

The Schiller Institute's Founding: 'Toward a New Age of Reason'

This was Founder and Chairman Helga Zepp-LaRouche's keynote speech to the first international conference of the Schiller Institute, held July 3-4, 1984 in Arlington, Virginia. The address is excerpted, and subheads added.

... We, today, must link up with the American Revolution, the German Classics, and the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon, because never before nor since did mankind conquer a higher degree of political freedom, and achieve a more beautiful ideal of humanity and a nobler method of thought. The coincidence of these two high-points represents the watershed of modern history, against which everything else must be measured. Precisely for this reason, this republican movement soon became the target of the most raging attacks from the oligarchical faction.

The American Revolution established for the first time a democratic republic in which every citizen's inalienable rights, based upon natural law, along with his absolute equality before the law, became integrated with his reciprocal relationship to the state. The Revolution was a joint European project, in which all of Europe's republican forces exerted a most direct and practical influence, in the persons of the Marquis de Lafayette and Baron von Steuben, among many others. But more than this, it became the proving ground for the best products of 2,500 years of European culture. The American Constitution was molded from the ideas of Plato, Nicolaus of Cusa, Leibniz, and Pufendorf; and these ideas encompassed both the citizen's republican duty to act for the best possible development of his nation, as well as the state's own obligation to provide for the flowering of every individual's latent potentials.

The American Revolution also represented the first complete victory for the republican system of economy, which Friedrich List subsequently called the "American System." As Alexander Hamilton, Friedrich List, and Henry and Matthew Carey demonstrated in their works, the increase in productivity effected by means of technological progress is the sole source of all social wealth. It is therefore the responsibility of the state, for the sake of its citizens' well-being, to promote technological and industrial progress by means of a suitable credit policy. It was this right to economic progress that England refused to grant its most important colony—a policy which finally convinced America's Founding Fathers that independence from England would have to be won by force of arms.

Schiller and the American Revolution

Benjamin Franklin was rightly called the "Prometheus of the Eighteenth Century," and the best minds Europe had to offer became associated with his political network. Contemporary literature described the young American republic as the "beacon of hope" and the "temple of liberty," and those who had supported America in the League of Armed Neutrality began to hope that the example of the American Revolution could be repeated in Germany. They enthusiastically viewed the early phases of the French Revolution as another step in this direction.

All of Europe's republicans hoped that a successful republican revolution in France would catalyze the development of sovereign, national republics in every part of Europe. William Penn, thoroughly conversant with the humanist authors of European civilization, presented a proposal entirely in the tradition of Nicolaus of Cusa and Leibniz. Relations between nations, he proposed, should be shaped on the basis of a community of principle among sovereign republics, in which such nations would enter into a relationship of mutual support, with each nation equally concerned for other nations' well-being as if it were its own.

John Quincy Adams later incorporated these foreign policy principles of the young American republic within the Monroe Doctrine, which was firmly anchored upon the principle of national sovereignty. Adams had traveled to Paris at an early age together with his father, John Adams, and became immersed in European culture. To him we owe the first translations of Schiller into American English.

No one celebrated these ideas of the American Revolution with greater dramatic tension and poetic beauty than Friedrich Schiller himself, especially in his works *Don Carlos* and *William Tell*. In his *Letters on Don Carlos* he wrote about "the favorite discussion topic of our decade—on the propagation of a purer, more tender humanity, on the highest possible freedom of the individual, coinciding with the state's greatest flourishing—in short, on the most perfect condition of mankind as is attainable with what lies implicit within its nature and its powers."

Schiller and many of his contemporaries were spurred on by this "great destiny of an entire state, the happiness of humankind for many generations to come," and he shared the conviction that mankind was on the eve of the Age of Reason. A tremendous sense of cultural optimism inspired them to greater works, in music and in poetry; never had men's minds



Prominent representatives and human rights activists of more than 40 nations attended the July 1984 founding Schiller Institute conference, which opened with a “presentation of flags” of those nations. Chairman Helga Zepp-LaRouche receives flags, above. Inset: Lyndon LaRouche greets the renowned leader of the World War II French anti-fascist Resistance, Mme. Marie-Madeleine Fourcade.

been ennobled by a higher ideal of mankind. More than anyone else, Schiller embodied within his own person and works the humanist ideal of man, and no one has more effectively united the idea of republican freedom with the principle of poetical beauty. What Beethoven was for music, Schiller was for poetry. Indeed, we can confidently say that Schiller and Beethoven were the two giants of the German Classics, infinitely like one another in their method of thought, each having established the standards against which all art must henceforth be measured.

Schiller was the great republican poet of freedom, who developed his capacity to clothe the ideals of a more noble, more beautiful mankind in such powerful language, that he indeed found that “infallible key to the most secret accesses to the human soul.” None could surpass his ability to evoke the most tender emotions within his audience, to expand its heart, and to guide it to previously unknown heights of reason. Schiller fulfilled the criterion he himself had set for all poetry: “All that he can give us is his individuality. Hence, this must be worthy of being displayed before the world and to posterity. To so ennoble his individuality, to refine and purify it into the most magnificent example of humanity—this his most important obligation he must fulfill before he can endeavor to move superior intellects.”

The Individual and the Republic

For Schiller, the most perfect of all works of art was the establishment of true political freedom. But what, to his mind,

was the content of this most pure and most magnificent humanity?

Schiller was also one of the best philosophers in all history, worthy of being taught and studied in every university philosophy department. His concept of the universe was identical to that of Cusa and Leibniz, the only difference being that he expressed their conception more poetically, and hence all the more effectively. Wilhelm von Humboldt, who forged his famous educational system according to Schiller’s philosophy, wrote about Schiller:

Confidence in mankind’s mental faculties, elevated to a poetical image, is expressed in the distich entitled “Columbus,” one of the most unique Schiller ever composed. This belief in the invisible force residing within the human mind, this exalted and so profoundly true view that there must exist a secret, internal agreement between this force and those which order and govern the entire universe—since all truth must be but a reflection of that which is eternal and primary—was a characteristic feature of Schiller’s system of ideas. This was in keeping with how tenaciously he applied himself to every intellectual task, until it was solved to his satisfaction. Already in his early letters of Raphael to Julius, published in the *Thalia*, with the bold, but beautiful expression, “When Columbus entered a doubtful contest with the untraveled sea,” we see this same thought allied with the same image.

This is the idea—already evident in Plato and pronounced in Cusa—of a correspondence between the lawfulness of human reason, the micro-cosmos; and the laws of the macro-cosmos, the philosophical universe.

In the Raphael letters, Schiller wrote:

The universe is a thought of God. Once this ideal image of the mind had entered into actuality, and the birth of the world had fulfilled the plan of its creator—permit me this human simile—it became the mission of all thinking beings, to rediscover the first design for the entirety of what exists—to seek the rule governing this mechanism, the unity of what is composed, the lawfulness of the phenomenon, and so to trace the edifice back to its first outlines.

Schiller goes on to develop an epistemological kernel idea which constituted the conceptual basis for the great advances in the natural sciences and mathematics during the 19th Century; namely, the idea that the visible world is only the reflection, the analogy of a more complex reality. It can be proven that there exists a direct coherence between Schiller's ideal of humanity, his philosophy, and the geometry of Bernhard Riemann. In his *Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Mankind*, Schiller proceeds from this agreement between human reason and the laws of the universe, taking up the question of how it might be possible to found the perfect state and to establish political freedom. In the Fourth Letter, he writes:

We can say that every individual, by his very nature, encloses within himself a pure and ideal man, for whom the concordance of his immutable unity with all his changes of state, is the great problem of his existence. This pure human being, who is more or less distinctly manifest within every individual, is expressed in the republican state, the objective and, as it were, canonical form in which the great multiplicity of individual characters strives toward unity. Now, there are only two conceivable ways by which man in time coincides with man the idea, and just as many ways by which the state can become manifest within individuals: Either the pure man represses the empirical man, so that the state annuls the individual; or the individual becomes the state, so that man in time ennobles himself into man the idea.

Now, for Schiller, who loved freedom above all else and considered freedom to be the only fitting condition of mankind, only the latter possibility was conceivable. But how is this to come about? How shall man be ennobled, and to what end?

We must begin by saying that for Schiller, the maximum perfection of a man's character is his moral beauty; it is the condition in which he has a "beautiful soul." The idea of man's beautiful soul, however, can only be understood from the standpoint of Schiller's general aesthetics. Wilhelm von

Humboldt rightly said that Schiller has set down everything essential concerning the concept of beauty of creation and of action, and hence on the foundations of all art and art itself, and that it would never be possible to go beyond what he had accomplished.

Freedom and the Truth

Schiller was moved to write his works on aesthetics, his theory of beauty, in part because of his irritation over the aesthetics of Immanuel Kant. Kant had claimed that reason can dictate no universally valid criteria for beauty, but rather beauty is a subjective judgment of arbitrary taste, having no other recognizable purpose, so that an arabesque, for example, is more beautiful than the human form. On the other hand, Kant postulated the categorical imperative, according to which man, whenever he perceives a contradiction between his inclinations and his duty, must always choose the latter.

But beauty cannot possibly come about in this manner, and Schiller, who considered Kant to be a rather monkish fellow who must have had an unhappy childhood, wrote the following:

Clearly, the dominion which practical reason exerts over our impulses as it morally determines the will, has something abusive, something distressing about it. Yet we do not wish to see compulsion anywhere, not even when exerted by reason itself. We also desire that the freedom of nature be respected, because, in aesthetic judgment, we consider each being as a purpose unto itself, and because we who hold freedom to be supreme, are repelled by the thought that something must be sacrificed for the sake of the other, serving as the means to some other end. Therefore, a moral action can never be beautiful so long as we can observe the process by which it is tormented away from the sensuous.

Only when fulfillment of duty has become part of one's nature, when reason and sensuousness, duty and inclination coincide, and man fulfills his duty with ease and on his own accord, as if he had acted on instinct alone—only then does a man have a beautiful soul.

It is important that beauty here does not become equated with perfection. Only those representations of perfection which are free, become at once transformed into beauty. This is the notion of organic self-organization, the notion of free self-determination, of freedom and autonomy of phenomena.

Something is perfect, says Schiller, if its manifold predicates come into agreement with the unity of its concept; it is beautiful when this perfection appears as nature. "Beauty increases when perfection becomes more elaborated and nature does not suffer therefrom, for as the quantity of predicates grows, the problem of freedom becomes that more difficult, and its successful resolution all the more surprising."

This is why man, in his most beautiful humanity, is always more beautiful than the most splendid beast, and this is why

a cathedral constructed according to the Golden Section is always more beautiful than a common house, and why—with your permission—a fugue of Beethoven is more beautiful than one by Bach.

Along with Schiller, I say that there do exist absolute criteria for beauty, dictated by reason. However—and Schiller is emphatic about this—purpose, order, proportion, and perfection have absolutely nothing to do with beauty itself; they are merely the material of beauty. “The only form of beauty is a free exposition of the truth, of purpose, of perfection.”

Beauty as the free exposition of truth—that is an enno-

bling thought! For the beautiful soul potentially residing within every individual, “desire shall ally with duty, and reason shall be joyously obeyed.” Beauty is therefore of vital significance for all mankind. Man’s “intellectual nature has been provided with a sensuous partner, not so as to cast it off or to shed it like a rough shell, but on the contrary, so as to unite it with its own higher self.”

But it is the senses which give human reason so much trouble, and they must be educated to the level of reason. Likewise, even though beauty itself is founded upon reason, it is through the senses that beauty is perceived. Schiller therefore arrives at the following conclusion:

Declaration of the Inalienable Rights of Man

This Declaration of the Inalienable Rights of Man was adopted on Nov. 24, 1984, by the Third International Conference of the Schiller Institute.

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for the peoples in the world to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the Earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable Rights; that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.

That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed;

That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive to these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably

the same Object, evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism; it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new guards for their future security.

Such has been the patient sufferance of the developing countries, and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Violation of National Sovereignty through the dictate of supranational institutions. The history of the present International Financial Institutions is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

They have refused their Assent to our plans of development, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

They have forbidden their Banks to engage in business of immediate and pressing importance for us, and in equal terms.

They have dictated to us terms of trade and relations of currency, that have relinquished our Rights as Equals in the World Community, a Right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

They have burdened us with conference after conference to discuss these matters, at places unusual, uncomfortable and distant from the depository of our Public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing us into compliance with their measures.

They have overthrown legitimate governments repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness their invasions on rights of the people.

They have refused for a long time and in many instances, after such topplings, to permit other republican forces to be elected in a democratic form; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their Exercise, the State remaining in the meantime exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsion within.

The contemplation of beauty, of truth, of excellence, is the momentary appropriation of these qualities. Whatever condition we perceive, we ourselves enter into that condition. The moment we think it, we are already the possessor of a virtue, the author of an action, the discoverer of a truth, the harbinger of a joy. We ourselves become that object which we perceive.

The contemplation of beauty awakens within us a power which transforms the sensuous world into a free product of our reason, and governs the material world through ideas.

But there is never a final goal in this quest. We must never

cease striving for improvement, struggling for the creative fruits of genius. As Schiller warns, "General experience teaches us that the person who relapses into the criminal life is all the more maniacal, and that the relief which the renegade from virtue finds from his heavy burden of contrition, is all the sweeter when he returns to the arms of perfidy."

Or, conversely, "The person who has managed to reap all the beauty, greatness, and excellence of nature in small and large, and can find the grand unity within this multiplicity, has already come much closer to the divinity. The entirety of creation flows into, and dissolves within his personality. If each man loved all men, then each individual would

They have endeavored to prevent the necessary population increase for industrialization of these States; for that purpose imposing forced sterilization programs and refusing the necessary technology transfer under the pretext of the so-called protection of the environment.

They have obstructed justice by giving aid and comfort to undemocratic forces whom they regarded as their "assets."

They have made Judges dependent on their will alone for the Tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

They have erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

They have used the military might of governments to pursue the continuation of a de facto condition of colonialism. They have in many instances furthered military forms of government to impose the demanded austerity.

They have combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitutions, and unacknowledged by our laws, giving their Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:

For using the territory of our countries for proxy and population wars;

For cutting off our trade with all parts of the World; for imposing conditionalities on us without our consent;

For depriving us in many cases of the benefits of Trial by Jury;

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of Our Governments. They have caused conditions in our countries, which destroyed the lives of our people; they have generally caused our countries, already previously weakened and exploited by colonialism, to collapse, with methods of cruelty and perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, totally unworthy of Man in civilized nations.

They have excited domestic insurrections amongst us,

and have endeavored to bring on the most backward and fanatic savages, whose known rule of Warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every step of these Oppressions, we have petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions and Resolutions have been answered only by repeated injury. Institutions, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, are unfit to be the rulers of free peoples. We have appealed to them in innumerable conferences, assemblies, and conventions, and appealed to their sense of justice, without any positive response.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the Peoples of the World, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the World for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by the Authority of, all good people of all countries, solemnly publish and declare, that all the countries of the World are and of Right ought to be Free and independent States.

That all human beings on this planet have inalienable rights, which guarantee them life, freedom, material conditions worthy of man, and the right to develop fully all potentialities of their intellect and their souls. That therefore a change in the present monetary and economic order is necessary and urgent, to establish justice among the peoples of the world.

These were in large part the formulations of the American Declaration of Independence, and no honest witness can deny that all we wish to remedy are the same unjust conditions which the Founding Fathers wished to remove when they ended their condition as colonies to establish the first true independent republic. It is this example we wish to replicate everywhere and it is these principles we wish to uphold.

And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.



The third international conference of the year 1984, in November, focussed on the rights of labor. At the center, with Helga Zepp-LaRouche, are Colombian union federation leaders Pedro Rubio and Jorge Carrillo, embracing; at the right are Argentine trade union organizers Manuel Carulias and David Lujan Duarte. A Schiller Institute international labor division was formed early the following year.

inherit the world.”

Hence beauty, the free expression of the order of creation, is absolutely necessary for the ennoblement of the human species, and consequently for the development of sovereign, national republics and a just world order. And is it not precisely such beauty which our present world so sorely lacks? What has the 20th Century produced so far, that truly deserves to be called beautiful?

This is why we must go back to Schiller. The ideas I have dealt with here theoretically can all be found in his works, presented with even greater power and effectiveness. Never was the majority of Germans at a higher level than during the time when Schiller became the beloved and celebrated national poet. He understood how to raise the people “playfully and jestingly” up to his own level, and by loving him, they also loved the best of humanity within themselves. It was Schiller who scaled the highest pinnacle ever attained by the human species, and at the same time expressed this with the most power, sensitivity, and poetical beauty.

Schiller was a product of the best Leibnizian tradition. The real conditions of his time, however, were anything but ideal. He often described the despotic caprice and internal strife afflicting mankind, conditions which remind us very much of our world today. Schiller was not the happy son of his time; he had to conspire with Goethe, Wilhelm von Humboldt, and their circles to single-handedly create the program of the Weimar Classics. So it is possible to overcome dreadful situations!

Studying the biographies of Schiller’s contemporaries and other documents from the period, it becomes clear that

Schiller’s influence was not confined to his works, but that an infinity of sparks was thrown off whenever his genius directly touched another mind. His genius helped bring forth more geniuses, and numerous people have recounted how their encounter with Schiller left an indelible impression on their lives.

Almost all of the Prussian reformers felt the influence of Schiller’s mind, and even after Schiller was long dead, they sought to realize political changes designed by him in patriotic fervor. It is because of the joint influence of Schiller and the Humboldt educational system which embraced his ideas, that 19th-Century Germany produced a larger number of outstanding scientists than any other epoch or nation! . . .

The Schiller Institute’s Tasks

The great decision confronting human society today is altogether clear: The necessity for a just world order, founded upon natural law and based on the ideas of the American Revolution and German Classicism, stands in resolute opposition to the danger of an oligarchical nightmare modeled on the Holy Alliance, which will in all likelihood spawn a Third World War.

Thus we are engaged in the decisive battle, whose outcome will determine the survival of the human species. The Schiller Institute has therefore set itself the following tasks, and will publish studies on the following themes:

1. The immediate focus of our efforts shall be to prevent the decoupling of Western Europe from the United States, because upon this question hinges the survival of Western civilization.

2. It is equally urgent that the Western Alliance be given a new content, which by linking up with the ideals of the American Revolution, the German Classics and the Wars of Liberation, will enable us to formulate new tasks for the future.

3. By disseminating and stimulating the study of humanist literature and art in general, the Schiller Institute intends to contribute to creating the conditions for the flowering of a new Renaissance.

4. In order to ensure peace, we must work out concepts for eliminating the present nuclear threat, concepts comparable to those implicitly embedded within President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative. Lasting peace is only possible when the superpowers demonstrate mutual respect for each other's sovereignty, as well as that of other nations.

5. Solving the world economic crisis, whose effects are threatening the lives of millions of people, is a matter of the greatest urgency. It is the moral duty of the United States and Western Europe to support the Southern Hemisphere in its legitimate desire for industrialization and development, with full recognition of national sovereignty.

6. The Western Alliance must adopt the goal of making

the emerging scientific and technological revolution in the fields of plasma physics, laser technology, and biology, into an object of international cooperation, as it is already doing on a limited scale with the joint exploration of space.

It is my profound conviction that we will survive only if, at last, we fulfill Friedrich Schiller's great hope that now—in our own time—we can usher in the Age of Reason. How can this be done? Along with the great poet himself, let me tell all of you who share the ideas and goals of the Schiller Institute:

Dare to be wise. This requires the energy and the courage to overcome all the obstacles which indolence and cowardice may put in the way of our education. It is not insignificant that the ancient myth has the goddess of wisdom springing fully armed from Jupiter's head; for her very first function is warlike.

Let us therefore be the warrior-angels who will storm into the Age of Reason for all humanity. Let us never rest until, a few generations hence, all humanity, all living people, will have developed into beautiful souls; for this is the only fitting condition for mankind.

I give my thanks to Friedrich Schiller, this beautiful, great soul.

Principles of the Schiller Institute

1. The purpose of the Schiller Institute is to counterpose to the multiple tendencies toward decoupling Western Europe from the United States, a positive conception for the maintenance and revitalization of the Western alliance. Its members commit themselves to the idea of returning to the spirit of the American Revolution, the German Classics, and the Liberation Wars against Napoleon, to proceed from that basis to find solutions to the present problems.

2. The Schiller Institute sees as its task, to newly define the interest of the Western alliance; namely, in the humanist tradition of Nicolaus of Cusa, Leibniz, and William Penn; and to work for a more just world order in which national sovereign republics are united as a community of principle of mutual help and development. The members of the Schiller Institute regard themselves as world citizens and patriots alike, in the sense that Friedrich Schiller used these notions.

3. It is not without reason that the Western alliance has been afflicted with the present crisis. To elaborate those causes of the crisis, and to redesign the areas of positive

collaboration, are included tasks of the Institute. The following departments shall be created to this end:

I. Department for military cooperation. Subsumed areas: Topics of military history from Lazare Carnot, Scharnhorst, Gneisenau to MacArthur, etc. The alliance in the era of the doctrine of Mutually Assured Survival.

II. Department for economic cooperation. Subsumed areas: The economic theory of Alexander Hamilton, the "American System" of Political Economy, Friedrich List, the Careys, etc. Common future economic tasks of the alliance.

III. Department for scientific and technological cooperation. Subsumed areas: The physical principles in the work of Gauss, Riemann, Cantor. Future areas of scientific cooperation.

IV. Department for the study of the common historical and cultural roots of Western Europe and the United States. Subsumed areas: The significance of the Weimar Classics, Schiller, Beethoven, and Franklin's European networks. The influence of German culture in America. Historical developments in the 18th, 19th and 20th Centuries. Need for a new humanist renaissance.

4. The Institute shall carry the name of Schiller because no one has combined the idea of republican freedom and the idea of poetical beauty more effectively than Friedrich Schiller. For Schiller, as for the members of this Institute, the greatest work of art is building political freedom.