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# Call for Papers

Comparative Civilizations Review

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## Call for Papers

### 44th Annual Conference of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations

**June 11-15, 2014**

**Monmouth University, West Long Branch, New Jersey, USA**

#### Can Collective Wisdom Save Civilization?

Jonathan Lear, in his book *Radical Hope* (2006), wrote:

We live in an age of deep and profound angst that the world itself, as we know it, is vulnerable and could break down... We are confronted with global warming, nuclear conflagration, weapons of mass destruction...and even the demise of civilization itself...events around the world – terrorist attacks, violent social upheavals...have left us with an uncanny sense of menace. We seem to be aware of a shared vulnerability that we cannot name.” (p. 7)

What is the way out of this deep sense of contemporary crisis?

What exactly is “wisdom” and how can wisdom be promoted on a global level to deal with a number of serious crises now facing the future of civilization?

What have been some different definitions of wisdom? This is an ancient topic, but how can it be specifically applied today?

What, if anything, can be done to solve these problems collectively?

Some applications may be (but are not limited to) the following questions:

- What exactly is human nature and how is this relevant to civilizational futures?
- What are some possible solutions to overpopulation and the related problems of over-industrialization, resource-depletion and environmental degradation?
- What are some possible solutions to the problem of inequality, economic and otherwise?
- Why do a few have so much while so many have so little? Do rich nations have any responsibilities to the poor ones?
- Is Capitalism really working today? What did the “occupy” movements signify? Why are many western economies currently floundering?
- How have technological advances (especially increasing automation) contributed to the current jobs crisis?
- Does material accumulation really bring happiness? Why/why not?

- Is humankind naturally prone to conflict or cooperation? How are organizations like the United Nations faring with regard to international responses to regional problems?
- What is a Utopia? Dystopia? How are these terms relevant today? What roles do utopias and dystopias play for the future of society?
- Have our leaders run out of inspiration? Is fear now the main rhetoric?

In the 20th century, humanity saw the rise of several grand ideologies: Communism, Fascism, Liberalism, etc. We also saw the dismantling of many of the institutions built on these grand visions. Have today's leaders given up on grand visions? Is narrow self-interest and small scaled-down retraction now the trend? If so, what are the implications of this? Is this 'realpolitik' or just the politics of disillusionment?

And of course, papers concerning all questions relevant to civilizational studies are also welcome!

These could include:

- Studies of great civilizationalists, e.g., Spengler, Toynbee, Sorokin, Quigley, etc.
- Analyses of particular civilizations and/or comparative studies of civilizations.
- Decline and progress of civilizations.

Please send abstracts via email by April 1, 2014 (300 words) to:

Prof. David J. Rosner  
Metropolitan College of New York  
ISCSC President and 2014 Program Chair  
drosner@mcny.edu