

## LaRouches intervene in Italy at key strategic juncture

by Claudio Celani

On April 10, Lyndon and Helga LaRouche were the keynote speakers at a conference organized in Rome by *EIR* and the Italian Solidarity Movement, to discuss the necessity of a war plan to bring the world out of the worst financial disaster in mankind's history. Lyndon LaRouche's proposal for a "New Bretton Woods agreement" to save the economy from the disintegration of the financial system, was supported by prominent opposition leader, former Transportation Minister Publio Fiori, as well as by representatives of Italy's state-sector industries, who also endorsed the project for the "Eurasian Land-Bridge" presented by the chairman of the Schiller Institute, Helga Zepp LaRouche. Lyndon LaRouche told the audience of more than 100, "Most intelligent governments know there are alternatives to what is happening. Most people in senior positions of experience know there are alternatives in practice, to what is going on now. But they will say, it's politically impossible to bring this about. The governments will never do it. Which means the captain will never let the passengers off the *Titanic*. That's the problem I face: how to get a solution."

He went on to explain that his role is to ensure that the alternatives are clear, and that the governments which come together to meet in a moment of crisis, understand the decisions that they will have to take. "Can we do it?" LaRouche asked. "I'm not sure. But if we don't, kiss your grandchildren good-bye. Because if we don't do something like that, then famine, epidemics, chaos, and so forth, the collapse of the nation-state system, will collapse the level of population potential of the planet back to the level of the 14th century. And therefore, we have to. And I think the only reason we will do it, is because we have to. And once people see what the alternative is, maybe they'll be more willing to do it."

The growing momentum around the LaRouche movement's mobilization for the New Bretton Woods, and the

Eurasian Land-Bridge development perspective, shows that, as the reality of the crisis begins to hit home around the world, the possibilities for success increase exponentially. The Eurasian Land-Bridge, in particular, is now at the center of attention internationally. Mrs. LaRouche indicated in her Rome speech that the Chinese government, as well as India, Pakistan, Iran, and several Central Asian republics, are already committed to the development perspective which she has outlined in major addresses in Beijing, Vienna, New York, and Washington, among others. (Future issues of *EIR* will include excerpts of the conference speeches.)

The conference, held at the Columbus Hotel, one block from St. Peter's Square, was extremely well attended, representing a cross-section of Italy's political, industrial, diplomatic, and clerical layers, despite—or, perhaps, because of—the fact that, in Italy, almost all public attention was focussed on the unfolding government crisis. In addition to the LaRouches, speakers included: Alberto Servidio, former head of the Development Fund for the Mezzogiorno, the government agency which, beginning in the 1950s, built infrastructure throughout Italy's southern region, the Mezzogiorno, on the model of Franklin D. Roosevelt's Tennessee Valley Authority; Engineer Fortunato Covelli, spokesman for the Strait of Messina Corp., which will build the bridge across the strait separating Sicily from the Italian mainland (planned to be the longest single-span bridge in the world); and Giorgio Vitangeli, a senior economics journalist.

Most of the speakers agreed with LaRouche that the disintegration of the financial system is inevitable, due to the explosion of financial derivatives, high-risk, hot-money instruments that parasitize the physical economy. All the guests supported the idea of the Eurasian Land-Bridge program, each contributing from their experience and expertise: In particular, Fiori endorsed the idea of creating a National Bank to

finance infrastructure development; Vitangeli suggested that a New Bretton Woods monetary system be pegged not to gold, but to values related to productive activity; Servidio used the history of his government agency to show how only national programs can promote infrastructure development; and Covelli described the great expectations for the Strait of Messina bridge, to help bring Europe closer to the African continent, as well as being an artistic attraction in itself.

### Italy's crucial role in Albania

The LaRouches' intervention in Rome occurred at a moment when Italy is assuming major strategic responsibility by leading the multinational force in "Operation Alba" to nearby Albania, whose collapse under the weight of several national pyramid schemes is paradigmatic of the unravelling global financial system. The issue of an Albanian intervention caused something of a government crisis, as political balances shifted in reaction to the Albanian mission. On April 9, one day before the *EIR*/Solidarity Movement conference, the government, led by Romano Prodi, had won an overwhelming majority in the Parliament in favor of the Albanian mission, but one government party, Communist Refoundation, had voted against it. Prodi's government survived thanks to the opposition parties' votes. Although this will have ramifications for the future survival of the government, the fact that the Albanian mission garnered substantive bipartisan support is more important.

The Parliament vote was preceded by a public debate in which the economic issues underlying what happened in Albania were brought out: the disintegration of a nation as a result of the policy enforced by the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The "pyramid banks" that robbed 70% of Albanians of their pitiful savings, was acknowledged as only the most extreme form of the IMF's systematic looting policy, called "free-market reforms." Leading columnists raised the urgency for Italy to help develop its Mediterranean neighbors, instead of enforcing the "Maastricht criteria," the murderous budget-balancing axe being swung, IMF-style, in the hopeless attempt to reach a European single currency union.

Here are highlights of the debate:

- In early March, Stefano Cingolani, foreign policy editor for Italy's largest daily, *Corriere della Sera*, proposed that Italy should not wait for the "international community" to address the Albanian crisis, but should launch a "Marshall plan" on its own, an entirely feasible task for the world's seventh industrial power, in a country like Albania, with 3 million people. Cingolani told *EIR* that his proposal has been well received both in the PDS, the main government party, and in opposition circles. Negative reactions came from the technocrats in Prodi's cabinet, notably from Finance Minister Carlo Azeglio Ciampi.

- On March 16, Cingolani named those truly responsible: Albania's President Sali Berisha "was able to wash his clothes in the River Thames" and was "crowned" by George Bush's Secretary of State James Baker III. Overseas Albanians'

"funds flew into a non-existent banking system. The national bank controlled and channelled everything, including, perhaps, what ended up in the 'pyramids' and enriched the new pharaohs." Cingolani hinted that Oricum Alimucaj, head of the largest pyramid, "was an operative who made money thanks to Philip Morris." It is well known that the tobacco giant, whose international public relations agent is Margaret Thatcher, supplies the large cigarette-smuggling network of the Italian mafia gangs, through Albania.

- On March 17, leading economist and former Industry Minister Paolo Savona warned in an interview that the international monetary system is "a powderkeg. . . . Either we decide to recover sovereignty through the control of international monetary creation, or we risk its exploding." Savona comes very close to LaRouche's proposal for a New Bretton Woods Conference: "In order to put out the fuse and fight international speculation, we need an agreement among national monetary authorities, which have lately lost their sovereignty."

- On March 19, industrialist Cesare Romiti launched a strong attack against the Maastricht austerity. Romiti is currently chairman of Fiat, Italy's number-one industrial corporation: more than just a carmaker (and aside from the fact that its financial department has been deeply involved in derivatives), the Fiat group is a leading producer in machine tools and aerospace. Romiti called for a return to the original idea of the European Union, which "had been supported by a dynamic view of the economy, centered around the growth of new industrial firms, generating wealth, welfare, and jobs." Speaking about the Mezzogiorno, Romiti expressed a concept that can be applied to all underdeveloped areas, including Albania: "We accepted the idea that the South represents a problem. Instead, we should consider it a great source of wealth, a great opportunity."

### Potentialities and pitfalls

With this background, majority spokesman Fabio Mussi succinctly told Parliament before the April 9 vote: "If we do not go to Albania, Albania will come to us."

It is clear that the Albanian mission, which is politically and logistically supported by the Clinton administration, has potentialities and pitfalls. As a military mission, it is already an obstacle to the British imperial plot for a second Balkan war; for this reason, London was against it from the very beginning and vetoed it in the European Union. But more than that, it encapsulates the challenge facing the world: Either a LaRouchean development policy is adopted, or we will see more disintegration of nation-states, on the Albanian model, against which there will be simply no police force to deploy. This particular mission, however, also carries a great risk of failure, if political leaders do not fully face up to London's games, playing off one party against the other, certainly within Albania, but also potentially within the multinational force, which, besides Italy, is composed of French, Greek, Turkish, Romanian, Austrian, and Spanish contingents.