

LaRouche, in Milan: ‘Real Leadership Is Needed’

by Claudio Celani

On March 21-22, U.S. Presidential pre-candidate Lyndon LaRouche visited Milan, Italy, where he held private and public meetings with legislators, businessmen, and supporters. On March 21, LaRouche was the guest of honor at a dinner with about 100 representatives of the productive industries of the Lombardy region, organized by regional legislators. On March 22, LaRouche was officially received by the presidency of the regional parliament, and later the same day, addressed a public meeting organized by Iniziativa Italiana, an association of small entrepreneurs. In addition, LaRouche had private meetings with national legislators, journalists, and local politicians. In all his meetings, he intersected strong disapproval of current U.S. foreign policy, as well as preoccupation with the consequences of the Mideast conflict and a possible war against Iraq. This was a major issue in the discussions, as were the global economic crisis and the perspectives for reversing the collapse.

Lombardy is in a delicate moment of transition, as it is about to assume broader legislative and administrative powers due to a recent “devolution” reform of Italy’s government. Italy’s 20 regions will assume responsibilities which have been held by the central government—which will be left with control of only foreign, defense, and monetary policies. Lombardy’s elite, especially small and medium-size entrepreneurs, are conscious of the larger role and also of the risks they will face in the new situation. With 9 million inhabitants, Lombardy is one of the four richest regions of Europe (along with Baden-Württemberg, Germany; Rhône-Alps, France; and Catalonia, Spain). It alone produces one-fifth of Italian Gross National Product, and has a rate of employment well over the national average.

The Role of the Entrepreneur

These issues provided the backdrop to questions addressed by LaRouche during his visit. At the March 21 dinner and the March 22 public event, he developed the theme that the entrepreneur has an important role to play in the current strategic and economic crisis. Describing the long waves of history that influenced Twentieth-Century politics, starting from Roosevelt’s Presidency in 1933, LaRouche described the shift into the post-industrial society that occurred in 1966, and the genesis and the nature of the “utopian” military faction in the United States, the faction which is leading the current Clash of Civilizations policy.

The United States has shifted from a production-oriented economy to a consumer-oriented society, he said, and this is the reason for the current economic crisis. This is not a simple depression, but a breakdown crisis. The role of the entrepreneur in this situation is to use his influence in society to force a reversal in economic policies, back to a production-oriented society. The way to do this is to create a locomotive for a recovery in Europe, which is based in the development of the Eurasian continent. The real entrepreneur, as distinct from the owner of a large corporation who is interested only in profits, has a sense of mission, of creating something which is good for society in the form of an improved product or a product design, stressed LaRouche.

Participants posed questions ranging from U.S. policy on Iraq, the Middle East, and Colombia, to Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan’s ritual prophecies of a coming recovery; from the problem represented by the lack of an entrepreneurial mentality in Russia, to the perspectives of the planned enlargement of the European Union to include

countries such as Poland and the Czech Republic; from the origins of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's racist policies, to the future of telecommunications industry.

'Where Is the President?'

The most ironic response was provoked by LaRouche's answer to the question, "Where is bin Laden?" raised by a regional legislator. President George Bush was asked the same question a few days ago, LaRouche said, and he answered, "I do not care"—the same President Bush who brought us a war in Afghanistan for the sole purpose of capturing bin Laden! Bush does not know what he is doing, the Presidential candidate said. He reads speech cards written by somebody else, and becomes emotional about what he reads. He then asks his advisers for an interpretation of what he has just read, and gets homicidal about anyone who tries to stop him. Therefore, you raised the wrong question, LaRouche said. The right question is: "Where is George Bush?"

At the March 22 meeting, which took place in the historic Palazzo dei Giureconsulti, in the center of Milan, Danilo Broggi, chairman of Iniziativa Italia, who is also president of the Milan Association of Small Industries, introduced LaRouche, saying that if he were asked to reduce LaRouche's economic thought to one slogan, this would be "less finance and more production." It is impossible to disagree with that approach, said Broggi, especially for a representative of small and medium-sized enterprises. Furthermore, he said, LaRouche asserts the centrality of man in productive processes, which is fundamental in small enterprises.

Later, in summary, Broggi said that his sentiments about LaRouche's views had been strengthened, and listed three main points, which, in his view, are guidelines for policymaking: 1) the values of reference, expressed by the concept of the Common Good; 2) the capacity of the economic system to express pivotal elements in the process that leads to values of reference; 3) the extraordinary importance of infrastructure investment as the physical economic aspect of the Common Good.

A distinguished guest, Prof. Roberto Panizza, an expert who has worked on Third World debt policy for the Vatican, intervened from the audience to praise LaRouche's capacity "to surprise us each time" with his accurate forecasts. In particular, he said, LaRouche had forecasted the Argentinian crisis well ahead of time, and even the Enron bankruptcy.

In the meeting with the presidency of the regional parliament, which had taken place earlier, Lombardy legislators discussed for almost one hour, questions related to the reform process they are currently involved in. LaRouche was received by the Office of the Presidency, by a delegation which included Vice President Fiorenza Bassoli, Secretary Councilmen Luciano Valaguzza and Giuseppe Adamoli, and legislators Carlo Porcari and Massimo Guarischi. The presi-

dent of the Lombardy Regional Council, Attilio Fontana, could not participate because he had been called to a national meeting of regional presidents; he had met LaRouche the evening before.

The American Intellectual Tradition

Mrs. Bassoli outlined to LaRouche the "federalist" reform taking place in Italy, and asked for advice, on the basis of the American experience of constitutional relationships between states and the central government. LaRouche explained that the history of state-federal government relationships in the United States, must be seen in light of the history of the conflict between two opposing traditions: the so-called American intellectual tradition, which extends from the Founding Fathers to President Abraham Lincoln, to President Franklin Roosevelt and LaRouche himself; and the Tory tradition, which is the alliance between the Southern slaveowners and the New York bankers.

In this context, he invited the legislators to look at the period starting with Roosevelt's economic recovery mobilization, in 1933, until 1966, when the Roosevelt legacy started to be dismantled. Under conditions of economic mobilization, the states had to enact regulations for trade and finance, both for intra- and inter-state trade. This is the same challenge facing Italian regions now, LaRouche said. The new responsibilities involve a burden which some of you will see as a curse, he said, because of the collapse of tax revenues. Therefore, legislative activity must focus on regulations for trade and finance under conditions of a recovery program, which must maintain the export orientation of the Lombardy enterprises. This means to promote the Eurasian Land-Bridge project, and at the same time, the sources of credit needed for carrying out such development.

The legislators thanked the American economist and economist for his advice, asking questions such as: How can we find the necessary unity to realize such a project when, not only is the divergence between America and Europe increasing, but Europe itself is internally divided? And, what of the dramatic moment Italy is going through, with the recrudescence of terrorism?

On the basis of his experience in the study of the terrorist phenomenon, LaRouche said, such dramatic moments generally correspond to dramatic situations in the Anglo-American camp. He invited the legislators to look at the role of former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, who is notorious for having threatened Italy's Prime Minister Aldo Moro shortly before Moro was kidnapped and killed in 1978, and who was in Rome at the beginning of the week when, on March 19, 2002, government adviser Marco Biagi was killed.

As for the divisions in Europe and in the world, LaRouche said that the problem is the lack of real leadership. If there is clear leadership, people will tend to unite and support a recovery project.