

# How Europe changed during 1996

by Nancy Spannaus

At a public conference held in Milan, Italy on Dec. 2, 1996, on the occasion of the visit of Lyndon LaRouche and his wife Helga to that country, Sen. Flaminio Piccoli, a former general secretary of the Christian Democracy (until recently, Italy's leading party), sent a message of greetings which concluded:

"I personally met him [Lyndon LaRouche] for the first time in 1976, and he appeared to me very well informed on the Italian situation. He said that if Italy accepted IMF [International Monetary Fund] conditionalities, it would lose its national sovereignty. Hard words, which were confirmed by the facts which have hit our country since then, and particularly so in the last two-three years, with the attack against traditional parties and particularly the Catholic one.

"Besides his in-depth knowledge of history, and of Italian events, what impressed me in him the most was the fact that for each nation, for each continent, he had concrete proposals of economic and industrial development, from Latin America to Asia, from the Middle East to Russia and China. Of his movement, I appreciate the international approach, the idea that Italian problems can only be solved by creating a more just world economic order."

While Senator Piccoli is clearly more public in his appreciation of LaRouche's role in European politics than other senior politicians on that continent, his assessment is by no means unique. Particularly over the course of 1996, as the European continent began to go through the economic wringer of the supranational Maastricht Treaty, and patriots began to realize that the effects of the speculative financial bubble, IMF austerity, and the Maastricht measures threaten the very existence of their nations, the ideas of Lyndon LaRouche and his movement have become increasingly part of the political debate.

The European continent is currently wracked by a political mass strike process, a state of revolt against the austerity measures which the leading political institutions have determined to put into place. Under such conditions, there is a premium on ideas appropriate to solving the acute crisis. Despite a limited physical presence on the continent, European organizations associated with LaRouche and his ideas, have greatly expanded in influence over the past year. Under the growing conditions of crisis, that influence is nearly assured to increase.

## The end of an epoch

From the beginning of 1996, LaRouche's associates in Europe took out the message reflected in his elaboration of the "typical collapse function" (see article, p. 21), the fact that a continuation of decreasing physical production, against a hyperbolic rate of growth of financial speculation, would lead to financial, and then economic, disintegration. The thesis was produced in all the major languages of Europe, and many eastern European ones as well. Hundreds of thousands of leaflets went out in Germany alone, featuring the analysis of the collapse function.

What this message intersected, was a process of dramatic economic devolution—reflected in everything from cuts in traditional social services, to mass layoffs, to production shortages and depopulation—throughout every nation of Europe. The European Union had demanded a Maastricht strait-jacket, which required national governments to savage their economies in order to be integrated into a new supranational institution. Despite political resistance from unions, and even some industrial and banking figures, the governments determined to go ahead.

In Germany, in particular, the rate of collapse was spectacular. In the spring, unemployment reached levels higher than at any time since 1945, yet the Kohl government remained committed to implementing policies that would throw more people out of work. The Civil Rights Movement Solidarity, the German political party led by Helga Zepp LaRouche, ran candidates in a number of state elections in the spring, and Mrs. LaRouche herself, as head of the party, was given a short TV spot in Rhineland-Palatinate on March 9, in which she blasted the austerity policies, and attacked the policy of speculation. The Civil Rights Movement Solidarity launched a campaign in April against the health cuts, and was a visible presence within the trade union mobilizations that occurred through the summer, into the fall. "Production, not speculation" was the key slogan.

## An alternative perspective

In the summer, after the German government had confirmed that it intended to go ahead with drastic budget cuts, and adapt to the new "globalized" economy of cheap labor and geopolitical conflicts, Zepp LaRouche launched an initiative around foreign policy. "We Need a New Foreign Policy," was the title of an open letter she addressed to economic and political leaders of Germany. The theme of the letter, which she wrote shortly after returning from a Beijing conference on the Eurasian land-bridge, was that Germany must orient toward economic development, by integration with the nations to the East, through corridors of infrastructure development.

Zepp LaRouche reviewed for Germans the lost opportunities of 1989, when she and her husband had first put the perspective of the Productive Triangle on the table. This proposal would have provided the basis for the development of Russia



*Demonstration of the IG Metall metal workers union in Düsseldorf, Germany, September 1996. The sign reads: "The sick social state." Germany's spectacular rate of economic collapse during the past year, brought hundreds of thousands of workers into the streets.*

and eastern Europe, from which base there could—in fact, must—be a thrust to promote industrialization in the Southern Hemisphere. But those leaders in Germany who were hospitable to this proposal, such as Deutsche Bank President Alfred Herrhausen, were murdered, and the necessary decisions were never made. Instead, the Bush-Thatcher-Mitterrand cabal launched a series of geopolitical ploys, including the Gulf and Balkan wars, and Germany let itself be trapped. One sign of accepting this trap, was German accession to the Maastricht Treaty, which was explicitly devised in order to prevent Germany from playing its necessary role in spurring eastern European and Russian development. This is evident in the fact that the Maastricht Treaty explicitly proscribes the kind of government-backed credit for large development projects, which a rational policy demands.

This paper on foreign policy was circulated widely in leading political and economic circles in Germany. The only visible change in German government policy has been toward China; when Zepp LaRouche first wrote her evaluation, the Germans had been playing anti-China games with Tibet's Dalai Lama, games which they have since put on the back burner, in order to pursue significant economic deals with the government in Beijing. Otherwise, despite mass popular unrest against the Maastricht restrictions, the Kohl government continues to insist upon a course of suicide.

Zepp LaRouche followed up this intervention in the fall, with a public response to a speech by German President Roman Herzog. In contrast to Herzog's thesis about the waning of the nation-state, Zepp LaRouche argued in defense of na-

tional sovereignty, as the only institutional basis for promoting scientific and industrial progress. Her document has circulated widely, and provoked considerable, if private, debate.

### **Eastern Europe**

Because of the more rapid pace of collapse in the East, among other reasons, the LaRouche movement's alternative to the IMF has received more prominence there than in the West. Representatives of the Schiller Institute are in considerable demand, and have travelled extensively to give seminars in Poland, Slovakia, Croatia, Austria, and Bosnia. Schiller Institute representatives also travelled to Moscow in May, in order to deliver policy papers on the question of education policy, at a meeting held in the State Duma (parliament). This was a significant followup to Lyndon LaRouche's visit to Moscow in April (see p. 67).

The Schiller Institute launched a major initiative to save the children of Bosnia in January 1996, and raised the demand for dumping the World Bank-IMF diktat, in favor of a huge reconstruction, or Marshall Plan-style effort. Press conferences on this policy were held in Washington in February, and in Sarajevo in April, as well as in some German cities. The Schiller Institute organized delegations to Sarajevo, including prominent Slovakian political figure Jozef Miklosko and some U.S. state legislators, in March and April. In August, another prominent delegation visited Bosnia, including French political leader Jacques Cheminade, and a retired German general, J.A. Graf von Kielmansegg, in order to report back on the state of that target of British geopolitics.

The most prominent eastern European trip was that taken by LaRouche and his wife to Slovakia, from July 31 to Aug. 3, where the U.S. Democratic Presidential pre-candidate was described in the major Slovakian press as “the American Sakharov.” LaRouche gave a well-attended press conference, and addressed a meeting of political leaders in the capital, Bratislava, on the subject of “Present Problems in the Financial World and Their Importance for Countries Under Transformation.”

The Schiller Institute’s input on the economy has also been welcomed in Poland, where LaRouche’s associates have established a branch of the Institute, and maintain regular publication of a newspaper. In early December, Schiller Institute representatives held a televised debate on economics in the port city of Szczecin, and addressed a seminar at the Polish Ministry of Industry and Trade, on LaRouche’s economic perspective.

Austria has also been the scene of increased Schiller Institute presence in 1996, with 15 public meetings having been held there during the year, including presentations at two agricultural schools.

### **The French problem**

The year 1996 began with a major mobilization by the French trade unionists against Maastricht austerity demands. The Chirac-Juppé government found itself extremely unpopular, but there was no visible leadership for an alternative economic policy. The situation was ripe for a rapid rise to prominence of the “surprise” Presidential candidate of 1995, LaRouche associate Jacques Cheminade. Despite his ultimately small vote, Cheminade’s ability to gather the signatures to get on the Presidential ballot had made him a national figure, and a potential rallying point for the opposition to Maastricht.

Allies of the British oligarchy in France, however, had different plans. From January forward, Cheminade found himself and his political organizations under virulent attack, particularly through the courts. First, Cheminade was condemned for alleged theft, in a totally fraudulent case which had been previously thrown out by an unbiased judge. Then, the courts ruled that Cheminade, the poorest of all the Presidential candidates, had violated election fundraising laws, and took action to recover monies which had been advanced to him by the state, for his Presidential campaign. This blatantly discriminatory and unwarranted move against Cheminade’s very limited financial means, continues to this day.

As *EIR* pointed out in the fall, the assault against Cheminade was of a piece with the British moves to consolidate a new “Entente Bestiale,” a geopolitical alliance with France to counter American strategic influence. The British oligarchy, which the LaRouche movement had moved aggressively to expose as a still-active imperial force over the previous two years, including a new study of the British Empire’s physical strength and power (see *EIR*, May 24, 1996, “The Sun Never

Sets on the New British Empire”), was determined to destroy the very concept of national sovereignty based on economic, scientific, and technological progress, and cooperation between nation-states based on this principle. The destruction of the de Gaulle tradition in France, and a collaborator of LaRouche—Jacques Cheminade—was an integral part of achieving this objective.

### **The Italian flank**

Italy, home of so much of European civilization’s highest accomplishments, has been virtually destroyed industrially and politically over the past decades. This destruction has included shattering its political parties, and carrying out dirty operations against associates of LaRouche. But, in the course of 1995 and 1996, Italy became very fertile ground for LaRouche-led attacks on the British oligarchy.

It was in October 1995 that the LaRouche-associated Movimento Solidarietà (Solidarity Movement) launched a formal legal complaint against international speculator George Soros, for his illegal attacks on the lira back in 1992. But, on Feb. 3, 1996, the Italian press prominently covered the fact that Italian magistrates were now investigating Soros on the basis of this complaint. Over the course of the year, other charges by the Solidarity Movement against British-backed attacks on Italy have been taken up by a variety of political leaders.

These leaders can see that the shattering of Italy’s political institutions, is now set to be followed by the dismantling of the nation altogether. A huge vote for the separatist Northern League in elections in April galvanized a lot of people who had previously been reluctant to do battle with the British.

It is in this context that the LaRouches’ trip to Italy occurred in late November-early December. LaRouche and the Schiller Institute have a long history of promoting Classical Italian cultural achievements, particularly in the area of music. It was in Milan that LaRouche launched an international campaign for the Verdi, or Classical tuning at C=256, back in 1988. In late May 1996, *Canto e diapason*, the Italian translation of *A Manual on the Rudiments of Tuning and Registration, Book I*, which LaRouche had commissioned to present the scientific basis for this tuning, was released at events in Milan and Rome. With the LaRouches’ trip, the presentation was repeated, before a larger audience, in Verdi’s hometown of Busseto.

The fact that LaRouche’s political appearance in Milan was co-sponsored by one of the major sections of the former Christian Democratic Party, the CDU, reflects an advance in the degree to which leading Italians are looking to LaRouche. The combination of the cultural issue with the political issues per se, also underscores the point. The only way in which the world is going to get out of the global crisis, represented economically by the typical collapse function, is through reviving principles of Renaissance culture, which created the best of our civilization to begin with.