

# The life of Flaminio Piccoli

*This biography was supplied by the Christian Democratic Party. Subheads have been added.*

Flaminio Piccoli was born on Dec. 28, 1915 in Kirchbichl, Austria, where his family was interned at the beginning of World War I, because they were Italian. At the end of the war, he returned to his family's home in Trento, where he recovered his health, which had been damaged during the internment.

He received a university degree in foreign languages and foreign literature at the Ca' Foscari University in Venice. In the 1930s, he participated in the activities of the association of Catholic students in Trento, which had been created by Bishop Celestino Endrici, and he later joined the Trento Catholic Students Association.

At the beginning of World War II, as an officer in the Alpine Corps, he was sent to the western front. When, after the truce of Sept. 8, 1943, the Germans took all Italian soldiers prisoner, Piccoli became a prisoner of war in Grenoble. There, he made contact with other young officers who were politically committed to the Christian Democratic inspiration, which gave birth to resistance groups operating in Italy in the areas occupied by the Germans and the Fascists.

He, together with his brother Nilo, participated in the national liberation movement against Fascism. After the liberation, Piccoli was among the first to help build the Italian Christian Democracy. The beginning of his political career was linked to his activity as a journalist in building the party, which was created by Alcide De Gasperi.

On May 7, 1945, Piccoli was assigned the post of party spokesman. He was co-editor of the Trento Liberation Committee organ *Liberazione Nazionale*. In August 1945, in order to ensure that the Christian Democracy had an independent voice, and to continue the tradition of the paper started by De Gasperi, which had been abolished under Fascism, Piccoli founded the weekly *Il Popolo del Trentino*, which in 1946 became a daily, and in 1951 took the name of *L'Adige*. He was its editor-in-chief until 1977.

## Friendship with De Gasperi

An important chapter in Piccoli's political career was his friendship with De Gasperi, both of whom were from Trento, and from the same Christian and social background, although of different generations. They worked together closely, and kept up a correspondence, thanks to their mutual esteem and friendship, although they sometimes had different opinions.

In 1945, Piccoli proposed and helped create the People's University of the Association of Catholic Workers, and the Association in Defense of Immigrants.

That same year, he married Maria Cescatti, with whom he would have three children: Flavia, Mauro, and Annalisa. In 1952, after a few years dedicated to journalism and the party, he was called upon by Archbishop Carlo de Ferrari to chair the Diocesan Committee for Catholic Action.

In 1957, he took up his political work once again, becoming the provincial secretary of the Christian Democracy. From then on, with a brief interval of two years as Minister of State Holdings, he held party posts.

In 1958, Piccoli, then 43, was elected a Member of Parliament, where he was continually reelected until 1987. In 1992, he was elected to the Senate.

At the Congress of the Christian Democracy in 1964, he was elected national vice secretary. In 1969, during one of the most difficult periods for the party, he was elected general secretary of the Christian Democracy. His role as secretary was always one of fostering reconciliation among the various currents, knowing that each of them had to contribute to the well-being of the political system as a whole.

From 1970 to 1972, he was Minister of State Holdings in the Rumor and the Colombo governments.

After the elections in 1972, he was named president of the Christian Democratic group in the Parliament, and he held this post until July 1978, when he replaced Aldo Moro, who had been killed by the terrorist Red Brigades, as president of the National Council of the party.

On March 5, 1980, he was again elected national secretary of the Christian Democracy. He was general secretary of the International Federation of Catholic Journalists (until 1992), and president of the Union of Italian Catholic Press. On June 6, 1986, he was elected president of the Christian Democratic International (which is the umbrella group for all the Christian Democratic parties internationally), which he chaired until 1989. He continued as honorary president of the Christian Democratic International.

## Foreign policy

On Aug. 4, 1987, Piccoli was unanimously elected chairman of the Parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, and he was reconfirmed in this post in 1989 and 1990. This allowed him to gain great international experience. He led parliamentary missions to Chile, Nicaragua, Panama, China, North Korea, South Africa, Ethiopia, Algeria, and the Philippines, and he contributed to helping solve many crises, including in the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia, Albania, and Somalia. In an environment in Europe and Italy which was almost indifferent to the Serbian war against Slovenia, Croatia, and Bosnia, Piccoli worked with a few others to call Europe to its task, foreseeing that this war, had it not been stopped, would have become a European-wide conflict.

When he was elected to the Senate, he served with Amin-

tore Fanfani in the Foreign Affairs Committee. In November 1998, he re-founded the Christian Democracy [during 1992-93, as a consequence of the “Clean Hands” operation, the DC had split into different groups — ed.], whose headquarters is in the Piazza del Gesù, the historical seat of De Gasperi’s DC.

He was also general secretary of the International Federation of Catholic Journalists.

He wrote several books, including *Reflections on a New Time of Democracy*; *Possible Democracy in a Changing Country*; *The Strategy of Courage*; and *State Holdings: A Formula for Development*.

He was among the first to sponsor many legislative proposals, such as on public party financing, and stopping hunger in the world, which were approved by the Italian Parliament. He also promoted legislation to solve the long-standing problem of Italian emigration, including a law granting dual citizenship, and one securing the vote for Italians living abroad.

He played a key role in recognizing the rights of the German minority in South Tyrol.

On Feb. 10, 2000, despite the ongoing legal suit for the name “Christian Democracy,” he rebuilt the Christian Democratic Party founded by De Gasperi, and served as its president.

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## Documentation

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### Piccoli’s fight for justice and economic development

*From an interview with Senator Piccoli published in EIR, March 12, 1993:*

**EIR:** As you have pointed out, the same circles which are destabilizing Italy are currently promoting privatization and the selloff of state industries, hitting the center of national sovereignty created very consciously by the work of Enrico Mattei [the Italian Christian Democratic industrial leader assassinated in 1962]. Against such forced privatizations and unbridled free-market capitalism, the American economist and political figure Lyndon LaRouche has counterposed a dirigistic project for infrastructural and economic development called the Paris-Berlin-Vienna Productive Triangle, which is based on the government’s prerogative to generate credit and to mint money. Do you think that such a dirigistic plan is preferable to privatization?

**Piccoli:** I know the work and proposals of LaRouche. I believe in the good faith and good will of the government which wants to free itself of sectors of industry which have come under the State Holdings.

However, I observe—and I have said so in political and parliamentary settings—that while we must privatize that which has become an impossible burden for the state, we

must safeguard the “family jewels,” such as the SME [a state-owned conglomerate], because it is not written in heaven that everything which is private is healthy and robust, and that everything which is held by the state must declare itself incompetent, when there are vital sectors there for the Italian economy. Not to mention that in many situations of the country, it was the State Holdings which resolved the problem of industrialization in such regions, which had been forgotten by private initiative.

I wonder how the rapid selloff (at prices which today would be bankruptcy prices) of important sectors of the national economy could contribute to saving hundreds of thousands of workers from unemployment who are now receiving jobless benefits. I wonder also how the selloff of delicate sectors of industry, only because they are public, would contribute to improving the country’s economic situation, or if this does not mean a surrender to foreign competition with the result of an extreme worsening of unemployment.

Once the state has been deprived of the ability to move some sector to make the situation less painful, who is going to replace the state for a positive intervention, even if it is done in a cautious manner?

### Mobilization to free LaRouche

*On April 2, 1993, in Rome, three members of the Italian Parliament held a news conference to announce a parliamentary initiative for the liberation of Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr. who was unjustly imprisoned in the United States (jailed in 1989, he was released on parole in 1994). A petition to U.S. President William Clinton, bearing the signatures of 60 members of the Italian Parliament, was presented by Emma Bonino, member of the national and European Parliament, president of the Radical Party of Italy, and representative of the European Federalist Group. Mrs. Bonino was joined at the press conference by Sen. Flaminio Piccoli; Sergio D’Elia, coordinator of the International Initiative for the Abolition of the Death Penalty; and LaRouche’s wife, Helga Zepp-LaRouche.*

*Only a few days earlier, on March 31, their colleague, former Judge Carlo Palermo, had raised a formal parliamentary inquiry into the politically motivated jailing of LaRouche.*

*Then on April 7, parliamentarian Antonio Parlato (MSI) submitted a parliamentary question to the Italian government on the LaRouche case, asking whether the government will take action, “on the basis of the prominent international call in favor of the liberation of Lyndon LaRouche, in the name of the freedom of thought, and toward the UN Commission for the Defense of Human Rights, based in Geneva.”*

*Here are excerpts from the proceedings of the April 2 press conference.*

**Bonino:** We have called this press conference to present a parliamentary initiative made by Italian parliamentarians who are joining an initiative already signed by European par-

liamentarians and other parliamentarians from around the world on the case of Lyndon LaRouche. We have also prepared for you, as you will see later, a detailed dossier regarding this case. . . .

This initiative has been spread through various parliaments all over the world, and we have also placed here a list of American personages who have signed the appeal. It has been taken up again also now with the change in administration. In effect, the initiative is directed to the current President Clinton in the hope that certain political obstacles and political pressures which have seemed to us totally obvious in the documents we have seen (we spoke of this directly with Ramsey Clark [LaRouche's attorney for his appeal] when he came to the Radical Party congress on the topic of abolishing the death penalty, and so among other things, we also spoke about this). The political influence has seemed to us, from these papers, very heavy, and this is why the appeal today is directed to Bill Clinton in the hope that the change in administration might at least lead to a review of the trial. . . .

**Piccoli:** I am participating in the LaRouche case—a little differently from Honorable Bonino—because LaRouche is an economist who has advanced many ideas of social Christianity; he has been a careful student of the encyclicals of the Church, and he has advanced many ideas, especially in the economic area, some of which I find myself fully in accord with—for example, his battle against the huge banking corporations which even today, in my view, are meddling in the

currency markets of the entire world.

I do not believe it is poor, penniless fellows who run the operations to ruin the lira, to destroy the franc, to yank up the pound sterling one day and then next day to cast it down, etc. I am convinced that behind this are great corporations which have deep interests, and the international financial system is much affected by them. Hence, I believe that to a great extent the campaign against LaRouche happened because he annoyed the big American corporations, because he was a man who, if by chance he had become President, with the American powers he would probably have hit sectors which are the bosses, the political and economic culprits, often with great success, with great usefulness to the world, often with diversity and taking risky positions.

I am convinced that many of the things happening even in our country are due certainly to errors and grave deviations by political officials, but they are to a great extent guided and directed by people who are interested in weakening Europe, in impeding Europe from becoming in effect a great competitor on the international level, of the superpowers. I am convinced of these things; I said them, I repeat them, I hope they don't put me in prison, because now it's easy. This is why the LaRouche case has always interested me. Then when they came to talk to me about it, since I saw that the cause was in the hands of Mrs. Bonino, who has always done these things with a great spirit of solidarity, with great altruism. . . .

Mrs. Bonino is admirable because she says outright: I

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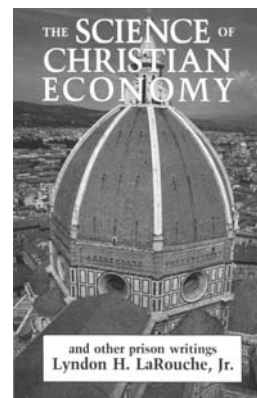
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don't agree on these things, but otherwise I believe that he is one of those prisoners who is held in prison out of fear that their ideas may make headway; surely for me this is why LaRouche has undergone these trials.

Then the other details, the repayment of loans—you will find them here [in the dossier]—but we know perfectly well what can be fabricated against a person in political life; one can invent everything, and the opposite of everything. . . .

I hoped to be able to be part of a group which was going to the United States to speak with the President, but I could not go because of other matters. However, I propose, together with Honorable Bonino and a few others, that we should find a way to go. . . .

I maintain that the Italian press should be interested in this case, also because American life is a life that interests everyone, which has a value for humanity; everything that happens in America, because of its power, its development, also its freedom, for the way in which it has managed to mix different races and always succeeded in overcoming so many problems.

But there are some heavy sides which turn up every so often, and they have to do with personages who could be a nuisance to the major sources of the economy: They might try to change the course of things. I am convinced that in economics we need to change the course of things. Just yesterday, they showed me that in the Bank of Italy, gold was pegged to paper money, and then I saw how little gold was valued at, and how paper money has become an object of negotiation for sale and speculation; and therefore I think that, especially for the generation of young economists coming up, there is a lot to be thought about in the economic events which are taking place in our country, and which are often regurgitations and copies of what occur in the great powers: Germany, the United States, Japan. Whereas, in my view, if we want to create a situation of equity and justice, above all the financial part, the monetary part needs to be reviewed and corrected. Here, too, in Italy it is easier to go to prison for saying these things, than it is to be walking around free. But I say them anyway.

## **Toward a New Bretton Woods System**

*Speech by Senator Piccoli to a Rome conference on the New Bretton Woods, March 11, 1999, sponsored by EIR and the Italian Civil Rights Movement Solidarity. Helga Zepp-LaRouche also spoke at the conference.*

I always had great esteem for Lyndon LaRouche, because he is a man who can look forward, who always expresses his thoughts with great exactness and without prejudice, and therefore can forecast the future. The first time I met him, more than 20 years ago, I listened to him a bit inattentively. But over the years, when I also intervened on his behalf when he went to jail, because he had told the truth on the homicidal folly of those who wanted a war, I realized that the financial

and economic crisis he had warned us of had come true. I decided to accept the invitation to speak at this conference, when I heard that Mr. LaRouche, whom I wished to see here again, was unable to attend and the kind lady who works here in Rome with him asked me to comment on his forecasts and his proposals. I agreed, because I consider him one of those figures who are able to move on their own, who can think profoundly and because of this finds a lot of obstacles put in his way by false politicians, false scientists, or false economists. But then the crisis did happen, which might have been avoided.

He is also a man who not only says how things will go wrong and why, but also proposes remedies. I am a political figure with the only importance of being very old, and of having lived through two world crises. I was born a few days before Italy joined the First World War. I was an Austrian then, because I was born in Trentino, and I can still remember the poverty we experienced during that war. Then I had the luck, or ill luck, of joining the Alpini three months before the Second World War exploded, and I saw also that war and many events which made me suspicious about things I read every day in the newspapers, which pick up on violent incidents just to increase sales.

I want to say today that it is worth listening to LaRouche's economic, political and military warnings and to his proposals, which have annoyed those who make trouble in economic and political life, but which he kept saying, without ever stopping, at whatever personal cost, always formulating proposals which—after many years of knowing him personally—are worth some reflection at the end of this century, since his words are not only prophetic, but the result of an intelligent interpretation of the greatest international crisis.

When we speak of politics these days in Italy, we find a confusion which is frightening, at least to those of us who witnessed the century of wars, and which recommends us not to tail behind politicians who are full of money and reckless ideas, but to rather attentively follow those few political figures who had from Providence the gift of seeing into the future.

I will say at the end, that the theme of this conference is very important, because it poses the question: "Will Europe have a future of stability, or become one of the regions of the world shaken by depression and wars?" I have been a journalist and a party man all my life, and if I look back on my life, I realize that sometimes things happen which remind us of events 30 years ago. The mistakes which were made in the 1920s, the events of the First and Second World Wars, tend to be repeated in a way which is even monotonous.

Lyndon's proposal this time is summarized by proposals he made four or five years ago, and which he now presents with new features, the idea to convoke a New Bretton Woods conference, to realize great infrastructural projects in Eurasia, which is struck by the Maastricht measures that are part of the problem, and by the systemic crisis.

# What's behind all the hysteria against China?

China wants to buy *trillions of dollars* worth of U.S. capital goods, for the great infrastructure project of the 21st century, the Eurasian Land-Bridge. But the British-led financier oligarchy, determined to prevent such collaboration at any cost, has unleashed its mad dogs in Congress, to wreck President Clinton's efforts to forge a mutually beneficial partnership with China.

## The Eurasian Land-Bridge

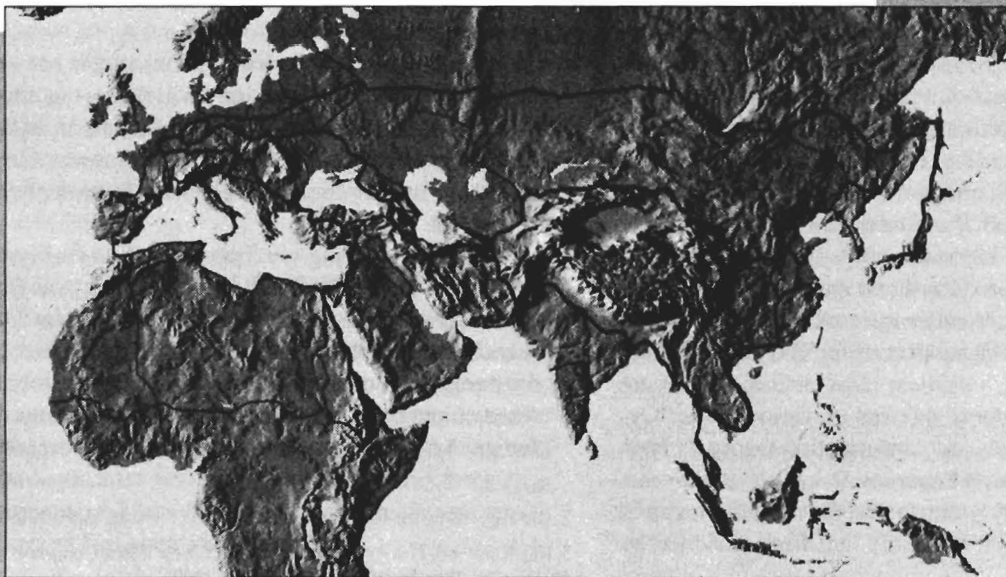
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EIRNS  
Helga Zepp-LaRouche (right), known as "the Silk Road Lady," has played a major role in organizing worldwide support for the Eurasian Land-Bridge. She is shown here with Schiller Institute associates at Lianyungang Port in China, October 1998.



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