

Swiss Vote No to Climate Suicide

by Dean Andromidas

June 17—Put before the direct vote of a national electorate for the first time, the dictates of the Paris Climate Accords were decisively rejected in a referendum in Switzerland on June 13. Being one of the few countries in Europe that still has sovereignty, Swiss voters rejected the country's new climate law, the "CO₂ Act" (CO₂ Gesetz), by a 51.6% majority. The defeated law called for taxes on fuel, and other restrictive measures imposed in the name of reducing CO₂ emissions to mitigate "climate-change."

While the "No" voters uncorked their champagne

headline, the "People's Voice," warning:

The referendum in Switzerland is also a lesson for Germany. [It] shows that not everything that is considered a consensus at party conferences and talk shows is also the case in the population. Not even the hot topic of climate protection....

Citizens are anxiously wondering whether they will soon have to do without their vacation and their car. Whether the state will really give



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Popular political resistance to the European Union's imposition of killer Green Deal measures is erupting all over Europe, sparked by the Swiss "No" vote. Shown here is an earlier demonstration in support of workers in Poland in May 2020. The banner reads "They have taken away your decent job; let's take away their power."

bottles, the climate lobby spoke in terms of a "black day for climate protection," and a "pile of broken glass for Swiss climate protection," according to an article in the Swiss *Cash* financial and economic news website. The vote also promises to be "broken glass" for the climate lobbies in the rest of Europe and even in the United States and Canada.

The impact in Germany, the greenest economy on the continent, was immediate. *Bild Zeitung*, the country's largest circulation tabloid, editorialized under the

them something back after making gasoline more expensive...."

Bild warns that after the Swiss vote,

[E]very German politician should ask himself: do they really still know what people think? Or has he long since distanced himself from the will of the voters? It is dangerous to hang the party-political flag in the wind instead of listening to



the people's voice. Otherwise, those who are no longer heard will go to the radicals.

In Switzerland, the message is loud and clear. Writing in the *European Scientist*, under the title "A Nice Democratic Flop for the Climate Urgency," Swiss chemical engineer Michel de Rougemont asserted,

[T]he negative vote of the Swiss citizens is rather a sign of distrust: they dislike complex and costly measures that have little prospect for efficacy. They also hate policies consisting in punitive measures and behavioral constraints. But above all, they do not easily accept the climate emergency, as the propaganda keeps harping on, and which the other half of the citizens gullibly adopt. How many times humankind should have become extinct, should all the announced catastrophic urgencies have materialized?

De Rougemont called for Switzerland to reverse its policy of phasing out nuclear energy, writing,

As we cannot anymore count on neighbors to palliate capacity losses after closing our nuclear power plants, it is now high time to plan for new and better ones.

The CO₂ Act would have caused a steep rise in the

cost of living, which is already high in the country. Everyone would have been affected by increases in fuel prices, taxes, and higher energy costs. The only cantons where the Yes vote won were in Basel-Stadt, Geneva, Neuchâtel, Vaud, and Zürich. These are the major cities, but by no means do they constitute the largest part of the population since the country is decentralized. The rural population came out strongly for "No," since there were also other objectionable referenda on the ballot, including one on banning artificial pesticides, which was defeated by a 61% majority.

There was strong support for "No" from political parties. The Swiss People's Party (SVP), the country's largest party, was totally against it. The FDP-The Liberals Group is a substantial party, and was split, with a significant faction against it. Both sides mobilized strongly. Industry associations all mobilized against the CO₂ Act, including the fuel, gasoline, diesel distributors association, the National Automobile Club, and the Aerodrome Association, which includes everything from small airfields to the Zürich and Basel international airports. The homeowners' association and the smaller business associations likewise mobilized strongly to bring much of the middle classes behind the "No" vote.

The SVP party, which pushed hard for the "No" vote, argued that the proposed "CO₂ Act." would not only cost more, but its effectiveness is questionable anyway." The SVP is said to have won over voters from well beyond its normal base of support.

There still is a danger in Switzerland that the Climate lobby will push for a referendum to put into the Swiss Constitution a zero emissions law which would force the government to implement policy to cut CO₂. Moreover, once such a clause is put in the Constitution, it will be hard to remove, even with a new referendum.

Blowback in Germany

The first country to feel the heat of the Swiss vote will be Germany where national elections are to be held in September and the Green Party is making a power grab to put party leader, Annalena Baerbock,

trained by the London School of Economics, into the Chancellor's chair. Election polls in May were giving the Green Party 30% of the vote. But by the time of their Party Day on June 6, their poll ratings had collapsed to 20%.

Warning of the Swiss blow-back on Germany's election, Sebastian Viehmann, Chief Editor of *FOCUS Online*, one of Germany's largest weeklies, wrote on June 16,

While the Federal Constitutional Court subordinates everything to the climate, the people in Switzerland decided differently, and overturned a CO₂ law. In Germany, too, the gasoline price dispute shows that you don't necessarily win elections with climate hype.

Viehmann goes on to warn that the politicians should not be so quick to refer to "we" when it comes to climate change policies now being pushed.

It was not "we," that is, the population, who signed any climate agreement. Nowhere could you vote on whether you wanted to subordinate your life, your job, your leisure time, or the economy solely to what the federal government defines as climate protection, and signs in any agreement. If you do ask the people—see the current Swiss example—that can backfire for politics.

The big question is whether the Christian Democratic and the Social Democratic parties who have been trying to outgreen the Greens, to their own detriment, will learn this lesson and change their ways and begin addressing the real concerns of the population, especially, the economic crisis. Will the political parties address the necessity for financial reorganization through separation of sound commercial banking from bailouts and speculation? Will the parties address Germany's deteriorating conditions of power, water, health care, transport, and agro-industrial base, with an economic



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Annalena Baerbock, the Green Party's candidate for German Chancellor. Her very aggressive Green policy is now threatened by the spillover of the Swiss "No" vote.

recovery program centered on reconstruction and expansion of infrastructure? *That* is what will win elections, not climate-change suicide.

Will the European Union's Green Deal Collapse?

The Swiss "No" vote is comparable to the votes back in the 1990s on the disastrous Maastricht Treaty, where in every country in which a referendum took place, including France, the Netherlands, and Ireland, the voters defeated it; although in Ireland a second referendum "corrected" the "wrong vote."

The British-based *E&T* magazine (*Engineering and Technology*) wrote a warning recently to the European Union, that

souring public opinion is the *bête noire* of climate policy-makers, because it could make or break flagship initiatives like the EU Green Deal, which is filled with language like "just transition," and "green jobs," and "nobody left behind."

The *E&T* solution is for the EU to be more clever in their sound bites in promoting their policy. Moreover,

The main lesson the EU will learn from the Swiss case—not that it needed to be relearned—is that complex policy decisions should not be put to a public vote.

The EU "Fit for 55" package, which calls for CO₂ emission cuts of 55% by 2030, already caused division among the leaders of the EU's summit in May, and it will come up again for discussion at the July summit. The environment ministers of Bulgaria, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia have signed a letter to be presented at the summit demanding "realistic" targets, and the taking into account of "the real social, environmental and economic costs" of moving away from fossil fuels.

All these countries have substantial coal reserves and coal-fired power stations, and cannot afford to plaster their countryside with wind turbines and solar panels and spend much-needed dollars on gas imports. Poland is at the forefront of the struggle against the EU's insanity, given the fact that no less than 65% of its energy is derived from its huge coal reserves.

Thousands of mining and energy workers in Poland, from 16 trade union organizations, including *Solidarność*, protested on June 9 in Warsaw in front of the European Commission Representation building. They held banners with such slogans as, "Hands Off Turow." This refers to the Turow power station and lignite coal mine, which the European Court has ruled must be closed down—a ruling the Polish government refuses to implement, and is challenging the ruling.

In the forefront of the trade union action was *NSZZ Solidarność*. While in the 1980s it was leading the fight against Soviet domination, it is now fighting the domination of the oppressive European Union policies that ignore the lives of working people. The Green Deal is being compared to the infamous shock therapy policies that were implemented after the fall of communism where tens of thousands lost their jobs overnight. The "exit from coal" policy is repeating this brutal policy.

Jarosław Grzesik, head of the National Mining and Energy Secretariat of the *NSZZ Solidarność* trade union explained to Poland's TOK-FM radio station, that the European Commission's coal phase-out policy threatens no less than 105,000 jobs in Poland and in other East European members of the EU, where up to 80% of electricity is coal-based.

Similar demonstrations are taking place in Romania, the poorest country in the EU, where the European Union is artificially bankrupting power companies using coal, by forcing them to buy carbon emissions certificates, in the so-called "cap and trade" system, which is at the center of the Green Deal. Only the speculators benefit. The EU dictates add prohibitive expenses to the already cash-strapped power



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With 65% of Poland's energy derived from coal, thousands of mining and energy workers protested June 9 in Warsaw to stop the shutdown of the Turow lignite coal mine and power complex, shown here. The European Court has ruled that it must be closed, a ruling the Polish government now refuses to implement.

companies. Other kinds of companies are losing state subsidies now deemed illegal by the new EU regulations. Coal is the source of 20-30% of Romania's power and employs tens of thousands of its citizens.

It has been only a week since the Swiss vote, and the fallout promises to continue.

The July summit of European Union leaders is supposed to review, and possibly approve, new European legislation to implement "Fit for 55." The legislation is being drafted by the European Commission itself in a totally utopian manner by simply setting the target for cutting CO₂ emissions by 55% by 2030, without even considering an economic impact study. It promises to be worse than the CO₂ Act rejected by the Swiss. It will raise costs for individual families as well as entire countries, especially in central and eastern Europe where coal is the major source of power, and governments do not have the resources to finance costly, so-called renewables. Already Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán announced in May that he will not support a policy, the costs of which are borne by the population.

With the Swiss vote in the background, the July EU summit could be a breaking point in the Green Deal madness.