

Friends of the Schiller Institute Shift the Agenda in Denmark

by Our Copenhagen Bureau

Nov. 23—The election campaign by the Friends of the Schiller Institute (Schiller Instituttets Venner, SIVE) in Denmark, part of the international LaRouche movement, led by Copenhagen mayoral candidate Tom Gillesberg, succeeded in putting the dangers of the accelerating economic collapse, and the way out of it, squarely on the national agenda, during the three-week campaign leading up to the Nov. 19 municipal election.

The call for Glass-Steagall-style bank separation has been gaining support lately in European countries such as Switzerland, Belgium, and Italy. In Denmark, the biggest Glass-Steagall debate has been sparked by the last two SIVE election campaigns. First was the parliamentary election of 2011, with the slogan “Glass-Steagall—or Chaos”; and then, in the just-concluded campaign, with the slogan “Glass-Steagall, Not EU Fascism: The Banking Union¹ Will Take Your Money and Your Life.”

This was the entry point for a nationwide discussion of the intention of the financial oligarchy to implement fascist austerity cutbacks, including bailout, bail-in, and, on the other hand, the LaRouche-movement’s three-point recovery program: 1) Glass-Steagall bank separation; 2) a credit system to finance the productive economy; and, 3) great infrastructure projects, moving toward a fusion economy.

The party’s election results were small in number, but the impact of the campaign was far greater than the percentage of votes. The approximately 1,000 voters in Copenhagen, Aarhus, and Jutland are now potential activists, plus the many more who considered voting for SIVE, or would have, if the slate had run in their district, in this small country of 5 million people.

Press Coverage

During the campaign, there was a breakthrough in national press coverage on TV, radio, and in newspapers. The party’s posters became famous in the capital of Copenhagen, where SIVE ran five candidates; in Aarhus, Denmark’s second-largest city, with two candidates; as well as the midwestern region of the Jutland mainland. The campaign newspaper was distributed to thousands of households and especially to college dormitories. Many visited the SIVE websites (www.sive.dk; www.schillerinstitut.dk; and www.facebook.com/schillerinstituttetsvenner), literature tables, or met the candidates at election meetings.

As in rest of Europe, the Danish mainstream political parties are quickly losing credibility. Both the Social Democratic-led three-party government coalition, and the two mainstream opposition parties, are in an existential crisis. The far-left and far-right parties received big increases in their votes.

The SIVE’s Gillesberg stood out as the candidate with the most credibility. The starting point for most of the press coverage was that Gillesberg had been “prophetic” in warning about the 2007-08 crash before it happened.

There was a transformation of the character of the press coverage compared to past elections. The first major breakthrough was a full-page article in the Copenhagen tabloid *Ekstra Bladet*. The article, entitled, “Glass Steagall—or Chaos,” though in keeping with the paper’s satirical tone, stated that Gillesberg had been right about his 2005 and 2007 warnings of a coming crash, prominently printing three of his campaign posters.

The character of the previous coverage of the campaign was the subject of one of the three programs Gillesberg was on, on the national “24/seven” station. The host, who had penned a satirical article about Gillesberg in 2005, asked why candidates who bring up non-mainstream ideas are ridiculed by the media.

1. The European Union’s proposed banking union would give the European Central Bank the power to shut down banks in individual EU countries, bypassing elected governments: a major abdication of national sovereignty.



EIRNS

Tom Gillesberg campaigns for mayor of Copenhagen, Oct. 29, as the candidate of the Friends of the Schiller Institute party. The poster reads, "Glass-Steagall, Not EU Fascism. The Banking Union Will Take Your Money and Your Life."

Shouldn't we help them instead? The participants, including the host, and assistant professor at Copenhagen Business School Ole Bjerg, stated that they had, or wanted to vote for Gillesberg.

The character of the coverage was transformed even before this discussion, as seen in a two-page interview in the left-wing intellectual newspaper *Information*. "Tom Gillesberg predicted the financial crisis on his election posters several times," the article reported. Gillesberg's posters are "more prophetic than political," recalling his posters from 2005, 2007 and 2011. "The bubble burst, housing prices fell, we got a financial crash, though a maglev across the Kattgat² hasn't been built, but Glass-Steagall is being discussed in serious economic circles." Gillesberg's posters are "iconic with their complex messages. Also this year: 'Glass-Steagall—not EU-fascism, 'Fusion: Yes, Thanks,' 'The Banking Union Will Take Your Money and Your Life....' He was right about the financial crash coming. So, should we be worried, when he now predicts that the banking union will take our life?"

SIVE scored a victory in getting Gillesberg on DR2 TV's Deadline, the most important news discussion program, on election eve, after another scheduled ap-

pearance before the election had been cancelled. Gillesberg posed the choice between Glass-Steagall and EU fascism and the banking union taking money and lives. He challenged the voters to make history, and elect him.

During his second appearance on DR2 the next morning, he spoke of his vision for the future, based on a fusion economy and maglev high-speed trains to integrate the economy of Denmark and the world. These interviews profoundly moved many voters, as expressed by those who contacted SIVE afterwards.

In a statement after the election, Gillesberg called on his supporters to strike while the iron is hot, and coalesce a national campaign. The Friends of the Schiller Institute will use the next six months, leading up to the European parliamentary elections, he said, to campaign to prevent Denmark from joining the banking union, and to get Glass-Steagall adopted. He appealed to those touched by the campaign to become activists.

Another campaign highlight was SIVE's interview with Schiller Institute founder Helga Zepp-LaRouche (in English: <http://schillerinstitut.dk/drupal/node/1127>). After endorsing the candidates, she described the fascist economic policy being implemented by the Troika (IMF, European Commission, European Central Bank), and Obama, with reference to what happened in the 1930s, and how this can lead to war. She also gave a battle report on the international fight for Glass-Steagall. After speaking about Lyndon LaRouche's conception of physical economy, and how Friedrich Schiller (1788-1805), Germany's poet of freedom, can inspire us today, Zepp-LaRouche said that Denmark has a special role to play in Europe, because the population had voted "No" to the euro, in a referendum in 2000 (Denmark uses its own currency, the krone). History has shown that small countries, or, even single individuals, can change history, she said.

Now, after the election, the SIVE is in a better position to do just that.

2. The Kattgat Sea separates Denmark's two largest cities, Copenhagen on an island, and Aarhus on the mainland.