

German Councilwoman Tells Congress: The World Needs Glass-Steagall

Nov. 25—Dorothea Schleifenbaum, a City Councilwoman from Siegen, Germany since 1994, spent several days in Washington last week, meeting with members of Congress and staffers on Capitol Hill. A signer and organizer for the August 2013 pro-Glass-Steagall Arzviller Declaration of French, German, and Italian elected officials (see *EIR*, Aug. 23, 2013), Schleifenbaum, a Christian Democrat, met with 11 Congressional offices, 2 members of Congress, and elected officials from Virginia and Maryland. She reported her impressions on the Nov. 23 LaRouche Show, the weekly Internet-radio program (www.larouchepub.com/radio), in an interview that included Tom Gillesberg, the director of the Schiller Institute in Denmark.

Schleifenbaum said that she found that many Congressmen and their staff members do support Glass-Steagall, but they “want someone else to go out front.” One Congressman told her specifically, that Wall Street was pressuring him not to have anything to do with it.

Schleifenbaum told Congressmen and staffers that there must be a paradigm shift in Washington, if there is to be a solution to the global financial crisis, and that her visit convinced her that, contrary to the impression that Europeans have of the United States, “Americans are not the same as Wall Street!” If the U.S. restores the Glass-Steagall Act, and a real economy, she said, there will be international change for the good.

The councilwoman described her city of Siegen, in North-Rhine Westphalia, with more than 100,000 residents, and dating back to ancient times, as a center of metalworking, commerce, and culture, on the Sieg River in the Rhine River basin. “Our region has been making metal products since the time of the Celts—



Courtesy of Dorothea Schleifenbaum
Councilwoman Dorothea Schleifenbaum of Siegen, Germany

that means 500 years before Christ,” she said. Now however, like the rest of Europe, its industries have been taken down, its school system degraded, and its economy undermined by the prevailing Green policies.

“Germany is expecting a crash,” Schleifenbaum told LaRouche Show host Marcia Merry Baker, and related how shocked she was to learn that German commercial banks had begun buying bonds from Greece, Italy, and Spain, whose economies have been decimated by the Troika’s killer austerity policies. The tyranny of the City of London and Wall Street must end, she said. People are suffering and dying in Greece, Cyprus, Spain, and this must stop. Such risky investments, she said, follow the U.S.-

British-Dutch pattern of putting commercial bank deposits into speculative pools. “These bonds are not secure. They are toxic,” she told the *Washington Examiner* in an interview published Nov. 24.

National Sovereignty Means an End to Green Ideology

Both Schleifenbaum and Gillesberg denounced the narrow-mindedness of elected officials and the public alike. Schleifenbaum said that at present, Germany is not even a sovereign nation, but is bound into the system dictated by the EU bureaucracy in Brussels, and the City of London. Chancellor Merkel is under fierce pressure to go along with anything Brussels/London order her to do—for example, the demand that Germany buy Greek bonds and other toxic debt. These funds never reach the Greek people; they are sucked into private banking and financial flows, including the funding of terrorism, drugs, and strife.

She particularly attacked the green ideology, and



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Organizing for Glass-Steagall in Essen, Germany by the BüSo, the political party of Helga Zepp-LaRouche, August 2013. The sign in the foreground says, "General Welfare Not Fascism!" and calls for reinstatement of Glass-Steagall.

the insane green-energy program, which is ruining Germany and the Trans-Atlantic region. She also described the subversion of the German education system, by the imposition of an "inclusion"/one school system, according to which no special arrangements can be made for students of differing needs, but all pupils must be "included" in one heap, in one school, which is resulting in chaos, demoralization, and ignorance.

On The LaRouche Show, Schleifenbaum expressed her surprise at what she had learned about Americans. "It was a very exciting experience," she said, that here in the United States, I'm meeting people who are different than I had expected. Coming from Europe, especially coming from Germany, we get the impression that the interests of the United States people are the same as the interests of Wall Street, and the City of London." The German news media, she said, "show us always a picture where they are going hand-in-hand."

Because she has been working with Helga Zepp-LaRouche, she knew more than the average German. "But in the public view, the Americans are the same as Wall Street." The United States, she said, to strengthen its true identity, "should separate itself from this government of Wall Street and the City of London."

In a meeting with members of Congress, she found

support for Glass-Steagall, "but I always felt they keep behind, and they wish someone [else] to go in front . . . then they would follow. One of them said that he felt pressed by Wall Street, and I think not all did this so clearly, but it's the effect on most of them. And when I go back to the German situation, I think it's just the same."

Problems in Germany

Reporting on the German parliamentary elections in September, Schleifenbaum noted that "the themes which were discussed were very narrow, very ridiculous, really, in relation to the big tasks we have for our country, and of the development of all the states that are in a terrible situation, within the EU or outside."

This is especially true for energy policy she said: "For me it's hard to understand that [Chancellor Merkel] changed our energy policy in favor of this renewable methods. It's impossible. We had long-lasting contracts with the nuclear power stations and she broke them, from one day to the other! And installed a system which is not reliable. We cannot base our industry on these renewable energy [sources]. . . ."

Merkel does this, "because she is under pressure from the Green movement, and the City of London. In Germany, no one would understand if they were

told that this is a fascistic ideology they are following. They would be horrified. And also, if someone would say to them, officially, that this is going to genocide—they don't believe in genocide. Because this is a taboo. These two words are taboo, after Hitler. And to say that this policy is, in reality, continuous with these new methods—it would shock all the population.”

So, there is no public discussion of this, she added.

“In Germany,” she said, “people are made so much afraid because of nuclear energy, that we have a huge job to loosen this anxiety. They now believe in windmills and solar—that’s terrible. Going to the Moon is not the ideal of the Germans. They are happy playing with their smart phones, and things like that. But it’s really that they don’t have the idea of a future, a worthy future, and a sense of the future. We have to import new ideas.

Expecting a Crash

“Everyone is expecting a big crash,” Schleifenbaum told Baker, “because everyone who can add one and one knows the system can’t keep going on with these cheap interest rates, and the monetary flow is going on and on.

“I can add an example from our community. Since I’m on the Council of this town, since 1994, I heard the Chancellor always claiming, ‘I must have more money’; but I really date the beginning of the crisis at the time when the Glass-Steagall law was cut down in the United States, in 1999. It began slowly, and it had a big problem at the moment when Lehman Brothers failed. But over the last years, it’s increasing more and more, and our last budget—we are discussing the budget for 2014—we just recognized that the expected tax income was EU70 million.” But the actual tax revenue, she said, was only EU50 million.

“It’s a big difference,” she explained, “and now our Lord-Mayor and our parties and our Chancellor are trying to make a new budget, and they always think, ‘Where can we cut? Where can we cut?’...”

“This is the beginning of the end,” she added.

On Glass-Steagall, Schleifenbaum reported that she had spoken to the parliamentary deputy who represents her region, and asked him what he thinks about the separation of banks on the model of Glass-Steagall. He said, “Oh I think it will not help,” because he was thinking of the construct that [Finance Minister Wolfgang] Schäuble and the European banks have worked out,

which is a system which provides many holes to merge the money of the banks, and the bank interests. The investment banks are not cut off by this plan they have. So, it will not help really....”

Baker added that “it’s a fake reform, that in fact allows the continued speculation.”

Yes, said Schleifenbaum, it allows the investment banks and the speculative money to continue to operate, “and it works not only against the people in our country, in Europe, in Greece, and so on, but it also works terribly against these countries we hear about, as in Afghanistan, Syria, as Egypt—where this toxic money is introduced to finance terrorist activities. And this is a very great point, I think, which we should have in mind, if we want to give peace to the world.”

Asked to comment on the financial crisis in her city, Schleifenbaum said, “The numbers of people on short [part-time] employment is getting greater and greater, and we see the problem.... Our Lord-Mayor, referring to this EU50 million he had in his budget, said that must be a singularity; we shall come back to our normal income.

“But our [state] Chancellor says, no. He is worrying very much; he doesn’t think it’s coming back to the higher level we had. So, you see, people try to close their eyes to the real problem.

“On the whole, our situation is quite comfortable. It’s not so terrible as in other countries, and our district especially, has so much industry that we really are not on the level of getting poor—that’s not the reason. There are other districts in Germany where things are much more difficult, such as parts of the so-called new states [formerly in East Germany, before reunification]....

The View of Obama

“Do you find the ‘bloom is off the rose’ on the Obama issue?,” Baker asked.

“When I think about the reputation and respect of the European countries for America—there had been a great respect, but it has been going down and down since Bush Jr. But nowadays, we Europeans think Obama has shown his real character, and his real aims, and he is not at all respected now. He has lost his reputation totally. I do not think that everyone is expecting him to be a real representative of the United States. It would be good for the United States to let him go.”