

Signs of Change In Germany, Also

by Rainer Apel

Three spectacular developments on May 22, 23, and 29 have changed the strategic and economic environment for Germany in a profound way—more so, than most Germans may yet recognize. The stunning defeat of Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's Social Democrats (SPD) in the May 22 legislative elections in Germany's most-populated state of North Rhine-Westphalia, and Schröder's surprise announcement on election day evening, after the SPD defeat, of his plan for early elections by mid-September, have created a rather turbulent situation in Germany.

Not only does that imply the abrupt end of the Social Democrats' "red-green" national coalition with the Green party; it also means the beginning of the end of 25 years of ecologist penetration of politics in Germany. At present, only a minority of Germans would say that openly, outside of the LaRouche movement, but there are some, among the labor unions, among traditional, labor-linked Social Democrats (SPD) and Christian Democrats (CDU), and they have received support, after May 22, from two prominent Social Democrats: Kurt Beck, vice chairman of the SPD, said on May 24, that his party will not conduct an ecology-fixated *Mopsfledermaus* (roughly: "dingbat") election campaign, but that the creation of jobs will have priority over ecologist concerns about the defense of alleged "animals rights" at the expense of investment projects.

Siegmar Gabriel, also a member of the national SPD party executive, added a head-on attack on ecologism on May 29, charging the Greens with "preventing us [the SPD] from creating and securing jobs in Germany. . . . Our voters expect the Social Democrats to stand up in favor of innovation and employment. . . . The SPD has depended too much on the Greens." He added that he "very much regrets" that the SPD is forced to have the Greens as a coalition partner in the present German government. SPD national party chairman Franz Müntefering had already said on May 27, that he could "imagine other coalitions . . . including Grand Coalitions," meaning with the Christian Democrats, the largest opposition party.

End of the 'Conservative Revolution'

Now, the May 23 vote of the U.S. Senate rejecting the ominous Bush-Cheney script for a coup against the Constitution, a vote based on the courageous stand of a bipartisan group of seven Democratic and seven Republican Senators in defense of the Constitution, is highly important for Germany.

For Bush and Cheney to be turned into lame ducks, by meeting unsurmountable resistance (which the LaRouche movement helped to build) in the Senate, has very direct implications for the Administration's German allies—notably the present leadership of the Christian Democrats. The CDU leaders are still on “autopilot,” propagandizing against Chancellor Schröder as if we were still in the early days of the Iraq War of 2003, when Bush and Cheney were at the peak of raw power politics. What these CDU leaders, such as party chairwoman Angela Merkel, do not want to realize, is that the aura of the “Conservative Revolution” has been broken, by the Senate agreement to defend the Constitution, and this change combines with the other, underlying trend away from the era of radicalized shareholder monetarism, which became drastically visible when 55% of the French population voted “no” in their national referendum on the European Union Charter, on May 29. The Charter would have stripped away any remnants of national sovereignty, transferring political power directly into the hands of the independent central banking system and the financier oligarchy.

The French vote (and the Dutch rejection of the EU Charter which followed on June 1) is the complement, on the one hand, to the increasing opposition in Germany to the destruction of industry at the hands of “shareholder value” and globalization; and to the heated debate among Germans on the defense of the Common Good, after SPD party chairman Franz Müntefering spoke of “financial market locusts” in an April 17 interview. The French vote is, on the other hand, the kick-off for a new phase of struggle against supranational monetarist institutions like the EU bureaucracy, the European Central Bank, the International Monetary Fund, and others.

Uphold the Social State: the General Welfare

Whereas most of Germany's political establishment was in a state of shock and hysterical denial over the May 29 vote in France, the labor unions were the first to welcome the French “no.” Michael Sommer, chairman of the German Labor Federation DGB, and Jürgen Peters, chairman of the metal workers union, supported the French vote, issuing statements on May 30, saying it is an unmistakable message to political leaders to rework their European agenda. “The majority of the French voters,” Sommer said in Berlin, “have issued an urgent appeal for a renewal of the European social state model . . . and it is, naturally, also a response to free-market strategies which the French government has pursued during the past years.” Sommer called on political leaders in Europe, “not to try to ignore the vote,” but to seriously work out a new agenda that can find the support of the majority of the peoples of Europe. “Europe will either be social or it will not be,” Sommer added.

Peters said in Frankfurt: “We have seen in France what



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The LaRouche party, the BüSo, organizing in Aachen, during the North Rhine-Westphalia elections. The smashing defeat for the Social Democrats there opened up Chancellor Schröder's party to consideration of new policy options.

exists also in other European states, namely an alienation of the people from the institutions, and it was wrong to push for the integration of Europe predominantly under the flag of liberalized markets. The referendum in France was an unmistakable signal that Europe will not function without the consent and sympathy of the people.”

Especially with Peters, another very important aspect enters the stage, because he also called for a big German public sector investment program, in an interview on May 25. He warned the SPD and the Chancellor that if they held on to their budget-cutting Agenda 2010, they would face certain defeat in the early elections in September—just as they have also lost, because of this policy, all elections since the last national elections in September 2002. Instead, Peters urged, the SPD should go for a big public sector infrastructure program to overcome “an investment backlog of 400 billion euros.”

With that, the debate in Germany begins to be very interesting, because it enters territory dominated, so far, by the LaRouche movement—the Civil Rights Movement Solidarity, or BüSo—with its call for an annual investment program in high-technology industry and infrastructure of 200 billion euros. This was the theme of the BüSo campaigns for the legislative elections in Saxony last Summer, and in North Rhine-Westphalia this Spring. On May 26, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, the chairwoman of the BüSo, issued a statement saying her party would enter full-force into the Federal election campaign, insisting “on the necessity of a new financial system, a New Bretton Woods in the tradition of FDR.” They will campaign for the development of the Eurasian Land-Bridge, and the creation of 10 million new productive jobs in Germany.