

Left Party To Counter Zepp-LaRouche Campaign

by Rainer Apel

It happened before: During the Summer of 2004, the LaRouche Youth Movement, within a few weeks after its first Monday Rally in Leipzig on July 12, managed to mobilize citizens in more than 200 German cities to participate in a campaign to replace austerity policy by an investment and job creation program. Then, in early August, many of the leftist and ecologist groups, ranging from the ATTAC umbrella group to Trotskyists, were awakened from their Summer sleep and all of a sudden discovered that they had to act to contain the LaRouche role in these Monday rallies.

In addition, some formerly prominent—but now almost forgotten—“leftists” such as Gregor Gysi (a pre-unification figure in the East German Communist Party, later in the Party for Democratic Socialism, PDS) and Oskar Lafontaine—who recently quit the Social Democratic Party

(SPD)—were reactivated, and intervened in the rallies with a lot of establishment media support. This disoriented the rallies in some cities, but the movement was still too strong for those who wanted to contain the LaRouche impact. So the media claimed at the end of September that the rallies had grown obsolete, and the leftists who had jumped on the bandwagon, deserted them.

Despite this, numbers of cities continued to hold these rallies. For about half a year, the ferment continued on the low burner. At the same time, the financial oligarchy implemented a project to create a “new left party” in time for the national election campaign in September 2006. The new party was set up to take a considerable percentage of the vote away from the SPD of Chancellor Gerhard Schröder, in hopes of forcing him out, and installing a new government committed to more brutal austerity policies, under Angela Merkel, the neo-con chairwoman of the Christian Democrats.

However, this timetable had to be changed, because at the same time that political influence of Lyndon LaRouche was increasing dramatically in the United States during the February-April period, the German LaRouche movement, led by Helga Zepp-LaRouche and her Civil Rights Movement Solidarity (BüSo) party, made big advances in the election campaign in North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany’s most heavily populated state, using programmatic campaign slogans like “Production, Instead of Speculation.”

On April 17, Franz Müntefering, the national party chairman of the SPD, stirred up public debate by calling for establishing controls on hedge funds, similar to what the LaRouche movement had been campaigning for. The week after Müntefering’s remarks, two articles were published in the daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the leading mouthpiece of the German banking sector, which identified the “LaRouches” as the leaders of the revival of Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s ideas in the United States, and the proponents of similar ideas in the ongoing North Rhine-Westphalia campaign.

A Forced Counteroffensive

As a result, the financial oligarchy decided something had to be done to contain the LaRouche influence. When Chancellor Schröder on May 22—the day his SPD lost the election in North Rhine-Westphalia—called for early national elections, the decision was made to speed up the timetable for the formation of the new left party. Its basic components, hastily patched together, are the rainbow-coalition-like political underground of radical ecologist, socialist, and Trotskyist groups, in addition to feminists, Pôrto Allegre World Social Forum branches in Germany, disgruntled labor unionists, and the post-communist PDS, which is still strong in eastern Germany. The non-PDS components were already loosely organized in the Election Alternative Social Justice (WASG), an organization that was established on a national level in Berlin early in July 2004. The WASG also ran

candidates in the North Rhine-Westphalia election, but in spite of massive media attention, it only received 2.2% of the vote. The PDS, almost non-existent in western Germany, is, however, the strongest party in eastern Germany, in some areas being the leading party there, with about 30% of the vote.

The decision to speed up the merger of the WASG and the PDS, was accompanied by the decision to revitalize Gysi and Lafontaine. Gysi was made the leading candidate of the PDS; Lafontaine, who in June quit the SPD, was made the leading candidate of the WASG. The mass media proclaimed that the new left party would receive 10% or more votes in the early national elections, shaking up the existing four-party system in the parliament, and allegedly “pose a real alternative to the traditional parties.”

This is a propaganda lie: The new party poses no alternative at all, and neither do its two top candidates. Gysi, who postures as a “socialist,” is a preferred guest on primetime television talk shows. Three years ago, he ran away from his job as Minister of Economics in the administration of the city-state of Berlin when the situation got too hot for him, because of the high debt, collapse of the new economy, and the loss of jobs. Lafontaine, who keeps building a legend that he got ousted from the German government because he was for a “new financial architecture,” also ran away from his job as Minister of Finance in early 1999. Lafontaine has repeatedly called for “stable currency exchange agreements” during the past ten years, but strangely enough, he has always combined that with praise for the policies of Alan Greenspan’s Federal Reserve and the alleged “job miracle” these policies created. He also praises hardline monetarist economists such as Paul Volcker and Robert Mundell—both of them ideological enemies of LaRouche. Shortly before he was appointed Finance Minister in October 1998, Lafontaine said in an interview that he thought the best proposals at hand for a reform of the financial architecture were those made by Paul Volcker. He reiterated that in the context of an important session of the European Union’s finance ministers in Brussels, in early January 1999.

Lafontaine and Gysi and their new party are a hoax. Their party’s campaign platform does not make any mention of the ongoing world economic depression; it does not mention any state program for industrial and infrastructure investments; it proposes cuts in weekly working hours as the way to “create” more jobs; and it pushes solar energy as the solution to the problem with secure power supplies. The new party is so post-industrial that it can already be called “pre-industrial.” This fits nicely with plans of the financial oligarchy to drive the wheels of human development backwards toward a new feudalism.

The LaRouche citizens’ movement will expose these scenarios, it will continue to rally votes, and it will not stop stirring up the establishment: The election campaign in Germany is only just beginning.