

Berlin Mayor Debate Excludes Real World

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It was comical; it was outrageous; it was double that, if it can be said. Flamboyant melodrama as a substitute for politics and real thinking. As if a maître d' had approached your dining table and said, "I'm sorry there is nothing today. Our waiters are themselves 'out to lunch'!" These are all valid and keen insights into the state of Berlin and for that matter, German political life.

The Mayor of Berlin Klaus Wowereit (Social Democrats [SPD]), and candidate Wolfgang Pflüger (Christian Democrats [CDU]) held a debate sponsored by the German daily *Tagespiegel* on Aug. 21, for the Berlin Mayoral election Sept. 16. The election is of critical importance for Germany and Europe, which are now rapidly plunging into a post-industrial nightmare. Yet, the debate excluded the only real alternative to a cabaret-like fantasy plunge into Hell: Daniel Buchmann, candidate of the Civil Rights Movement Solidarity (BüSo) and LaRouche Youth Movement leader. Buchmann's campaign has amassed a movement with many people organizing for a systemic change in politics, firstly by having youth be the cutting-edge of his campaign. With the prospect of an intercontinental airport in Sperenberg; 1 million new industrial jobs, and a focus on development of Berlin as transport hub of Eurasia, Buchmann has uplifted Berliners out of a state of fuss-and-vote and into a state political awareness. These shifts in the economic life of Berlin are not only needed, but are life-or-death matters for a city which has more debt per capita than Argentina, with about 60 billion euros of debt.

More Debauchery Than Debate

I would characterize this event as more debauchery than debate. Following opening remarks by the moderator, Wowereit, the "debate" began.

"Pflüger, it is interesting that you want to be Mayor of Berlin," Wowereit began, "because I have here a reason why you shouldn't be: In an interview, you state that your 'home city' is Hannover, and that's a reason not to become Mayor of Berlin, when you consider your 'home' to be Hannover."

Ten minutes of pure childish back-and-forth ensued, so ridiculous that you would have thought that these were two schoolmates arguing over a pencil. The debate went from, at some points causing a state of hebephrenia, and in other moments, being so touchy-feely that it was obvious that tons of money went into advising the two candidates on how to

push people's buttons—or other parts of their anatomy.

Afterwards, questions were taken, which showed that the audience members were completely enraged at the utter bankruptcy of both candidates as well as the major political parties. The first to speak, out of a crowd of about 750 people, was a teacher, who decried the failure of the city to provide supplies for the schools and other such problems; at that point the moderator denounced him, and screamed, "Question!" The next questioner asked of Wowereit, "What do you actually mean, when you say 'Berlin is poor and sexy'?"—a paraphrase from one of Wowereit's campaign speeches.

Berlin Needs a Debt Moratorium

Markus Kührt of the LYM proposed that, "Berlin should have a debt moratorium for illegitimate debt and create a mechanism for credit generation." Other questions were equally as stunning. For instance, one man attacked Wowereit for having people in his government who were involved in the infamous "Bank Scandal" of Berlin. Wowereit, in his best sophisticated manner, "corrected" the person who had asked about Berlin being "poor and sexy," by claiming that this wasn't a question, but word-play, and what he had actually said is "Berlin is poor but sexy."

In his answer to Kührt's question, Wowereit said that while he was sympathetic to the proposal, it wasn't realistic. And to the final questioner, he said "the guy who claims I have corrupt people in my government, hasn't even given names."

In closing, Pflüger—reflecting the impact of our literature—attacked Wowereit's interview with the *Financial Times*, where he was quoted as saying, "Berlin must embrace its future as a post-industrial city and abandon aspirations to revive its traditional manufacturing base." Pflüger said "Wowereit wants a post-industrial age for Berlin," adding, "When Berlin needs a mission, . . . when Berlin has a mission, we can deal with these problems." On the other hand, Pflüger revealed that he may have close ties with synarchist banker Felix Rohatyn and other fascist "pimps of the perverse," by endorsing PPPs (public-private partnerships), and announcing that he had spoken to Mayor Bloomberg of New York; Pflüger calls the "New York model" a good one for Berlin.

During the reception, this author chanced to speak with Pflüger and said, "It's interesting what you said about industry, but on the question of PPPs, do you know that Rohatyn is behind this, and explained problems with PPPs in the U.S. Pflüger interjected, "Well, if they are only limited to schools and other governmental functions, it works," and switched into English, telling me he had lived for some time in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

'We Owe the Banks'

At this point, LYM member Portia Tarumbwa and I approached a near-inebriated Wowereit who was busy keeping up his image as "party animal," sipping a glass of wine, while middle-aged women stood by, gushing "Ja, stimmt" ("Yes,



Daniel Buchmann, mayoral candidate of the BüSo party, and the only candidate with an actual program for revitalizing the "post-industrial" city, was excluded from the orchestrated candidates' debate. His poster reads: "Youth Want a Future—'Industry for Our Capital City.' "

right") at his every word. Tarumbwa challenged Wowereit on his stance on industry, and said "politicians have to find the guts to stand up to the banks," at which point, seeking a "fan club" to back him up, Wowereit turned away from her and said to the women "but we owe them"—the banks, that is—and they properly nodded "Ja, stimmt," in due fashion.

This showed that this so-called big shot had not a lick of real world in mind and was out to "party," not to govern. When Tarumbwa mentioned BüSo candidate Daniel Buchmann, Wowereit exclaimed, "Yes, the young guy. . . . I heard the singing outside" (We had had a chorus in front of the event singing "You are my opposition.") Buchmann's campaign, on the other hand, shows that in a time of crisis, only ideas actually work and organize the population. Only with mass-saturation of pamphlets, combined with intense organizing, can you really wake people up from their pessimistic slumber. Daniel Buchmann is not attacking the candidates from the low level that was shown in the debate between the nominal Mayor and Pflüger. He's providing solutions through economic development and an optimistic outlook for our generation, and future generations, too.