

Report From Germany by Rainer Apel

What Would Cause a Reality-Shift?

Members of the German parliament need the kind of courage which their Italian colleagues have shown.

Could there be a German parliamentary equivalent to the spectacular Feb. 13 initiative in the two chambers of the Italian Parliament for a New Bretton Woods reorganization of the bankrupt global financial system? Generally, one would not think it possible, because of the depth to which ecologism and a zero-growth mentality have penetrated German politics. Members of the Bundestag (parliament) show more interest in the state of the Brazilian rainforests, than in the financial crisis in Argentina, for example. Recent meetings of the Bundestag's foreign relations committee, financial affairs committee, and developing sector committee all ignored the Argentine conflict with the International Monetary Fund, showing how much the parliament is out of touch with reality.

German resistance to the Iraq War in 2003 was one of the rare moments in which the Bundestag showed some interest in international affairs; but after the end of the U.S. official military operations, that interest eroded, and boring budget-balancing routine has taken over the minds of the parliamentarians, along with proposals for new austerity measures.

Discussions this author has had in recent days with Bundestag members and their aides in Berlin, however, do show that with the U.S. Presidential primaries, a certain interest in developments outside of Germany is re-awakening. Some said they would not rule out that President Bush would try a propaganda trick, such as "finding" Osama bin Laden or starting a new military intervention somewhere; but they were dubious as to whether even

this would secure Bush's re-election, because of the worsened economic and social situation in the United States. They pointed out that in the election of 1992, Bush's father lost to Democrat Bill Clinton, on the issue of the economy.

When briefed about Democratic Party pre-candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche's ongoing campaign, and LaRouche's intervention to educate his rival Sen. John Kerry on economic issues, including the Argentina crisis, several Bundestag politicians suddenly showed more interest in American developments. The fact that the German economy is very much connected with that of the United States, and very much influenced by the ongoing collapse of the dollar, all of a sudden moved to the center of discussions.

One Social Democrat, for example, said that the main incentive for the German economy in 2005 would not come from within the European Union—where more than 50% of German exports are currently going—but rather would be provided by a shift in U.S. economic policy, "putting an end to the militaristic approach of the Bush Administration, beginning with long-overdue domestic investments in the civilian economy, and stopping this dollar policy. It would also help our exports to the States, which have been shrinking visibly."

This politician, who first said he did not like LaRouche, but then admitted that he did not know much about him, conceded that "if Kerry would win and invest in transport projects, as your man there advocates, there might be a chance also for German high-tech

products like the Transrapid [maglev system] in the U.S.A. This would be good."

A Free Democrat said that he still has not figured out whether LaRouche is "more a leftist or more a rightist," but that if LaRouche is campaigning against the neo-conservatives, that is welcome news. He said that if the idea of the New Bretton Woods is that the U.S.A., especially, should return to a reasonable economic and financial policy of constructive cooperation with other countries, this would be more than welcome and necessary. This politician was impressed by the fact that LaRouche has a broad network of supporters among the U.S. electorate, having more individual contributions even than Kerry.

With a keener understanding of U.S. developments, a first step toward improvement of the political debate in Berlin would be taken. But still, is it realistic to expect German politicians to show as much courage as their Italian colleagues, on the New Bretton Woods issue?

It is realistic, on the condition that Social Democrats stop insisting, as they did when discussing with this author, that the top priority is to carry out the government's budget-cutting Agenda 2010 and sell it to the electorate. It is realistic, on the condition that parliamentarians begin dealing with fundamentals of economic policies and stop repeating the budget-balancing slogans. Numerous parliamentarians have some of LaRouche's proposals stuffed away in their desk drawers, and have been made acquainted with them during numerous LaRouche movement political interventions in Berlin in the recent period. It would be a relatively easy job to finally pull them out from those drawers; but it could certainly be a big step forward for mankind.