

Early Elections in Germany Open New Options for Change

by Rainer Apel

Forecasts that the outcome of the May 22 elections for state parliament in North Rhine-Westphalia would be decisive for Germany as a whole, were more than appropriate, as surprising developments illustrated within a few hours after the election. With the final results of that election not even in yet (although the defeat of the Social Democratic Party [SPD] was already clear), German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (SPD) announced that he would call early national elections by September.

The SPD defeat in that largest state of Germany, which constitutes 20% of the national electorate, gives the opposition Christian Democrats (CDU) a majority of almost two thirds in the upper house of the parliament. This majority gives them the ability to slow down legislation—as they are already doing with their absolute majority there—and also to veto any important legislation. A Germany already difficult to govern, would then become ungovernable, potentially paralyzing the nation for the next 15 months, until the scheduled national elections in September 2006.

Schröder decided to spare himself and Germany this agony, taking the risk of losing the Chancellorship in early elections, but taking the small chance for re-election.

Schröder elaborated on May 23 the procedure by which he will initiate early elections: On July 1, he will call a no-confidence vote in the parliament, which (by arrangements made before) would yield no majority for either him or the opposition leader, Christian Democrat Angela Merkel. According to the German Constitution, President Horst Köhler then has 21 days to dissolve the parliament or to seek another solution—for example, proposing another candidate for Chancellor. As elections would have to be held within 60 days after the President's decision, the last option for elections would be Sept. 18.

In the May 22 elections in North Rhine-Westphalia, the

SPD lost 5.7%, receiving 37.1%; the CDU gained 7.9%, receiving 44.8%. The SPD's coalition partner, the Green Party, lost 1.2%, receiving 6.2%; the Free Democrats (FDP) lost 3.6%, receiving 6.2%. With minuscule financial resources, but enormous conceptual drive and political combativity, numerous of the 41 candidates of the Civil Rights Movement Solidarity Party (Büso), headed by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, got 0.4 or 0.5% in their election districts. This is significant, given the state's large electorate, and the fact that small parties in Germany can become coalition partners of larger ones, and exercise leverage in other ways.

Acknowledged by many SPD members and voters as the better program, the Büso campaign platform gained statewide attention, even among those that did not vote Büso this time, and it is certain to play a catalyst role in the internal SPD debate now.

Schröder's move has surprised many, including the opposition leaders. Schröder's likely adversary for the Chancellor's office will be Merkel who is a neo-con in foreign policy, with a corresponding economic policy of radical austerity. Schröder has a slim chance in the autumn, but he has a chance. In foreign policy matters, his approval rating is at 46%, way ahead of Merkel's 36%. But, his and the SPD's Achilles' heel is the economy. In the North Rhine-Westphalia elections, where foreign policy played no role, the SPD lost for one reason: More than 1 million of the state's 17.6 million inhabitants are without a regular job. This, and the Hartz IV labor market "reforms," led to the SPD's defeat, because its traditional voter base has become deeply frustrated.

SPD chairman Franz Müntefering's charge against the speculative "locusts" eating up Germany's industrial base, was a step in the right direction, but was too little, too late. And, the SPD refused to distance itself from the anti-industrial Green Party—a policy that is going to change now. Schröder

himself stated on May 23 that he wants the SPD to “run against all other competitors,” which means that it will not campaign with radical ecologist positions, but concentrate on the unemployment issue, leaving it open whether there would be any new coalition with the Greens at all, after the elections. This statement has met broad support among SPD members, a majority of whom consider the Greens an obstacle to any effective investment and job creation policy.

Schröder’s only chance to get re-elected is a decisive turn in economic and social policy: a large-scale state investment program for infrastructure and industry projects creating enough productive jobs to bring down the mass unemployment. Büso chairwoman Helga Zepp-LaRouche’s advice for Schröder has been that he implement a transaction tax for derivatives trading and other speculative activities, and support a New Bretton Woods initiative for a reorganization of the world financial system.

On May 23, Zepp-LaRouche announced a national mobilization (see *Documentation*) for the three crucial weeks until June 13, the date of the Chancellor’s speech on the hedge fund issue. That intervention by the Büso aims to get the New Bretton Woods issue into the SPD platform for the early elections. And, very important: The SPD will be mailed updates on the crucial situation in the U.S. Senate and other political interventions by the LaRouche movement in the States.

Germany has entered a new phase of political developments, with new options for positive changes, and as it was in the North Rhine-Westphalia election campaign, the LaRouche movement will be a decisive factor in the shaping of these options.

Documentation

Zepp-LaRouche Speaks Out

This leaflet by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, chairwoman of the Civil Rights Movement Solidarity (Büso), was issued in Germany on May 26, under the title “A Coup d’État in the U.S.A. Was Averted! The BüSo Enters Full Force Into the Federal Election Campaign.”

With Chancellor Schröder’s decision to go for early elections this Fall, and his distancing himself from a further coalition with the Green Party, new opportunities have been opened for Germany. All the more so as a threatened coup against the U.S. Constitution was averted through a bipartisan agreement among 14 Senators, creating a completely new situation both in the U.S. and internationally.

While attention in Germany was focussed on the election results in North Rhine-Westphalia and Schröder’s surprising

announcement of early elections in September, the truly crucial battle was taking place in the U.S. Senate. In the context of the pending confirmation of Federal judges, the Cheney/Bush Administration had attempted to stage nothing less than a coup d’état against the U.S. Constitution. Lyndon LaRouche countered this with a declaration titled “Save our U.S. Constitution Now,” in which he called for resistance all over the country, especially in Washington, and pointed to the parallel between the intended power grab by the White House now, and the *Notverordnung* [emergency decree] enacted in Germany on Feb. 28, 1933. The fact that a bipartisan coalition of seven Democratic and seven Republican Senators, led by Sen. Robert Byrd (D-W.V.) and Sen. John Warner (R-Va.), repelled this attack and “saved the republic” as Senator Byrd put it, amounts to a political earthquake.

With that development, the basis has been laid to face the next two dramatic dangers which are hanging over the world as a Damocles sword: 1) the preventive nuclear strikes against Iran and North Korea which the neo-cons intend to launch, and 2) the imminent collapse of a series of hedge funds, and with that, the collapse of the global financial system. To counter both dangers, the same type of bipartisan cooperation between Democrats and traditional forces in the Republican Party is needed, as well as a common return to the tradition of Franklin D. Roosevelt and his New Deal.

With this backdrop, the BüSo will immediately enter full force into the Federal election campaign, and insist, in particular, on the necessity of a new financial system, a new Bretton Woods in the tradition of FDR. The uncontrolled collapse of hedge funds, which will constitute a virtual daily threat over the next few weeks, presents an existential danger for the entire physical economy worldwide, and for the lives of millions of people along with it. Therefore, as a first step, regulation of hedge funds must be put on the agenda immediately,



Helga Zepp-LaRouche addresses a meeting of her party, the Civil Rights Movement Solidarity (BüSo), on May 3.

despite the freakouts of those neo-cons who favor the warlike actions of predatory capitalism, not the least against Germany's productive *Mittelstand* [small- and medium-sized industry]. If, as mooted, the German Chancellor announces measures against the hedge funds during the SPD meeting scheduled for June 13, he must be fully supported. And if consenting voices are heard from the non-neo-conservative wings of the CDU/CSU, so much the better for Germany.

The bipartisan cooperation of U.S. Democratic and Republican Senators creates the preconditions for new types of coalitions; not formal coalitions of parties, but of forces who, in this period of dire threat, put the common good and the interest of Germany above their petty self interests. However, the world still stands at the edge of new Iraq-style wars—but this time with the deployment of nuclear weapons—and has to face the certainty of the onrushing global financial crash. Therefore, the highest priority of German foreign policy must be war avoidance, and the avoidance of conflicts which could indirectly lead to war. Second, the question of a just new world economic order has never been more urgent.

In the U.S. Congress, especially in the Senate, openness to the economic programs proposed by my husband Lyndon LaRouche, has grown tremendously. Among these proposals, there is his program for saving the bankrupt American automobile industry by converting it into a motor for rebuilding infrastructure in the U.S., as well as the return to the policy of FDR, that is, a new Bretton Woods and the New Deal. Such a fundamental policy shift would also offer a way out of the crisis for Europe and Germany.

The BüSo and the LaRouche Youth Movement will do everything possible in this election campaign to make sure the citizens understand this solution to the crisis, and can vote for it. The latest news from the United States is, for a change, very good. And despite all skeptics and cultural pessimists: the BüSo does have the remedy! And what's more—we are winning!

1. For taxation of hedge funds, as a first step toward ensuring transparency in the gigantic derivative speculation trading.

2. For the convoking of an emergency conference to create a new Bretton Woods system.

3. For the development of the Eurasian Land-Bridge as a vision of peace for the 21st Century.

4. For a state investment program of at least 200 billion additional euros per year in Germany, in order to create 10 million new productive jobs as soon as possible (to replace the Agenda 2010 and Hartz IV reforms).

5. For a new Treaty of Westphalia for the next 50 years, which guarantees to all nations on this Earth the peaceful use and development of all raw materials.

6. For a renaissance of scientific and technological progress, and of the inherently safe technology of the high-temperature nuclear reactor.

7. For a renaissance of classical education. The time has come for a *Schillerzeit!*

New Provocations by Sharon in the Works

by Dean Andromidas

Israeli police recently revealed the arrest of five Israeli fanatics who were planning to attack the al-Haram al-Sharif/Temple Mount in the Old City of Jerusalem. The plot involved the launching of a Lau anti-tank missile at one of the mosques atop Islam's third most holy site—an attack that many fear could trigger a new religious war, if not World War III.

Although the Israel Shin Bet and police are conducting surveillance of hundreds of Jewish fanatics, their most serious target of investigation should be Prime Minister Ariel Sharon himself. The very networks that are plotting against the Temple Mount are those which have been supported by Sharon since the time of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War. Sharon has been the godfather of the illegal settlements since the final days of that war. For more than 35 years, these networks have enjoyed his support, and it is only since 2004, when Sharon announced his plan for disengagement from Gaza, that they have begun to attack him. Some experts have claimed that the threats to Sharon are only a feint, but an extremely dangerous one, inasmuch as it could be turned into a "live" operation by a rival right-wing faction.

Former Shin Bet Director Carmi Gilloon, writing in the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*, May 20, said that an attack on the Temple Mount site "can be a disaster for the existence of the State of Israel, and can bring total war between the Muslim world, Israel, and maybe against Jewish targets abroad." But extremist settlers hope that just such an attack would unleash a war that would put an end to Sharon's so-called disengagement plan, which calls for evacuation of Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip.

It is an open secret in Israel that Sharon, himself, is looking to disengage from his disengagement plan. On May 9, Sharon officially announced that the disengagement would be postponed from July 25 to Aug. 18, in deference to a religious holiday. On the same day, Vice Premier Shimon Peres told the *Jerusalem Post* that the disengagement was not a "done deal." While Sharon has declared "unequivocally" that this would be the last postponement, an opinion poll released by *Ha'aretz* on May 18, revealed that 37% of Israelis think Sharon will eventually announce yet another postponement, and only 35% believe that the disengagement will be carried out on schedule. Israeli commentators have also speculated that Sharon will call early elections, which would push the