
Interview: Alexander Hartmann

BüSo Brings Reality To Hesse Campaign

On Jan. 27, elections for the state legislature (Landtag) will be held in the German state of Hesse, whose capital is Frankfurt. The LaRouche-affiliated party, BüSo (Civil Rights Solidarity Movement), is running a slate in this election, led by its state chairman Alexander Hartmann. Here are excerpts from an interview with Hartmann conducted by Andreas Weber and Xenia Bie-reichelt of the LaRouche Youth Movement, which is campaigning for the BüSo in Hesse. The interview was translated from German.



Andreas Weber: How do you see the political situation here?

Hartmann: The most obvious fact, which dominates this election campaign, is that the world's financial system has been collapsing, ever since August of last year. And if you look more closely at the situation, here in Hesse, you will recognize one thing: In the major parties, no one is talking about this financial crash. People talk about a lot of things, be it bio-energy or problems with foreigners, but not this very acute problem, that the financial system is evaporating, which will of course massively affect Frankfurt as a financial center.

In Frankfurt, 70,000 people work in the financial sector, out of 450,000 people employed in the city. In Wiesbaden [also in Hesse], there are as many people working in the insurance sector, which has become part of the financial speculation, as in the productive sector—15,000 in each of them....

We all are affected by the financial collapse, by the attempts of the central banks, to keep up the impression of bank solvency, by pumping billions of dollars into the financial system: At the gas pumps, or the prices in the supermarkets, we can see a sharp inflation.

And to all of this, the leading politicians say—nothing.

On the one hand, in the SPD [Social Democratic Party], we have state chairwoman Andrea Ypsilanti, and her economic advisor Hermann Scheer, who say, we want an “ecological

reconstruction”: We want to get out of nuclear power; we want bio-energies, instead.

But, that would not solve the problems; indeed, it would exacerbate them. For, part of the inflation of food prices comes from the fact that we are putting some of our food in our gas tanks, and burning it, instead of using corn as food. For us, this is expensive; for the so-called Third World, it is brutal. This is genocide. And this is what the SPD has written on its banners.

On the other side, we have Hesse Prime Minister Roland Koch, who apparently has difficulties in reading the German Constitution, because many of the proposals coming from his side would infringe on the constitutional rights of the citizens.

I believe that this is related to the fact, that beyond the public sphere, behind closed doors, these parties know very well, that we are confronted with a crisis, of which we have warned for a long time. We call ourselves a civil rights movement, and we always said: When the crisis comes to a head, the citizens have to move, to protect their rights. But, the other side will, in this crisis, try to protect their own interests, and that can be done only by taking away rights from the citizens....

Effects on Industry

Weber: What will the consequences of the crisis be for the medium-sized and larger companies, which still exist here in Hesse?

Hartmann: ... When banks have to eat massive losses, they cannot issue new credit. And our *Mittlestand*, middle-sized industries, are already having difficulties in getting credit. One of the banks that has been granting credits to *Mittelstand* companies is the Deutsche Industriebank, IKB, which, since August of last year, has been massively involved in speculation, and is having great difficulty keeping its doors open. We have to expect more bad news on this front, which will mean, fewer places for *Mittelstand* companies to get credits.

At the same time, our region's productive sector is oriented toward exports, and the crisis threatens to disrupt our foreign trade relations. It is not clear at all, anymore, what the currencies are worth....

There is a dislocation of the exchange rate, to the dollar: Everything billed in euros is becoming ever more expensive, relative to the dollar. That means, we are threatened by disruptions in our foreign trade. And that means, that our productive sector will shrink even more, and that affects its ability to fund and support the service sector, which, in Wiesbaden and Frankfurt, includes up to 80% of the labor force....

Weber: How can we get out of this mess?

Hartmann: We are calling for a “firewall” between the real economic functions of the banks, which must be pre-

served and have to continue, and the whole speculative sector. This goes beyond the authority of the Hesse state government, but it is our function to raise this issue and force a debate on it, not only in the parliaments, or the banks' back rooms, but in the population in general.

Second, we must rebuild and enlarge the productive sector, the physical economy. And in the north of the state, in Kassel, we have the center where the maglev train Transrapid has been developed and built. The BüSo has proposed that we develop and expand the inadequate infrastructure in the transportation sector, building a network of maglev lines, and in Hesse, two lines to begin with ... to connect all the cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants, making it possible to travel between cities within one hour.

Building these 500 km of Transrapid lines will create some 250,000 jobs, across all sectors of the economy—half of them in construction, but also in chemistry, electronics, etc. There is a lot of technology in these trains and in these tracks. Presently, we have 235,000 people in Hesse unemployed. So, this single project alone would create full employment, and it is only a beginning.

The other area is, of course, the issue of energy production. Our nuclear power plants, especially here in Hesse, are nearly 40 years old. We need to go into the next generation of nuclear technologies. We cannot run an industrial country based on manure and windmills. We need to start up the fourth generation of nuclear plants, high temperature reactors. This would be a giant construction project, which will create plenty of work. ... The whole economy would be geared up around this massive engine.

Another America

Xenia Biereichelt: ... How can these giant projects be started from such a small state?

Hartmann: ... We will be able to move things in Hesse only as far as we can move things on the federal level. But German politics is bound by the international situation, where it does make a big difference, for example, what kind of policies America is following. ... We know, that there is Bush and his backers, people like Felix Rohatyn or George Shultz. These are the people who say: We will save the financial system at the expense of the people.

But, there is another America, the LaRouche wing of the Democratic Party, that we of the BüSo are working with closely. And there are people in other countries, too, who say: We want a solution for this crisis, which is productive, we want a new financial system.

You can see this in the fact that Russia's President Vladimir Putin has given a number of speeches, where he explicitly referred to President Franklin Roosevelt, and that is what we are aiming for: These forces have to get the upper hand in the United States, and we must achieve an alliance between them and the related forces in Russia, China, and

India. And then, it will be very easy for Hesse and Germany, to hook up to this train, so to speak, and to deliver the technologies needed for the reconstruction of the world.

We still have a base for that. We have Opel, we have, the European Space Center, so we can do quite a lot of things, and make some contributions. But we must set the direction for this course. ...

Biereichelt: ... What can we do, for the young generation, so that it can join industry later, and get the needed education and culture now?

Hartmann: I believe, that even the decision to build such projects would effect a dramatic change of our youths' situation. For, presently ... they lack a sense of direction for what they are going to do with their lives. ... What would be very important for this generation, is what I call the "Kennedy effect." At the moment in 1961 that Kennedy said that we will put a man on the Moon, before the decade is over, this created an impulse, not only for the American people, but for the whole world. The world became better, because the people became better, because they became more optimistic. And that is, I am convinced, the most important point.

Of course, this has concrete ramifications. How must the education system work, so that we have the engineers and the scientists needed for such projects. There is also the area of thermonuclear fusion. The energy future of humanity does not lie in nuclear fission, it lies in thermonuclear fusion. But it has not yet been developed to a point where we can actually deploy it. So, we need young people to qualify themselves as scientists, to master these things.

There are other areas, that need solutions, for example, diseases like AIDS. In fact, we would need a lot of young people, to say: Okay, I will go into science, and I will make sure humanity is liberated from such diseases.

And of course, our education system must be organized differently. ... We need to use as a model, what Alexander Humboldt did 200 years ago. His conception of schools was not, "What will people learn for their jobs," but, "How can we help the pupils to become real human beings?"

We will not help them achieve this by putting a computer on every school desk, telling the pupils: Go look for information on the Internet. The task of schools is, first of all: Learn how to think, to use your mind, to find the questions that help you forward.

And that means, that the whole area of creativity must be built up, including Classical music. ...

I expect, that after the election, the result will be, that there probably won't be a clear majority that is able to govern. And the only chance, to pull together a combination that can govern, is the reality principle. We are the only ones, who confront the population and the parties with reality, and who present proposals to get out of the crisis, instead of running away from it.