

Saxony: An Industrial Heartland of Germany

by Rainer Apel

The LaRouche movement in Germany, campaigning for the Sept. 19 legislative elections in the easternmost state of Saxony, is using the slogan “*In Sachsen Muss die Wirtschaft Wachsen!*” (“Economic Growth Must Start in Saxony!”). Reviving the great industrial tradition of this depression-racked area of what was once communist East Germany, is essential for the nation as a whole.

State Governor Georg Milbradt has just returned from a visit to California, where his talks focussed on the enhancement of “Silicon Saxony,” of the chip-making and information technology sector of the new economy that is centered on and around Dresden, the state capital. Apart from the grand illusion that “Silicon Saxony” could flourish where the original Silicon Valley in California has already collapsed in this ongoing global economic depression, the Saxons, who have played a leading role in the industrialization of Germany for two centuries, do not deserve just being measured by the number of bytes on the computer chips produced at AMD’s Dresden plant.

Saxony was a pioneer in the development of machine-building and machine-tool production, beginning in the 1850s. Big facilities which for the first time produced machines entirely made in Germany, were built in Saxony by entrepreneurs such as Johann Zimmermann, J.S. Schwalbe, and Constantin Pfaff. And the region which played a catalytic

role in this process was Chemnitz, which established itself as the biggest concentration of machine-building in the eastern part of Germany, a position which it kept even through all the economic crises and two world wars, during 150 years of German history.

Things changed brutally after the reunification of Germany in 1990, with the policy of the Berlin-based Treuhand agency, mandated to organize the “modernization” of eastern German industry after 55 years of post-war division. Under the pretext of “making the eastern industry fit for the (free) world market,” the Treuhand shut down 95% of the industry that existed in the five eastern states and in the eastern part of Berlin, within the period 1990-94. New jobs have been created in the meantime, but they number only (differing from region to region) 10, 15, or maybe 20% of what was there before 1990.

A Modern Fairy Tale

In Chemnitz, people tell a modern fairy tale of the “evil sister” Treuhand, which after the reunion of the two kingdoms (West and East Germany) levelled everything that could obstruct the free view of the Royal Court, across the Saxon landscape. People were told that this was necessary, to make the land and its people attractive for a young and rich prince from a far-away country, who would come to wed the princess and take care of all the people. Well, Chemnitz citizens are still waiting for this prince to come.

At least some metal workers in Chemnitz never believed in this tale, but acted to save jobs, arranging that some of the important industrial firms in the region were taken under the control and ownership of the workers. This saved some 20,000 jobs in the industrial sector, the biggest worker-owned firm being the Union Werkzeugmaschinen plant. But this is only one-third—according to labor union sources, really only one-fourth—of the jobs that once existed in the machine-building region of Chemnitz. And with the present system of crisis-management policies, there is no hope for keeping the few jobs that still exist, let alone creating more jobs.

The established political parties that run the state have nothing to offer in the way of an economic future. A future for Saxony as an industrial powerhouse only exists with the Eurasian Land-Bridge development program, with an emphasis on industrialization, presented to the voters by the Civil Rights Movement Solidarity party (BüSo), which is headed by Helga Zepp-LaRouche. The BüSo is running 21 candidates (4 in Chemnitz), covering one-third of the 60 election districts in the state, and it has a powerful weapon which the other parties do not have: the 50-member-strong LaRouche Youth Movement intervention force. In the next eight weeks of the election campaign, they will confront Saxon voters with many new ideas, and with their own history as an industrial heartland.



The LaRouche Youth Movement campaigns in Leipzig.