

Berlin Mayor Campaign Has National Focus

Stefan Tolksdorf is the lead candidate in the of the Civil Rights Solidarity Movement (BüSo), headed by Helga Zepp-LaRouche, in the Berlin, Germany elections Sept. 18. He heads a slate of 20 BüSo candidates for the Berlin House of Deputies. The party with the most votes will name the next mayor of the city. He replied to written questions from EIR submitted to him Sept. 8.

EIR: How would you assess the state of the campaign for mayor of Berlin? Have you seen significant changes over the months that you've been running for office? When you announced your candidacy, you emphasized that the thrust of the campaign would be directed to the national parliament in Berlin, not just building up local support. How well do you think you have achieved that goal?

Tolksdorf: Mr. LaRouche was perfectly right, when he told us in December of last year, that the upcoming election for the position of mayor of Berlin would not mean anything: "The place is virtually dead," he said. The only meaningful thing to do is to aim the campaign at the Federal government of which, after all, Berlin is the host. And as it goes with being the host, you sometimes have to tell your guests how to behave, or maybe even show them the door. This, LaRouche said, would be the only way to provide leadership in this difficult time: to address not the population as such, but the Federal government.

Over the recent months, the accelerating breakdown of the financial system and the economy have been felt hard in Berlin. An astounding 4,000 out of 5,700 km of roads are in dire need of repair or need to be replaced altogether; the schools are in terrible condition; the train system has broken down repeatedly for months at a time during the last two years; and the Fed-

eral government has just decided to exit from any use of nuclear power, endangering many people's lives because of shortfalls in energy production during the coming Winter.

On top of all that, the city's budget is burdened with EU63 billion of debt. Everybody knows this; and therefore, while people are conditioned to ask us what concretely we want to do for Berlin, they agree with us ever less reluctantly, that there really needs to be a change from the top down—starting with the separation of the banks through an international Glass-Steagall standard.

Every other approach here in Berlin would simply be redistributing funds where there is not enough to

Stefan Tolksdorf leads a slate of 20 LaRouche movement candidates in the Sept. 18 Berlin elections. The BüSo campaign poster is headlined, "Two-Tier Banking System, Not Bailout Packages." A bank is split in two, between the Real Economy and Financial Toxic Waste, by the Glass-Steagall Standard.

begin with. The change of the recent months has mainly been that some people are beginning to wake up to the reality that the crisis is not some local problem, but something a lot bigger.

That our campaign is aimed at the Federal government and the national parliament has been the most recognized fact about this BüSo election campaign. The other is that this campaign cannot end on election day, Sept. 18.

The Weight of International Developments

EIR: What is your view of the potential, or likely, outcome of the election on the national political scene in Germany?

Tolksdorf: With the vote on the ESM (European Stability Mechanism), which is to transform the EFSF (European Financial Stability Fund, in Luxembourg) into a permanent bail-out facility, to be held Sept. 29, there is the very real possibility that Chancellor Merkel might face a vote of no-confidence. The government could then very well fall, which would mean fresh Federal elections soon after that—only half-way into the present government’s term!

So, while an election in the capital may not usually be insignificant, developments internationally have a much greater weight: the looming bankruptcy of Greece; the highly explosive situation in Spain; the impossible sums of debt to refinance in Italy; and the German population forced into paying for all of Europe, while the economies of the other European nations are being stifled by draconian austerity policies dictated by the European Commission in Brussels.

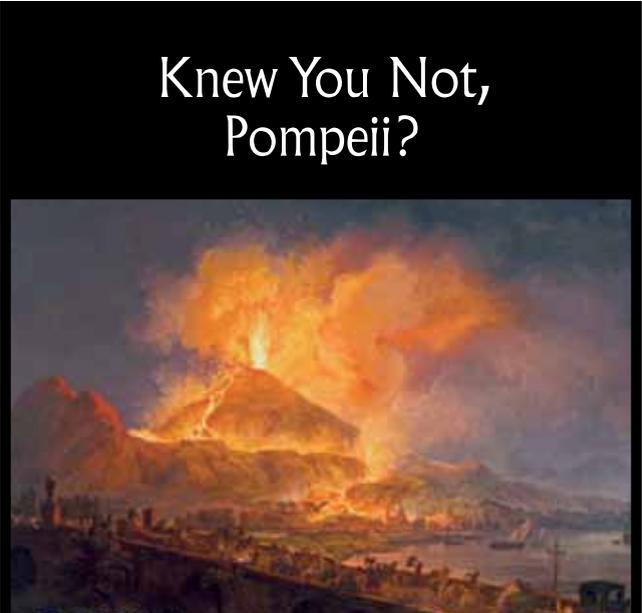
Whether or not the national government can be moved to adopt the *Trennbankensystem*—that is, the Glass-Steagall separation of investment banking from commercial banking—will determine whether there will be at least the possibility of changing the trajectory, away from the current direction of chaos and total collapse, to rebuilding the economy. And putting this Glass-Steagall standard on the agenda is the main focus of our campaign.

EIR: Can you describe for our readers the major campaign activities and highlights?

Tolksdorf: We are the only movement consistently out organizing and intervening into the political situation. That’s already one big difference from all the other parties, which seem to only be visible a few months before an upcoming election, if at all. So, if

you traveled through Berlin by car, there’s a good chance you might run into our organizers with their posters at one of the large intersections. If you go by train, you’re likely to meet our singing organizing teams. Be it at small book tables or larger campaign rallies, you can always recognize our organizing as soon as you hear beautiful singing, whenever you see our posters addressing the civilizational crisis we’re in, when you’re handed the beautiful mass-leaflet showing Clara Schumann on the hundred D-mark bill, and depicting the seven steps required to get out of this crisis.

The contrast to the clown-show the other parties are throwing, by paying tons of money to PR companies to come up with those meaningless slogans on their election posters, could not be greater. And this fact is not at all lost on the average citizen. The potential for lulling the population into a fake debate over so-called “local issues” is at an all-time low. And it is this longing for something real, something that can actually address the greater environment of the breakdown crisis now affecting every pore of society, that is our great opportunity. We intend to use it!



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