

Setback for the War Party In Germany's Elections

by Rainer Apel

In the Sept. 22 national elections in Germany, incumbent Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's "red-green" government coalition of Social Democratic (SPD) and Green parties secured a majority of 11 seats in the Bundestag (lower house of parliament) over the "black-yellow" opposition camp of Christian Democrats (CDU-CSU) and Free Democrats (FDP). The SPD's sudden "recovery" (it had, after all, a net loss of 2.4% compared to the last elections in 1998) during the last two weeks of the campaign, and the 1.9% gain of the Greens,



Of BüSo leader Helga Zepp-LaRouche's two campaign focusses, "Financial Crash and Danger of War," Chancellor Schröder took on the second, and surged to re-election. Here, a BüSo campaign table in Darmstadt warns, "Even an Iraq war can't save Wall Street any more."

are the reflection of a genuine, broad sentiment against war, among German voters of all ages. Schröder (SPD), who four weeks before Election Day was not certain to win, secured his thin margin over CDU-CSU challenger Edmund Stoiber mainly because, in early September, he copied a central theme from Helga Zepp-LaRouche's Civil Rights Movement Solidarity (BüSo) party: complete rejection of a war against Iraq.

Schröder focussed his campaign on this during September, and posed a trap for Christian Democrat Stoiber: On the one hand, Stoiber wanted to counterpose to Schröder's criticism's of President George W. Bush, his own reassurance of "institutional" German friendship with the Americans; on the other hand, Stoiber could not support the war drive of the Bush Administration, strongly opposed by more than 80% of Germans according to opinion polls.

The 11-seat Bundestag margin does not really match the voter percentages: Nationwide, the SPD only received 8,864 votes more than the Christian Democrats; each party won 38.5% of the vote and 247 seats in the Bundestag. And in many cases, the margins by which the candidates won were paper thin. But the SPD managed to get three more candidates elected directly, in their districts, than the CDU-CSU. The German election system allows each voter to cast two votes—one for a candidate, one for a party, in each district—and compensates the parties if their candidates' votes exceed the party's vote percentages. So the SPD was given four extra seats, and the CDU only one. Percentage gains by the Green party added to the 11-seat majority of the governing coalition.

Economic Storm Clouds Gather

Schröder "ducked" the other central theme in the BüSo campaign, the warning against an impending world financial

collapse, and the urgency of formulating an alternate economic design. Only vaguely, in his campaign statements and interviews, did Schröder make reference to the fact that Germany's economic problems and the rise of its unemployment are related to the ailing state of the global economy; and he used this to claim that Germany could not change anything on the global scale. Debating his challenger Stoiber on eco-

nomics, Schröder did not perform well during the entire campaign, and with that, he would not have convinced many voters to vote for his red-green majority.

What did help Schröder to rebuild some popularity, was his prompt response to the August flood in eastern Germany, where the Social Democrats gained votes significantly. He declared the Elbe River flood, which caused estimated dam-

LaRouche on Schröder's Surge to Narrow Victory

This statement was issued by the LaRouche in 2004 Presidential campaign committee on Sept. 23.

The coalition behind Germany's Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer surged from behind, to a narrow victory in Sunday's national election. As the surge in the vote for Fischer's Green Party indicates, it was the Chancellor's tough refusal to participate in a war against Iraq, combined with rival Edmund Stoiber's opposition to general relief for recent flood-devastated regions, which enabled Schröder to retain the Chancellorship.

As both rival Chancellor candidate Edmund Stoiber and the Bush White House have been shown, the German election-campaign and its results happened to coincide with a growing, powerful reaction, around most of the world—especially throughout Eurasia—against the Bush Administration's current support for the lunatic imperial war-policies of U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney and Cheney's flock of what are known in leading U.S.A. and United Kingdom circles as "The Chickenhawks."

It would be a mistake to view these results as defining a trend for the months ahead. The present ironies in international relations are only the warning gusts of two great, global hurricanes soon to arrive: the economic and other effects of the snarling strategic lunacies of the obsessed Vice President Cheney, and the already onrushing collapse of the world's present monetary-financial system. Under these circumstances, candidate Stoiber's near-miss in his challenge to Chancellor Schröder does not define a trend. If Stoiber continues to burden himself with the current economic ideologies of his CDU/CSU-Liberal alliance, he were likely to figure in the future role of Don Quixote riding a dead horse to a battle with the German Greenies' windmills.

Many trends are still undecided; what is certain, is that no current policy of any nation of the Americas or Europe will be left standing a year from now. Unless the Bush

Administration scraps both Cheney's strategic doctrine and Bush's own deeply-rooted economic policies, the gulf between the U.S.A. and Eurasia will deepen and widen. Eurasia will not willingly submit to the increasing horror produced by the continuation of Cheney's strategic lunacies. Eurasia could not survive in tandem with the tragic economic delusions presently taxing the credibility of the Bush Administration.

Merely typical of that Administration's economic-policy follies, is the fantasy displayed by one of the scrapbook items pasted into what is called "The National Security Strategy of the United States," Bush's March 22, 2002 address at Monterrey, Mexico. That appears in that Braque-like paste-up under the title of "VI. Ignite a New Era of Global Growth Through Free Markets and Free Trade." Were those policies continued, the super-armed U.S. gunman would, at present rates, soon lack the price of the ticket to travel to his latest war.

Meanwhile, of course, the blacked-out, and poorly financed electoral campaign of Helga Zepp-LaRouche's Bündnis Soziale Bewegung (BüSo) party, did show some interesting indications for the future, especially in Berlin, Bavaria, and Saxony. Under presently erupting international trends, Schröder's come-from-behind victory showed factors which coincide with the longer-range policy-outlooks which the BüSo has pioneered in Germany's political life.

The BüSo brought its warning of financial collapse and war, and stimulated public debate on these subjects. It ran lists totalling 150 candidates in eight Federal districts, and 45 individual candidates for direct election in nine Federal districts. The BüSo's lead candidate, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, ran for a direct mandate in Berlin-Mitte, on the platform of a Just New World Economic Order.

Both the number of votes for the BüSo's individual candidates, and for its slates, doubled from the last election in 1998. The former rose from 10,260 to 22,503 votes, and the latter from 9,662 to 17,020 votes. BüSo individual candidates polled between 0.4% and 1.2% in Saxony, 0.2% to 0.5% in Berlin, and 0.2% to 0.8% in Bavaria.

Despite press and party blackouts against the BüSo, LaRouche's New Bretton Woods, as the way out of the depression, can no longer be ignored in Germany.

—Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr.

ages of \$20 billion, a “national catastrophe,” and decreed that extra money outside the regular budget had to be made available for the victims. This enabled Schröder to present himself as a “friend of the eastern Germans”; and indeed, his Social Democrats did visibly better in the eastern election districts, than the Christian Democrats of Stoiber.

Schröder’s victory is an unstable one, however: the policies which he has advocated during the past four years, and which he wants to continue (as he said on election day), will not help to reduce the mass unemployment (over 4 million officially, 7.5 million in reality), which has drastically increased during the last months of his term. Nor will Schröder’s policies defend the German economy against the next inevitable rounds of financial market collapse. With the anti-industrial, pro-“New Economy” Greens in the government, the re-elected Schröder will not be able to master the coming world economic and strategic storms. The Greens also are the main source of calls for even deeper budget cuts and more fiscal austerity, which makes them an obstacle to any serious move toward economic recovery. An early failure of the new red-green coalition government, and its abrupt replacement by a Grand Coalition between Social Democrats and Christian Democrats, can be expected. This were actually in accord with what the majority of German voters would prefer.

BüSo Organizing New Voters, Activists

The LaRouche BüSo party’s own election campaign doubled its vote results from the 1998 election, and in Berlin (where party Chairwoman Helga Zepp-LaRouche ran, and where harassment and slanderous media coverage prevailed), election results for the party were considerably above the national average. For example in the Berlin districts Marzahn and Pankow, 0.5% and 0.4% were received. Another example of the BüSo impact is the eastern state of Saxony, in which the three districts Freiberg, Dresden II, and Zwickau yielded 0.6%, 0.6%, and 0.8% respectively. Two other districts in Saxony—Sächsische Schweiz and Görlitz, yielded 1.0% and 1.2% of the vote. In Wiesbaden and Neu-Ulm, BüSo candidates gained 0.5% and 0.8%.

All in all, the BüSo reported a visibly increased recognition in all districts where the party’s candidates ran. Its forceful campaign for an in-depth reconstruction of the flooded regions, on the basis of long-term productive loans guaranteed by the government, contributed to the high recognition of the party in Saxony. Many voters noticed the difference between this sound approach on the reconstruction challenge, and the government’s approach, which wants to “generate funds” by scrapping tax cut promises and suspending infrastructure projects planned for future fiscal years.

With its successful intervention in the election campaign, the BüSo has laid a sound basis for broadening the debate in Germany on an alternate economic and financial policy—which is exactly what Germany needs now.