

The Club of Munich: a nasty little tool of the oligarchs of the southern tier

by Laurent Murawiec

“Where money is, you will find big names too,” Zürich’s leading weekly paper *Die Weltwoche* wrote—that journal is in charge of saying “amen” when the money leaves the room. On Sept. 24 in Munich, the former capital of the Bavarian kingdom, a throng of elite aristocrats and financiers was congregating at what was described as “the workshop of the rich, the shop where higher yields are prepared, the VIP lounge for the jet set,” in a word, Munich’s brand-new “Finance Club.”

And there they were, these creatures let out of their family vaults and crypts, the names which have left trails of blood, famine, and poverty in European history: Prince Fugger-Babenhause, whose ancestors, the Augsburg bankers, bankrolled imperial Spain’s looting of South America and the extermination of its native population; Prince Thurn und Taxis, whose family ran Venice’s intelligence services, the world’s best and deadliest, for several centuries, and whose family fortune is counted in billions of dollars; Franz von Bayern, of the Royal Family of Wittelsbach, which ruled that south German province for one thousand years—until 1918.

The princes had brought their hired pens with them, such as Henri Nannen, chief editor of *Stern* magazine, a former member of Mr. Goebbels’ wartime staff; and their house servants, such as one Mr. Strachwitz, of the Wittelsbacher *Vermögensverwaltung* (Property Management).

Especially imported from America for the club’s opening celebration was Alexander Haig, whose topless quality was referred to with respect to what is above his shoulders. The club’s plush quarters and their awesome contents of computers and oligarchs thus enjoyed a spectacular, much-publicized startup with the benediction of Mr. Haig, who is a lower-level asset of the Italo-German Freemasonic cults.

Finance Club of Munich

Located in one of Munich’s posh areas, the club offers its members (at present about 150)—who pay an annual

membership fee of 2,250 marks (\$1000)—a series of services: computer and screen-display access to a great number of economic-financial data banks and monitor services, as well as media and other sources of information. Plugging his personal chip into the computer terminal, the member can use the data and the programs to model his own investment strategy, calculate the returns, vary the options, etc., i.e., play with electronic gadgetry and fill the role usually played by his investment adviser, the bank.

Were the finance club only that, it would barely deserve one paragraph. But, summing up the advice provided through the courtesy of several Munich-based financial experts, the chief stock-exchange operator of one of the city’s old private banks said, “We won’t touch it with a six-foot pole. The reputation of some of those associated with it is, let me say, dubious. There’s not one pro interested. We presume it’ll be a fiasco.”

This manager’s healthy views, however, remain too much at ground level; a scrutiny of the public and less well-known sponsors would change his views.

Running the Club is one Wolfgang Schoeller, an expert at designing tax shelters in the jungle of real-estate markets. A Munich financial insider described him as “a specialist in the grey capital markets, in operations that would not be transacted above the counter of a bank, without being necessarily totally black, but rather grey, just adventurous.”

Schoeller received his training in the 1950s as financial assistant to Richard Muenemann, the most celebrated financial swindler of the German post-war period. Muenemann owned the infamous Investitions- und Handelsbank (IHB) of Frankfurt, a bank that triggered a gigantic 1952-53 scandal for fraud on Jewish reparations money; Muenemann’s own collapse, bankruptcy and flight out of Germany in 1963; and the purchase of IHB by Walter Hesselbach. Hesselbach was himself a dubious financial czar of the German trade unions who re-sold a bank whose books had been carefully cooked

to the business partners of Tibor Rosenbaum (of Banque de Cr dit International of Geneva, and the notorious Investors' Overseas Service, IOS): the Hessische Landesbank of Frankfurt, Germany's sixth largest bank, which nearly went bankrupt as a result.

After Muenemann's discomfiture, Schoeller—who had escaped the sad fate of his boss—completed his apprenticeship by joining Bernie Cornfeld's IOS, the world's largest drug- and dirty-money-laundering machine. Its German branch was run by politico Erich Mende—the embodiment of continuity between the Nazi liberals of Hjalmar Schacht, and the modern liberal party—and banker August von Finck, of the all-important Merck, Finck private banking house of Munich, one of the individuals who own and run the Allianz insurance group. Allianz is the Central European representative of Venice's Assicurazione Generali, the largest landowner in Munich and a crucial control-point for the oligarchy's financial operations in Germany.

After IOS had gone the way of Muenemann, Schoeller, whose choice of sponsors obviously already formed a pattern, set up his own (small) shop in the real-estate advisory business—supermarket ventures and the like. No big fish, Schoeller's annual known turnover does not exceed 50-60 million marks.

How has this twilight-zone financier been able to bring together the millions of marks required to get the Club started?

How to make friends

The Westdeutsche Landesbank provided loans for the venture—a decision that might be explained in terms of that bank's immoderate taste for loss-making propositions, a proclivity that has marked both the bank's vertiginous expansion under its former chief, Ludwig Poullain. Poullain had to step down after shady loan affairs were unearthed (the Poullain-Schoeller link already existed)—along with the above-average loan losses suffered by the D sseldorf-based bank. But the West LB, as it is known, is not a shareholder in the Finance Club partnership, just a lender of funds.

While names of the silent partners are not publicly known, some educated guess can be ventured.

To start with basics, the Maria-Theresastrasse of Munich, number 26, houses not only Schoeller Aktiengesellschaft on the first floor, but also Schoeller's private apartments above, and, on the penthouse, those of Schoeller's "close friend," Peter von Siemens.

Friends like Siemens

Before laying out a few facts about the latter, one of Schoeller AG's main partners should not be forgotten: it is Caismir, F rst von und zu Liechtenstein—from the ruling family of that barbaric, feudal relic of a principality that houses a huge chunk of Europe's dirty-money operations. Even Swiss bankers blush when they think of goings-on there.

Herr von Siemens is the family dean of the dynasty that was developed by British intelligence as their German-based asset in telecommunication technologies, and is at present a curious pseudo-industrial organization: The so-called "Abteilung Z" (Department Z), controlled with an iron fist by the Siemens family, handles finances, long-term planning, political and educational activities—while a series of vertically-organized divisions are, in their own right, industrial corporations. There are very limited links between the horizontal, control-layer ("Z") and the other divisions. Peter von Siemens, one of the most ubiquitous presences in the boardrooms of German corporations and banks, is also the chairman of the "Society of the Friends of Bayreuth," the Nazi-loving Wagner cult organization.

True to form and family, von Siemens is also the financier for the Carl-Friedrich Siemens Foundation, the center-point for the articulation and propagation into European elites of the Nazi, neo-Nazi and post-Nazi ideologies. The foundation is run at present by former Waffen SS volunteer Armin Mohler, the herald of the so-called conservative revolution.

Herr von Siemens is not Schoeller's only friend. Who brought in such a prominent figure as Alexander Haig at Schoeller's club's opening? Munich sources report three names: Rolf Rodenstock, a Munich industrialist who doubles as Chairman of the German Industry Confederation (BDI); Ludwig Huber, the chairman of the board of the Bayerische Landesbank (a key channel of Wittelsbach royal power and money) who is a close friend of neo-conservative Franz-Josef Strauss; and August von Finck, Jr.—full circle, it seems, from humble IOS beginnings.

The power shift

The *Weltwoche*, indeed, was right: many names and much money—to what end?

As the Bavarian metropolis's financiers are wont to explain, with depression wiping out the economic base of the traditional Rhine-Ruhr and Rhine-Main industrial areas, the "southern tier" of German business, the Munich-through-Stuttgart belt, with its "soft" technology base, is gaining dominance. And the banks associated with the old, collapsing heavy industries, are being fatally wounded by the de-industrialization.

But the post-industrial activities promote the fortunes of other banks—and power is shifting from the old Prussian-Rhineland axis to the southern tier—which has also scored an impressive political breakthrough recently in the Kohl cabinet (see *EIR*, Oct. 26). Representing a new, important operational and intelligence capability, the new Finance Club, that uncanny mix of twilight zone and aristocrats (not so weird, if one recalls that the Princess of Thurn und Taxis was recently caught by overzealous custom officers with a large chunk of hashish in her handbag), is part of the new apparatus now emerging to consolidate the financial and political takeover of Germany by the southern-tier oligarchical mafia.