

and providing logistics support to their troops in the D.R.C.

British, Bush Connections

Madsen attacked the increasing reliance by the U.S. Defense Department on so-called “private military contractors,” and charged that these contractors have close links with some of the largest mining and oil companies involved in Africa. A March 2001 report issued by UN Special Rapporteur Enrique Ballesteros of Peru, concluded that mercenaries were linked to the illegal diamond and arms trade in Africa. “Military security companies and air cargo companies registered in Nevada, Channel Islands, South Africa, Zimbabwe, are engaged in the transport of troops, arms, munitions, and diamonds.”

The Rwandan-backed Goma faction of rebels in the east are seeking to restore mining concessions for the Bush-linked Barrick Gold, Madsen alleged. He said that currently Barrick and tens of other mining companies are stoking the flames of civil war in the D.R.C. “Each benefits by the de facto partition of the country into some four separate zones of political control. First the mineral exploiters from Rwanda and Uganda concentrated on pillaging gold and diamonds from the eastern Congo. Now, they have increasingly turned their attention to coltan.” As an example of the collaboration between the mining companies and mercenaries, he reports on the fact that America Mineral Fields bought 75% of the shares of IDAS Belgium, SA, a mercenary firm based in Curaçao and headquartered in Belgium. IDAS entered into an agreement with the Angola state mining company for diamond concessions along the Angolan-Congolese border.

Detailed as the Madsen testimony was, about the involvement of the U.S. military and private military services in the the destruction of the Congo, he omitted that the companies he cites as benefitting from the plunder, America Mineral Fields, and Barrick Gold, are *British Commonwealth* mineral companies, headquartered in Canada. Similarly, the International Monetary Fund is pressuring the successor of the slain President Laurent Kabila, his son Joseph, to sign over the mineral rights of the territory under his control in the Congo to such neo-colonial interests as Anglo American Corp., in return for alleviating pressure for so-called democratic reforms.

The fact is that the blame for the planning of the destruction of this region to the benefit of raw materials looters, must be placed at the doorstep of the former colonial powers, particularly the British Commonwealth and its puppet Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni. Museveni planned the war in the Great Lakes, beginning in 1990 with the first invasion of Rwanda by Uganda, together with Lady Lynda Chalker, Minister of Commonwealth Affairs in the John Major government. U.S. military and intelligence involvement should be attributed to the longstanding problem of Anglophile and neo-colonial circles in the U.S. State Department and military circles, who reject President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s commitment to ending colonialism and to developing Africa and the rest of the world’s underdeveloped sector.

Düsseldorf Voters Defeat Privatization

by Our Special Correspondent

In a vote May 20, 2001, the citizens of Düsseldorf, Germany defeated, unexpectedly, the privatization of the city’s public utility. On Nov. 9, 2000, the city council had decided to sell the shares held by the city; the citizens have stopped this, in a shot against privatization being heard all over Europe. The votes of 97,702 citizens determined that the utility Stadtwerke AG, which supplies gas, water, and electricity, must remain a public enterprise, and this decision may not be altered for at least two years. Stadtwerke AG had been founded in 1865 by a city council decision, after the earlier, private, supplier of gas had misused its monopoly.

Already in September 2000, employees of the utility, who understood the consequences of the city council’s decision, joined to develop an efficient counter-strategy. The group—consisting of members of the public workers’ union, the union factory council, and the social caucuses of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and Christian Democratic Union (CDU)—decided to use a clause of local law to organize a public referendum, which could nullify the city council’s decision. At least 13,200 petition signatures had to be collected from city residents. In November, the citizens’ initiative was founded, including several former Mayors; its spokesman was the former Düsseldorf chairman of the Metal Workers Union (IGM).

Mayor Tried to Ignore the People

A unique mobilization followed and 63,000 signatures were collected, forcing the city council either to withdraw its own decision of Nov. 9, or have the citizens decide in a vote. At least 20% of the electorate must vote in favor of the citizens’ referendum initiative. This means, in the case of Düsseldorf, at least 88,000 “yes” votes had to be cast. During a session of the city council in March, some 5,000 citizens demonstrated outside city hall against privatization. The city council did not give in to the demands, and May 20 was set as a date for the public vote.

The city’s Mayor is supported by a city council coalition of the CDU and the liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP). Mayor Erwin presents himself as a neo-liberal, who wants to prepare the city for the world soccer championship in 2006, and a bid for the Olympics in 2012. To realize these “visions,” he wanted to “sell the silverware,” to fill the city treasury. Fully in tune with the world of stock market rule, he also engaged in highly risky leasing deals, supposedly to aid the treasury: for instance, by selling the sewage plant to a U.S. investor—aided by Deutsche Bank—to later lease it back,

even if this meant that American taxpayers had to foot the bill.

The mighty Deutsche Bank, together with its subsidiaries, became the partner of the Mayor, formerly a small local lawyer, now playing in international financial circles. Thus, he showed complete arrogance toward the citizens' motion, and never met with their representatives before May 20 of this year. There was also no public debate on energy policy, which the representatives of the citizens' motion demanded repeatedly. The Mayor even shut up his own CDU faction in the city council; the CDU members did not say a word on energy policy during the entirety of the citizens' mobilization.

After it became evident that the vote would take place, Erwin tried to use his Mayoral powers to sabotage it. The number of polling places was reduced, and a vote by mail, which would have enabled old and sick people to participate in the vote, was forbidden, allegedly "for cost reasons." A few days before the vote, the Mayor spoke before the city council, presenting his plans on how to use the revenue from the sale of the utility! Pride goes before a fall!

The citizens' motion's representatives organized caucuses in all districts of the city, using the infrastructure of big organizations, such as the trade unions and the SPD. Among the activists were representatives of the Bürgerrechtsewegung Solidarität (BüSo), associated with Lyndon and Helga LaRouche; representatives of the Green Party; the churches; members of clubs and associations; and employees of the utility.

'David against Goliath'

Hundreds of posters went up, saying "David against Goliath—on May 20, vote YES to keep the utility as a public enterprise." Two issues of a special newspaper, of 200,000 copies each, were distributed, information stands were organized, and a service installed to drive the elderly, ill, and disabled to the polling places. (The Mayor had refused to provide funds to have severely disabled people driven to the polling places.) The entire campaign for the referendum was financed by contributions. However, Mayor Erwin did distribute a "letter to all citizens," defending his position, paid for with public funds. The Mayor was publicly slandering the citizen activists; he also tried to sabotage the re-election of the utility's director, who opposed its privatization.

The BüSo party, which ran last in state elections in North Rhine-Westphalia, where Düsseldorf is located, under the slogan, "Globalization Is Piracy—Protect the Common Good," took part in the whole campaign, and very early on, brought in the news of the energy crisis in the United States, which reached a dramatic climax in March with the California blackouts. The picture of the U.S. which was being praised in Germany at the beginning of the campaign, as an economic wonderland, where fantastic profits rained from the heaven of stock markets, was corrected, through mailings to city council and other local politicians, from the BüSo, which included material from its newspaper *Neue Solidarität*, and also from *EIR*.



LaRouche activists in Germany's Civil Rights Movement Solidarity (BüSo) preparing the Düsseldorf election victory against privatization of the city's utilities.

Thus, in open debates and statements, the welfare of the citizens was more highly valued than the shareholder value society, which was pushing the United States, too, into a crisis. In addition, the Düsseldorf citizens had themselves gone through the experience of the neo-liberal paradigm, when the old, tradition-rich Mannesmann firm became the victim of a hostile takeover, by the British firm, Vodafone. Vodafone itself, since then, has been smashed to pieces.

International Support

At the suggestion of the BüSo, local politicians considered, inviting an American state legislator, who is fighting for re-regulation of the energy sector, to Düsseldorf. An Armenian Member of Parliament, Hrant Khachatryan, who was in Germany to attend the Schiller Institute conference in Bad Schwalbach, took the time, together with a representative from the Armenian Ministry of Technology, to participate actively in the campaign. He was able to inform the Düsseldorf leaders about the victory of the Armenian Parliament, in having finally blocked the privatization of the energy sector in his country, after a long battle.

The BüSo's Karl-Michael Vitt, also active in the referendum, declared after the May 20 victory, that this victorious mobilization of committed citizens for the common good, could introduce a trend-shift in Germany. For the first time, people had stood up to the neo-liberals in the state, and won. In the nation at large, where politicians still see deregulation and privatization as a way of saving their jurisdictions from bankruptcy, this signal should be understood: The citizenry is not ready to give up historic achievements necessary for the general welfare. The Düsseldorf citizens' victory, moreover, has significance beyond the borders of Germany, in the fight against the ravages of globalization.