

LaRouche Youth Campaign To Reindustrialize Germany

The dynamic political force which led to the restarting of “Monday Demonstrations” against economic tyranny in Germany in the Fall of 2004, has gone into action again. When Helga Zepp-LaRouche and the LaRouche Youth Movement started up weekly demonstrations in July 2004, the point of mobilization was the government’s pending program for drastic cuts in unemployment insurance, called Hartz IV. The failure of the Social Democrats to take up Zepp-LaRouche’s call for creating 8 million new jobs, and restarting the economy with government credit, resulted in the Hartz IV plan going ahead in January 2005.

The nationwide mobilization which the Civil Rights Movement Solidarity (BüSo), the political party headed by Zepp-LaRouche, had kicked off, particularly with the election campaign in the state of Saxony, has had lasting effects on German political life. This is evident not only in the fact that Monday Demonstrations immediately began to emerge after Hartz IV was put into effect, but, more significantly, in the deepening discussion throughout the German political parties about the fact that only *job creation* in areas of high-technology production can turn around the deepening depression.

Zepp-LaRouche had already warned her fellow citizens last Fall that Germany’s economic collapse was far worse than the public figures showed, and that the equivalent of an Franklin Delano Roosevelt “New Deal” would have to be adopted in Germany. She also pointed out that further austerity measures would only make the government’s fiscal situation a lot worse, leading down the “slippery slope” toward the anti-FDR solution which Hitler’s backers chose in the early 1930s: fascist austerity. Her warnings have now been totally vindicated, as German unemployment has continued to climb, hitting over the historically significant 5 million figure (what it was in 1933) officially, and most likely, according to EIR’s calculations, at least double that amount.

After the Saxony campaign, which ended at the end of September 2004, Zepp-LaRouche called for a new electoral

mobilization, this time in what has been the industrial heartland of Germany, the Ruhr region. State elections are scheduled for May 22, and the LaRouche movement, spearheaded by the youth, are now campaigning heavily in the area, with the goal of recruiting candidates in as many districts as possible, and mobilizing the population around the solution to the economic debacle it faces.

The Ruhr district lies in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, the westernmost state in Germany, which borders on both the Netherlands and Belgium. This state has the largest population of any state in Germany, and the Ruhr region, which lies in the heart of it, is well known as the most productive and industrialized region of all Europe. This district has also been a solid base for the Social Democratic Party and its trade union supporters.

Deindustrialization of the Ruhr Region

Yet, over the last decades, a region well known for its coal, then steel, and now auto production, has become increasingly deindustrialized, in a way similar to “rust belt” of the U.S. Midwest. Industry has been shut down, the unemployment rate has gone up 30%, and, rather than attempt to save the industry, the powers-that-be have promoted the region as a center of the “fun society,” a center for light shows, discos, amusement parks, and the like.

Just during the Fall of 2004, the Ruhr region was hit with the shock of mass layoffs announced at GM’s Opel plants, an event which led to the first strikes in the area in 30 years. Mass demonstrations occurred in October, as the union workers garnered the support of much of the local population. Yet, ultimately, nothing substantive was won, due to lack of local, and especially *national*, leadership.

The LaRouche Youth Movement and the BüSo intervened in the Opel strikes, putting before the citizens the need for a fundamental change in economic policy. From October forward, North Rhine-Westphalia has become a center of

LaRouche organizing activity, from the universities, to the factories, to the public streets. BüSo Chairwoman Helga Zepp-LaRouche has visited the area, holding a round-table discussion with local citizen, and meeting with the youth. The political tempo is now heating up, as the BüSo recruits candidates for the April 4 deadline.

We reprint here Zepp-LaRouche's first Open Letter to the Voters of North Rhine-Westphalia, which was issued in early February.

Open Letter to Voters

Germany Needs 10 Million New Productive Jobs!

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche is chairman of the Civil Rights Movement Solidarity (Bürgerrechtsbewegung Solidarität, or BüSo). This statement has been translated from German. Its full title is "In North Rhine-Westphalia: Good-Bye, Austerity! Chickens Back Into the Pot! Germany Needs 10 Million New Productive Jobs!"

Dear Voters:

By now, everybody in Germany knows that things simply can't keep going the way they're going right now: *Officially*, we have 5 million unemployed, but already last Fall, the Econometric Institute in Halle was talking about 8.6 million unemployed, if you include all the categories of hidden unemployment, such as early retirees, those undergoing "job re-training," those who have simply given up looking for work, and so forth. And that was *before* the major layoffs at Karstadt, Opel, Walter Bau, and many more!

And then we have Economics Minister Clement, announcing that it would be a mistake to fall into a kind of paralyzed state of shock. Well, then, Herr Clement, what did you expect? Your Hartz IV policy was guaranteed to plunge millions of long-term unemployed into poverty. And now, Hans-Werner UnSinn¹ from the Munich IFO Institute is demanding a "Hartz V," whereby recipients of unemployment benefits are to be lent out by community slave-labor centers to private industry, at a ridiculously miniscule pay. Hartz IV, Hartz V, Hartz VI—if it goes on like this, our economy will soon be in *rigor mortis*, and it will simply cease to exist, all because of this utterly incompetent austerity policy.

1. A pun on the the name Sinn (= sense), turning it into Unsinn (= nonsense).

The Schröder government—albeit under pressure from international financial markets—is conducting the greatest assault against our population's living standards since the 1930s. And the Red-Green Coalition² believes that the only reason why they will not get whipped in the next elections, is because the opposition is pushing an even more brutal austerity policy on behalf of the banks—even for North Rhine-Westphalia.

But it can't go on like this forever! What formerly was considered unthinkable, is now coming to pass, blow by blow. Those who wanted to hold onto their jobs, have been forced to work at wages reduced by 30% (!), on top of a 42-hour work week—and even then, the prospect of further layoffs is "not to be excluded." Rapacious managers are sweeping away all existing wage agreements; obstreperous factory council members are being voted out as a result of threats from the management, after which they are fired. And so, the trade unions are now finally having to pay the piper for having obediently "kept the lid on things" for so many decades. "The Moor has done his work; the Moor can go."

Enough is enough! I say. People don't deserve to be treated this way. Sixty years ago, when we set out to rebuild Germany out of the rubble, it was the workers of the Rhine and Ruhr who played a key role in turning the Ruhr into the world's most productive economic region, and into the main engine of the German economy. Through their labor, they helped establish prosperity in Germany, and they grounded their pride and personal identity in the quality of the products which they were directly or indirectly involved in manufacturing. And they were pulling on the same cart alongside the productive *Mittelstand* entrepreneurs: Together they succeeded in transforming the phrase "Made in Germany" from a worldwide butt of jokes, into a mark of unparalleled quality. And the name of that cart they were pulling was: the General Welfare of all.

But then, some people who thought that speculation was more profitable than production, succeeded in putting Germany through a "structural transformation." First to be shut down were the mines—and today's coking-coal crisis shows how smart a move *that* was. Next to go were the nuclear power plants. Dortmund, for example, was transformed from an industrial city into a casino hub; the doors of many, many productive enterprises were closed forever; and the only investment to be had, was in the services sector.

After it had already become evident that this structural transformation away from industrial society into a post-industrial service, media, and information society, was an utter failure, the next hammer came crashing down: the Maastricht Treaty's Stability Pact, which had a devastating effect on municipalities' investment into the public sector. And now, when everything is bursting apart, they want to take the simple

2. Germany's Federal governing coalition of the Social Democratic Party and the Green party.