

GLOBALIZATION HAS FAILED!

Resistance Mounts Against The EU's Lisbon Treaty

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

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You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you can not fool all of the people all of the time.

—Abraham Lincoln

Anyone who has been in constant dialogue with the population at booktables and on the street, as the BüSo has been, cannot fail to have noticed a recent turnabout in popular sentiment. Faced with proposals for wage and pension increases which come nowhere near the so-called “perceived” rate of inflation; the self-enrichment of top corporate executives, which can only be described as obscene, as they continue to eliminate tens of thousands of jobs, despite their super-profits; the widespread sense that we’re living in a media dictatorship; and the spectacle of a government whose members, on a daily basis, violate their solemn oath to protect the general welfare, whether it be against [the European Union bureaucracy in] Brussels or against financial locusts of every description—there is a growing sense in the population that “enough is enough!”

And even though no one can predict what the world will look like as this year draws to a close, it is nevertheless certain that the financial oligarchy’s strategy of reacting to globalization’s systemic crisis with the same methods they employed in the 1930s, is not turning out to be as easy as they had hoped. It remains an open question whether the next U.S. President will respond to the world economic and financial crisis with the tradition of Franklin D. Roosevelt, or will instead impose the recipes of Mussolini and of Hjalmar Schacht. And it equally is undecided whether Europe will be transformed into an oligarchical dictatorship with the Lisbon Treaty, or into a Eu-

rope of the Fatherlands, of sovereign nation-states.

Hillary Clinton’s primary election victories, especially in Texas and Ohio, have ensured that she will remain in the race all the way to the Democratic Party Convention at the end of August. And leading up to the decisive April 22 primary in Pennsylvania, the Rezko-Auchi scandal and the “Obama trial” in Chicago will have dashed Obama’s election prospects. And by that point, the disintegration of the international financial system will have reached new hurricane levels, and will demonstrate conclusively that Obama has nothing substantial to offer for solving the systemic crisis, and that Hillary Clinton is the only candidate so far, who has been addressing at least some aspects of the crisis, such as the mortgage crisis, and has been calling for a moratorium on home foreclosures.

But the danger of a fascist resolution in the U.S.A. is by no means over. In the wake of Clinton’s latest victories, Michael Bloomberg is no longer considering running as an independent candidate, but instead he is using his billions to ramp up the pressure to establish himself as Wall Street’s man for Republican Vice Presidential candidate—a new Dick Cheney for a future President McCain, who, even now, is not in good health.

‘Stealth Bomber’ Lisbon Treaty?

Meanwhile, in Europe, governments’ attempts to smuggle through the Lisbon Treaty as a sort of stealth bomber, under the noses of the population, in order to abolish democracy covertly and without the population’s consent, are meeting growing resistance. In Ireland, where a referendum is set to be held in late May, polls indicate that only 26% of Irish citizens favor the EU treaty. In other European countries, ever greater numbers of people who learn about this, are in a state of mounting rage against their governments’ blatant deception maneuvers. It could even turn out that Europe’s governments, with their peasant-sly strategy, have chosen the worst of all

possible options for them, and will wind up bringing Nemesis down upon them.

The hijinks around the Treaty would be a total farce, were it not for the fact that it has very real and tragic consequences for the citizens concerned. In Berlin, Hamburg, and Hesse, Germany's parties continue to play their black-green and red-red-green sand-castle games, while on the federal level, they have illegally transferred to Brussels 86% of the sovereignty which voters entrusted to their representatives—for that is the percentage of legislative initiatives which have been coming straight from Brussels. And so, if the remaining 14% is given away by the Lisbon Treaty, why should anyone care who makes a coalition with whom? Cynics point out that, as expected, the only right which the members of parliament will *not* give away, is their right to increase their own salaries.

The next time Frau Merkel starts lecturing foreign heads of state about a lack of democracy and violation of human rights in their countries, as she has already done with Russia, China, and Zimbabwe, international observers would do well to recall that Frau Merkel, too, has a little duck's foot, as Heinrich Heine described in his poem "Waldeinsamkeit."¹ And the name of her little duck's foot is: democracy deficit!

1. Among the "elementary spirits" which Heine introduces in his poem "Waldeinsamkeit" ("Forest Solitude") are the gnomes:

Sie tragen Rotmäntelchen, lang und bauschig,
Die Miene ist ehrlich, doch bang und lauschig;
Ich ließ nicht merken, daß ich entdeckte,
Warum sie so ängstlich die Füße versteckt.
Sie haben nämlich Entenfüße
Und bilden sich ein, daß Niemand es wisse.
Das ist eine tiefgeheime Wund,
Wörter ich nimmermehr spötteln kunnt.
Ach Himmel! wir Alle, gleich jenen Zwergen,
Wir haben ja Alle etwas zu verbergen;
Kein Christenmensch, wähen wir, hätte entdeckt,
Wo unser Entenfüßchen steckt.

They wear little red coats, long and baggy,
Their demeanor is honest, yet anxious and wary;
I didn't let them know that I had discovered
Why they so anxiously conceal their feet.
Namely, they have duck's feet,
But they imagine that no one knows this.
It is a deeply secret wound
Which I was never able to joke with them about.
My heavens! All of us, just like those dwarves,
We all have something to hide;
No Christian, so we imagine, could have discovered
Where we're concealing our little duck's feet.

Thema des Tages
Wiesbadener Kurier

Dienstag, 4. März 2008

Inflation – das gefühlte Gespenst

Preise für Lebensmittel und Energie steigen weiter / Wahrgenommene Teuerung von 8,8 Prozent

WIESBADEN Das gleiche Phänomen, an der Zapfsäule wie im Supermarkt: Der Verbraucher wird mit immer höheren Preisen zur Kasse gebeten. Im Januar stieg die Inflationsrate um 2,8 Prozent. Das ist aber nur ein Mittelwert – die von den Verbrauchern gefühlte Teuerung fliegt weit höher.

Von
Alexandra Maus

Die neuesten Zahlen zeichnen ein klares Bild: Das Leben in Deutschland wird teurer und teurer. Das Statistische Bundesamt musste die Inflationsrate für den Januar gerade auf 2,8 Prozent nach oben korrigieren. Die Statistiker hatten mit einem Anstieg von lediglich 2,7 Prozent im Vergleich zum Vorjahresmonat gerechnet. Damit setzt sich der Trend vom Vorjahr auch in 2008 fort, denn im November erreichte die Teuerung einen Rekordwert von 3,3 Prozent. Insgesamt kletterte die Inflationsrate 2007 auf 2,3 Prozent – den höchsten Wert seit 13 Jahren.

Höchster Wert seit 1994

Verantwortlich für den Anstieg der Verbraucherpreise sind die hohen Energie- und Lebensmittelkosten. Die Preise für Nahrungsmittel stiegen im

oder Fernseher, sinken stetig im Preis – was der Verbraucher allerdings nicht so stark spürt, da er sie nur selten kauft.

Aber das gefühlte Schreckgespenst der Inflation ist es auch, dass sich direkt auf die Konjunktur auswirkt. Denn wenn die gefühlte Inflation hoch ist, verunsichert dies die Verbraucher und bremst deren Kaufverhalten. Im vierten Quartal ist der Konsum um 0,8 Prozent gesunken – trotz positiver Faktoren wie geringeren Lohnnebenkosten*, resümiert Mütze. Dieser Trend halte aber nicht an: Für 2008 rechnet Mütze mit einer moderaten Preisentwicklung und einem Anstieg des Konsums um ein Prozent.

Konsum steigt wieder

„In der ersten Jahreshälfte wird die Inflationsrate höher sein, im Jahresdurchschnitt rechnen wir aber mit 2,3 Prozent“, so Mütze. Der Ölpreis werde aufgrund der sich eintrübenden Weltkonjunktur sinken, zumal der starke Euro die Ölpreisentwicklung dämpfe. Die Haushaltsenergie, also Strom, Gas und Heizöl, stiegen allerdings weiter – viele Anbieter hatten beim Gas für März und April erhebliche Preiserhöhungen angekündigt. „Aber bei den Lebensmitteln haben wir schon ein sehr hohes Ni-

Die galoppierende Inflation: Die Geldentwertung ist für Verbraucher oft nicht fassbar, aber wie die apokalyptischen Reiter, hier nach einem Stich von Albrecht Dürer, ein Unheilbotschafter. Montage: Bartsch

“Galloping inflation”: The Wiesbadener Kurier adapts an etching of the “Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse,” by Albrecht Dürer.

It is equally scandalous that the government still refuses to admit that we're in the final phase of a systemic collapse, and that they have done absolutely nothing to shield the population from its ravages, nor have they taken any initiatives to overcome the crisis. Apparently they feel they can comfortably acquiesce, now that they have ceded their monetary sovereignty to the European Central Bank. Fat chance: European Central Bank (ECB) President Trichet has just now decided that, in light of exploding inflation rates, the euro should continue to soar upward without restriction—while European exports collapse along with it. Because the reality is that neither Trichet, nor Europe's governments, has the slightest idea what to do!

Inflation Dynamite

The greatest factor in the turnabout within the majority of the population is, without a doubt, the skyrocketing prices of food, home heating, and gasoline. The depreciation of the value of money since the introduction of the “teuro”² has continued without letup, and in many places people have to pay the same sum in euros which they previously had to pay in deutschemarks. But now, on top of this, since the outbreak of the global crisis last July, we have had to deal with spiralling inflation. Prices for milk and grain products, for example, increased by 20-40% between September and December of last year, while raw materials prices have risen 15.1% since January—the greatest increase since the Commodity Research Bureau Spot Index was started in 1956! The price of gold is hov-

2. “Teuer” = “expensive.”

ering just below the \$1,000 mark, while oil is at \$103 a barrel.

Since 56% of all households in Germany must spend their entire income on basic living expenses, the actual inflation rate for them must be more like 10-20%, as opposed to the official 3% inflation rate. And as for poorer families which must spend most of their income on food, rent, and transportation alone, this means that they no longer have enough for healthy eating. Even the *Wiesbadener Kurier*—not exactly a paragon of social conscience—devoted an entire page to the specter of inflation, and reminded its readers that the “black decade” of the 1920s left especially the middle class and small businessmen destitute, and that inflation brought fatal consequences, smoothing the way for the National Socialists.

The fact that we have once again arrived at that same point, is shown by a new study by the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW), which reports that the number of households with median income has shrunk over the past seven years from 62.3% to 54.1%. The number of households with lower income (less than 70% of the median) has meanwhile grown from 18.9% to 25.4%, while the share of households with high income (over 150% of median income) has grown from 18.8% to 20.5%. This means that over the past seven years, 5 million people have “dropped out” of the middle class, and one-fourth of all households are poor, or have a meager income.

So, if the public service trade unions refuse to be bought off with wage increase offers that are significantly lower than the real rate of inflation, they can hardly be blamed for causing the increase in inflation, as the EU Commission and the ECB have been trying to convince them, but rather they are simply attempting to defend themselves against a massive reduction in their members’ living standards. And so, it looks like we’re in for an uncontrollable strike wave here in Europe, based on all-too-justified demands.

Such strikes, however, will succeed only if their leaders raise their eyes above the edges of their dinner plates, and—as the German Trade Union Federation did in the 1930s, with its Woytinsky-Tarnow-Baade Plan³—they concentrate on the causes of the economic crisis, and how to overcome it.

Significantly, China’s government appears to be more concerned with its citizens’ well-being than people are in Berlin, because the Chinese are at least acknowledging the extent of the crisis. At a press conference, Ma Kai, Minister of the State Development and Reform Commission, along with People’s Bank of China Governor Zhou Xiaochuan and Finance Minister Xie Yuren, stressed that as a result of the global crisis and the U.S. Federal Reserve’s inflationary reaction to the mortgage crisis, China is facing entirely new challenges, which go way beyond its previous experience and existing know-how. But at the same time, they also announced measures for defending the population’s living standard. Moreover, the Chinese government declared that it will make the

fight against inflation its absolute priority. Already back in November 2007, leading Chinese institutions and news media were reacting very positively to Lyndon LaRouche’s programmatic proposals for a new financial architecture.

Globalization Has Failed

Giulio Tremonti, the former (and possibly future) Italian Economic Minister, has likewise made a public declaration that globalization is the height of folly, and has failed. And he’s right when he says that the crisis will grow far worse, and that the solution cannot come from any one country, but must be based on a New Bretton Woods system.

What Germany’s government lacks most, is the courage to acknowledge the systemic nature of the crisis. Because without such an admission, they will surely be unable to muster the courage to take measures needed to overcome the crisis. And in order that we may help Frau Merkel, the Cabinet members, and the Federal President more quickly to learn how to reduce their democracy deficit, we need a broad, public debate over Europe’s future course. And what we especially need is a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty.

Even though people in Germany (and in other European nations) have long grown unaccustomed to the exercise of republican virtue, the beginning of civic involvement by a growing number of citizens is nevertheless a positive sign. Because only when people begin to grasp, before it is too late, the dramatic historic decisions we will have to face over the course of this year, and only if a sufficient number of them begin to personally intervene into this process, will there be well-founded hope that the systemic crisis which seems to be gripping all aspects of our lives, can be overcome.

One thing is clear: A dramatic culmination of the world financial crisis, and of hyperinflation, will be setting the stage for both the U.S. Presidential elections, and European parliaments’ attempt to whip through a ratification of the EU Treaty. And every parliamentarian and citizen should get themselves uncompromisingly clear on the fact that by adopting the EU Treaty, we would be relinquishing all possibility of defending the general welfare and of adopting such measures as a New Deal and a New Bretton Woods system. With the EU Treaty, we would be condemning ourselves to plunging into a new dark age.

There Is Hope

As the financial crash escalates, there is, however, hope that in the course of the U.S. Presidential elections, Roosevelt’s policies will be placed on the agenda, and that a growing number of political leaders in the world will raise their voices in favor of a New Deal and a New Bretton Woods. If 2009 opens with a new President who activates Roosevelt’s policies, and if we in Europe can manage to bury the Monster of Lisbon once and for all, and can decide in favor of a vision of a Europe of the Fatherlands with a positive mission for world development, then we can forget about our present

3. “Wladimir Woytinsky, Revolutionary,” *EIR*, April 11, 1997.