

Obama the Soufflé—or the Gullibility of the German Masses

by Helga Zepp-LaRouche

The author is the chairwoman of the Civil Rights Solidarity Movement (BüSo) in Germany. This article was translated from German; its full title is “Obama the Soufflé, or the Susceptibility of the German Masses to ‘Charismatic Leaders.’”

Every cook knows how difficult it is to get a soufflé out of the oven successfully; if the balance of ingredients isn't just right, or if the temperature is a wee bit too high or low, it collapses into a unsightly little pile of undefinable goo. So if you imagine a soufflé puffed up with hot air, and just about to collapse in on itself, then you've got a good image of Barack Obama's speech before the Victory Column in Berlin on July 24.

The man is simply shallow, with little of substance, whereas what his PR writers mixed into his text, along with the usual hot-air bubbles of rhetoric, is nearly indistinguishable from the policies of the current Bush-Cheney Administration: the fight against terrorism, in which Europe must become more strongly engaged; the strengthening of the European Union for international interventions (he specifically named Sudan, Zimbabwe, and Burma); more German troops to be deployed in Afghanistan; more German “assistance” for Iraq. In short, the full imperial political agenda. Which is not all that surprising, since he had already promised, in his recent transatlantic webcast to a fundraiser in London, that he would improve the Anglo-American “special relationship” even beyond the level achieved so far (think: Blair-Bush), and that in the future, he would even allow the British to take the lead more frequently. And then we have his statement at a conference of the America Israel Public Affairs Committee, that



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Barack Obama at the Victory Column in Berlin on July 24. Far more disquieting even than Obama's vapid speeches, writes Mrs. LaRouche, “is the fact that the German masses have apparently learned nothing from their own history....”

Jerusalem should be only Israel's capital—a statement which places him well to the right of the Israeli government, on the side of Likud party leader Benjamin Netanyahu.

Seduction by ‘Charismatic Leaders’

What is really terrifying, however, is not Obama's speech, which presented nothing beyond what he had already said, except for a few references to the 1948-52 Berlin Airlift, which any professional speechwriter could have come up with. Far more disquieting, is the fact that the German masses have apparently learned nothing from their own history, and that, when assembled in Nuremberg-style rallies built by bombastic propaganda campaigns, they have a fatal tendency to slip into a kind of mania, such that it matters little whether it's Hitler in Nuremberg, Gorby on his Germany tour, the Dalai Lama, or, as now, Obama the Soufflé. And even though along the Fan Mile,¹ the spectators—who came this time not for the “Love Parade” or the World Soccer Championship, but

for the pop star Obama—appeared to be tamer than on those other occasions, this propensity of the German masses to seduction is an ominous sign.

It is ominous, because with Obama, appearance and reality are miles apart, and his “charisma” is a pure media fiction. Let's read an article appearing in *Spiegel Online* on July 19, 2007, titled “Obama Unplugged”²:

1. The strip between the Brandenburg Gate and the Victory Column.
2. www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,495460,00.html

“For some, presidential candidate Barack Obama looks like the savior of American politics. But a visit to a campaign speech provides a sobering wake-up call: The Senator from Illinois does not live up to the myth his campaigners are trying to create.” And after a “stump speech” in the Anacostia area of Washington, D.C., the article continues: Obama “is surrounded by silence as he departs. The applause doesn’t even carry as far as backstage. His shoes make a clicking sound on the wooden floor. The crowd . . . was not merciless in its reaction, just honest. The Senator from Illinois is recognizably not the product which he is being sold as. At the beginning he was described as a rising African-American star. That was back when people were still being modest. Then the political marketing people reached up onto the top shelf, and started referring to him as the new Kennedy, the new Martin Luther King, Jr., the first black president.”

The article goes on to describe how the PR teams tried to fill this label with content, by writing snappy speeches for him, bringing along claquers to organize waves of applause, so as to give the impression that a grassroots revolution is under way. “But the image doesn’t travel very far. The Anacostia audience knows better—they’ve experienced ‘Obama unplugged.’ . . . Overburdened with expectations, Obama stands there and talks woodenly. His arms hang lifelessly by his sides for minutes on end.” His words, on the other hand, are pleasing: “Obama is the candidate of comfort. He says a lot of things which are correct. It is difficult to stop nodding in approval.”

Since the time that Democratic National Committee chairman Howard Dean handed over control of the preparations for the Denver party convention to the British consulting firm WPP, and to its subsidiary the Dewey Square Group, the media have been working in a lock-step unparalleled since Goebbels, to spread the image of the “charismatic Obama,” even though he hasn’t promised much of anything so far, except for “change.” But “change” has a double meaning in the English language, and so Obama is “the candidate of small change.”

In the meantime, his managers have pulled off yet another coup: For \$5 million, Obama will be co-sponsor of NBC’s reporting at the Olympic games, and his election ads will be broadcast during the breaks. But for a person who reeled in \$52 million in campaign contributions in the month of June alone, that’s “small change” indeed. Obama’s earlier promise to limit his campaign spending in order to receive Federal matching funds, has long been discarded, in favor of unlimited spending. And as one can see from Federal Election Commission documents, his contributors include quite a few financial “locusts.”

Even though Hillary Clinton emerged from the primaries with 18 million votes, more than any previous candidate, and even though she won in all the states which will be crucial for defeating John McCain, and enjoyed landslide victories in the final primaries, nevertheless the media created the im-

pression that Obama was ahead. The sole intent was to artificially build up Obama, in order to sabotage Hillary’s campaign—and not, by a long shot, to make Obama into the next President.

Because what the misled teenagers on the Fan Mile along the way to the Victory Column apparently weren’t aware of, is that many early Obama supporters in the United States now feel that they have been tricked: Obama’s machine has replaced African-American regional party leaders with Establishment *apparatchiks*. Instead, a whole slew of new organizations have been springing up like mushrooms, demanding an open party convention, and the nomination of Hillary Clinton in an open roll-call vote.

In Berlin, supporters of one of these organizations, PUMA (Party Unity My Ass) PAC, were distributing leaflets calling for such an open party convention. Obama’s security team confiscated the leaflets, not only from the PUMA organizers themselves, but also from any spectator who passed through the security gate, leaflet in hand. So much for Obama’s oft-cited “change.”

No Substance, Just Packaging

In his Berlin speech, Obama’s election strategists were counting on the so-called “let go of the dog’s tail” effect. The dog is, of course, happy when someone who has been dragging it around by the tail, inflicting great pain, finally lets go. It doesn’t take much to understand that the people of the entire world will be glad when Bush and Cheney finally disappear from the White House premises. But as we have already pointed out, the new Obama package has the same old stuff inside.

Up to now, nowhere—not in the United States, Berlin, or anywhere else—has Obama said anything about the dramatically climaxing meltdown of the financial system, nor anything about the insolvency of the giant mortgage finance companies Freddie Mac and Fanny Mae, whose death-throes are only being drawn out by the Fed’s unlimited injections of liquidity. Obama, whose lack of knowledge about the complex strategic situation cannot be remedied by some week-long crash course, is not expected to offer any answer to the systemic crisis as it unfolds over the coming weeks. And if Obama’s campaign strategists refuse to permit an open party convention, then it certainly will *not* be because they are so sure that Obama will win the Presidency. And even if he does get nominated, this will have absolutely no effect on the escalating systemic crisis.

Events over the coming weeks and months will prove that this image of a new Kennedy or King, is nothing but deceptive packaging—or a soufflé, which will collapse on its first exposure to the rough outside world. We can only hope that the German fans will start being able to learn, and that their “virtually religious adoration of a putative savior,” as *Spiegel-Online* put it, will be supplanted by better political insight.