

Merkel Ignores Crisis, Supports EU Treaty

by Rainer Apel

Although German Chancellor Angela Merkel's Grand Coalition government of Christian Democrats (CDU) and Social Democrats (SPD) has a majority of more than two-thirds in the national parliament, it has been surprisingly inactive, in the face of the onrushing economic collapse. That inactivity has to do with the founding document of this coalition, which defines its one and only priority to be implementing the budget-cutting process required by the European Union's Maastricht Treaty. This government could, therefore, never do what the historic Grand Coalition that ruled 40 years ago, did: It could not launch a national industrial mobilization to create jobs and consolidate the health insurance system and pensions. The Maastricht Treaty bans any government interventions into the physical economy, on the monetarist grounds that "freedom" of the market (the free hand of the speculative funds, that is) must not be touched, and Merkel has been more loyal to Maastricht than any German government since the treaty was signed 16 years ago.

Even worse, Merkel is pursuing a plan to rewrite the German Basic Law (its constitution) to bring it into harmony with the Maastricht criteria, and she is at the center of a London-steered conspiracy to transfer the national sovereignty of the European Union's 27 member-states to a European president, to be established under the Treaty of Lisbon.¹ And Merkel has also proclaimed the "fight against global warming" to be an absolute priority in national and international politics. With all that, Merkel neither has any intention, nor any time left, to deal with the real challenge: the world financial collapse which occurred last July.

This has caused a massive erosion of public support for Merkel, whose CDU lost heavily in three state elections held since the beginning of this year—5.8% in Lower Saxony and 12% in Hesse on Jan. 27, and 4.6% in Hamburg on Feb. 24. In Hesse and Hamburg, the CDU losses have not only forced the party to share power, but have created a situation of ungovernability, because the "black-yellow" coalition which the CDU would prefer—itsself and the Free Democratic Party (FDP)—does not have a majority in Hamburg, because the FDP did not make it into the city's parliament. The three-party alternatives that exist—CDU-FDP-Greens (the multicolor "Jamaica" model) or SPD-FDP-Greens ("traffic light" model) or SPD-

1. See Helga Zepp-LaRouche, "Demand a Referendum on the Lisbon Treaty! Abolishing Democracy by Stealth: Constitution for Feudalism in Europe," *EIR*, Feb. 29, 2008.



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The BūSo party organizes for a national referendum on the European Union Treaty—"a second Versailles?" Chancellor Merkel is intent on getting the treaty ratified, without discussion, by May.



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Greens-Linkspartei (Left Party)—are fraught with so many diverging views that each would lead to pre-programmed un-governability. The other alternative, grand coalitions in Hesse and Hamburg, promises nothing good either, because they would be a mirror-image of the paralyzed national Grand Coalition of Chancellor Merkel.

The fact that in Lower Saxony, the CDU can govern with its favorite partner, the FDP, does not show much stability either, because that state's CDU governor, Christian Wulff, is a spokesman for a strong current in the CDU that opposes Merkel's hard-line free-market policies in economic and social affairs, such as the minimum wage (which Wulff supports and Merkel opposes). The vote for the CDU in Lower Saxony was, to a large extent, a vote against Merkel.

In a panicked attempt to drum up a "Jamaica" coalition to keep Hesse and Hamburg under control of a CDU-led state government, Merkel has given her okay to CDU talks with the Greens, which implies the big concession not to discuss nuclear power, the only option that offers secure energy supplies for Germany in the future. The Greens vehemently oppose nuclear power. Merkel has thereby opened another Pandora's box, because if the CDU in Hamburg is pushed into a coalition with the Greens and the FDP, the SPD in Hesse will be driven into a coalition with the Greens and the Linkspartei. Apart from the fact that an SPD-Green-Links coalition would be paralyzed by both the radical ecologism of the Greens and the pseudo-socialist populism of the Linkspartei, that kind of state government for Hesse would blow the national Grand Coalition apart—and it might happen on April 5, the deadline for election of a new governor of Hesse. But should the SPD's Andrea Ypsilanti (a radical ecologist) be elected governor of Hesse, the SPD in Hamburg might try the same tactic, so that Merkel's CDU would lose two states.

Moreover, the Merkel government is faced with a national strike of the public-sector labor unions, over the government's refusal to ease its budget-cutting policies. The beginning of

hyperinflation, a direct result of Merkel's loyalty to the speculative funds and of her inaction, has become the main driver for strikes in Germany.

Merkel's increasingly unpopular chancellorship would not survive that, and it were more likely that Germany would go into early elections than muddle through until the next scheduled election in Autumn 2009. One cannot rule out, therefore, the fall of Merkel's government before she can push through her priority project, the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty. She wants it ratified by the national parliament by no later than May 23, which is German Constitution Day.

All in all, these power games among the five establishment parties of Germany are being conducted as if the reality of the global financial collapse simply did not exist. But it does exist, and voters know that with certainty. So the next round of major banking collapses, industrial layoffs, and the like will find the establishment parties totally unprepared for such a situation.

By contrast, the LaRouche movement's continued campaigns through its Civil Rights Solidarity Movement (BūSo), for a complete overhaul of the global banking and credit sector in favor of productive investments, and at the expense of speculative ventures, and for a defense of the common good, have qualified the party, in the eyes of a growing number of voters, for political mandates. The political establishment will come to realize that at the peak of ungovernability, the power of ideas will play a dominant role, and that they do not have the ideas that are needed in such a time of crisis. And having ideas is the trademark of the LaRouche movement. The tens of thousands of brochures, leaflets, and other campaign material distributed by the LaRouche Youth in Germany over the recent weeks, are a good investment in a real future.