
France-Germany

Poland Says 'Let Me Be The Third of Your Union'

by Frank Hahn

While talk of a German-French union has been buzzing in European capitals, too little attention has been paid to an important initiative, involving the cooperation of the two nations with an eastern European partner, Poland. On Nov. 20, a conference was held in Potsdam, near Berlin, in which a French-German-Polish campaign for growth and innovation was discussed, which would surpass the Tremonti Plan for European development. Specifically, the French promoted an initiative for an investment of 150 billion euros *per year* into European infrastructure development projects.

The event was the second "Interdisciplinary European Forum for Innovation," on behalf of the "Weimar Triangle," which was founded in 1992 as the council for permanent

consultations among Germany, France, and Poland. The thrust of the meeting was to demonstrate the commitment on the part of Paris and Berlin to wrest Poland out of the grip of the neo-conservative group running U.S. foreign policy. Repeatedly, the speakers stressed that "the French-German-Polish axis is the continental European key for a successful European integration process."

Mental Wealth Awaiting Investment

The chairman of the forum, Professor Standke, explained the history of the initiative: "In 1973, the committee for the implementation of the French-German friendship treaty was founded. Then in 1992, along the lines of Friedrich Schiller, it was decided that Poland join, too." ("*Ich sei, gewährt mir die Bitte,/In eurem Bunde der Dritte*"—"I would, if allowed my intention,/Become the third in your union"; the concluding lines of a famous ballad, "*Die Burgschaft*"—"The Pledge," by Germany's national poet.)

The core issue under debate was how to mobilize the resources of the three countries' economies, in order to launch a major growth effort. France, Germany, and Poland, combined, have 5 million students as well as 450,000 scientists active in research, which represents an enormous potential which must be developed to transform it into economic growth stimulated by innovation. Specifically, the potential

After Dying Maastricht: New Bretton Woods!

On Nov. 25, the 14 finance ministers of the European Union member governments voted 10-4 not to apply Maastricht Stability Pact sanctions against Germany, the 15th member, for continued violation of the Pact's rule that state deficits cannot exceed 3% of GDP. And in a vote on France, the constellation was the same. Afterwards, all finance ministers gave assurances that the Pact was "not dead." But the fact that the Pact is no longer alive, cannot be denied.

Behind the scenes, in a deal arranged through Italy's Finance Minister Giulio Tremonti, sanctions are off for a year, in return for a promise by France and Germany to reduce deficits in 2004 and 2005 by about 0.5% of GDP, instead of the 0.8 to 1.0% originally demanded. But everyone knows that the promise cannot be kept, because of the downward economic-financial spiral. The next official tax revenue forecast by the German commission of taxation experts, in mid-May, will show (as it has repeatedly) that all previous forecasts about the economy, the labor market, and tax revenues were wrong. Therefore, why wait until

May to sign the certificate of death for the Maastricht Pact?

U.S. Presidential candidate Lyndon H. LaRouche pointed out on Nov. 26 that the foundations of the Pact, which was signed in 1992 to prevent big public sector infrastructure projects in Europe—thereby preparing the ground for a giant capital flow to support the speculative Wall Street bubble—have been destroyed by the deepening world economic and U.S. depression. Capital volumes capable of keeping the bubble intact are no longer available, and foreign investors don't have trust in Wall Street to invest huge sums of money. The apparent weakness of the U.S. real economy, the giant and ever-rising American trade deficit, and the related weakness of the dollar against the euro and other world currencies have eroded the Maastricht Pact along with all other such international monetarist agreements, and the overall situation makes an outbreak of an open dollar crisis by Christmas most likely, LaRouche warned.

Therefore, what Europe needs is what the United States needs: an exit strategy from the discredited, defunct monetarist system, to a new system, a New Bretton Woods. And it will function only if it is following the great examples of the Roosevelt New Deal, the French Planification, or the German Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau.

—Rainer Apel