

German Mayoral Candidate Campaigns For High-Skill Jobs, Development

Alexander Hartmann, who is running for mayor of Wiesbaden, Germany on the slate of Germany's Civil Rights Solidarity Movement (BüSo), was interviewed for "The LaRouche Show" Internet radio on Jan. 13 by host Marcia Merry Baker. We publish an edited version here. The BüSo was founded and is chaired by Helga Zepp-LaRouche.

EIR: Could you tell us what is at stake in this election, what the BüSo is, and so forth?

Hartmann: The election I'm running for, which is on March 11, is for the mayor of the city of Wiesbaden. Wiesbaden is the state capital of the state of Hesse, which is the fifth largest state in Germany. So, this is equivalent to Columbus, Ohio. Also, for 30 years, Wiesbaden has been the European headquarters of the international LaRouche movement, so we're quite well known here.

Now, what happened is something which, in a certain way was unexpected, but it's also lawful; after all, Lyndon LaRouche has always been talking about the incompetence of the Baby Boomers, and the generation a little bit after that. What happened here is that the Social Democratic Party [SPD], which, in terms of political sympathies, would be comparable to the Democratic Party—failed to register their candidate, whom they had dutifully nominated last April. They failed to turn in the papers for that candidacy by the deadline, Jan. 4, at 18:00 o'clock. So, suddenly we have a very interesting situation.

Go back through the last 30 years—and I'm a 30-year veteran of the LaRouche movement, so I have witnessed all this in person, and as an active participant—we had in the '70s the start of the ecologist movement, which was important in wrecking Germany economically. And it was the state of Hesse, and the city of Wiesbaden, which was the first state government in which the SPD basically dumped their own established policy and their own established politicians, in order to move into a "Red-Green" coalition with the Green Party. The whole Social Democracy, is now oriented this way—as if the Social Democracy is all Gore.

And this was in 1982. It led to the downfall of the Helmut Schmidt SPD-led national government in Germany later that year, and ever since that time, Germany has been on a road to industrial destruction—fast. On the left wing you had the ecologists, and on the right wing, the free traders.

Now, you can imagine, the SPD being the former party of the industrial workers, there are plenty of people within the party, or who were formerly with that party, who would still vote for the SPD, because they disliked the alternative even more. This was always a problem for the BüSo, campaigning for the values of the true former Social Democrats, the pro-industrial people who knew that you need a productive economy in order to have a decent standard of living and have decent jobs, to be able to raise a family and so on. This stratum of the population stuck to the SPD, because they didn't see any alternative. Part of the problem was that the media never wrote anything on the BüSo; but it was also that people were saying, "The BüSo is a small party. They won't get more than the 5% needed to get into any parliament; so therefore, it's a waste of our votes; we'd rather vote for the winner." Or the "lesser evil."

Now, with the failure of the SPD to register, that option is gone. What do the voters now have to choose from? They have the present treasurer of Wiesbaden, the candidate for the CDU, the conservative Christian Democratic Union, and who is a champion of free trade, deregulation, privatization. And then, there is the Green Party, which, last Spring, chose to change their coalition, and they are now in coalition with the neo-liberal free-traders, the Free Democratic Party (FDP). The FDP is also part of the governing coalition.

There are two or so other minor candidates, but the general effect is, that the bulk of the SPD voters don't have anyone to vote for. And this is a big, big opening for us, and this is what we are moving on now. Our intention is to run this campaign based on what Lyndon LaRouche writes in his New Politics paper.* We are really out to get a lot of these votes.

EIR: People here have seen the radical change over 20 years, and then the last couple years' destruction of our own heartland and industrial belt, from Pittsburgh westward through Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and Illinois. In Hesse, you have the Rhine-Main rivers, you had a certain kind of economic geography, and then this deindustrialization you were talking about; could you give us some highlights from your area?

Hartmann: Wiesbaden used to be an important center of the

* "Johannes Kepler & the Democratic Challenge: The New Politics," *EIR*, Dec. 8, 2006. Available at www.larouchepub.com.

chemical industry. Biebrich, which is a suburb of Wiesbaden, right on the Rhine River, has been an important chemical center for more than 100 years. In fact, when the Albert Works were founded in the 1860s, soon after, half of the phosphate fertilizer of the world production was produced right down there. And this was important, because it was used to build up the iron works. In a certain process in iron production, the so-called “Thomasbirne,” they found out that the slag that builds up within the machine, which you want to get rid of in order to produce steel, that slag just needed to be pulverized and it could be used for fertilizer. The guy who built up this company went to other steel producers, and said, “If you convert your factory to this more efficient method of purifying iron ore, I’ll buy your slag.” And that’s how this was part of the modernization of the steel industry here in Germany in the 1870s-1880s.

At the best time, there were 18,000 people working in the Biebrich chemical complex, which was not only Albert, it was also Kalle. Later that merged, became part of the Hoechst conglomerate, and by now, Hoechst has become Aventis. Now the complex still has 5,000 employees, but they’re spread over something like 360 different companies, as a reflection of globalization and the decomposition of the industrial structure.

This is actually something that we need to change. Because, what you need to finance a society—health system, education, and so on—you really need the productive base of the economy. And if that’s gone, if we ship off the jobs to the Czech Republic, to China, or other places, the effect is that we cannot function any more in terms of production; we cannot provide a living for our people. But at the same time, we cease to be a market for the Chinese and the Czechs—so it’s not going to work for them either. It’s a total dead end.

And this is something we’ve been working to change. Our function in the election campaign was always to try to catalyze a debate within the population about how to do that. And the election campaign here in Wiesbaden is catapulting us into a perfect situation to do that.

EIR: By the Social Democratic Party not meeting the filing deadline for its own candidate, has this pressured the media, to give you more coverage?

Hartmann: Yes, it was actually quite funny, because after they failed to turn in their papers on time, they asked all the other candidates, including me, to withdraw their candidacies, so that then the city, having no candidates, would have to schedule a new election. This is the first time that I’ve heard that cancelling an election is “democratic”! They said that people need to have the “democratic” choice of the SPD candidate; if they don’t have that, it’s not “democracy.” But, that’s not our fault.

Keep in mind that the SPD is not new to politics: This is a party which is 125 or 130 years old! Since the War, they’ve had three chancellors: Willy Brandt, Helmut Schmidt, and

Gerhard Schröder. Schmidt was probably the best of them, although he had his limitations. But every German Chancellor always has one big limitation, that we are the junior partner of the United States. So, we’re very much affected by what happens in the United States, and this is actually part of my campaign: to spread the good news, that the winds in Washington are changing, and that we have an active movement in the United States, which is working to impeach Bush, to impeach Cheney, get the war party out, and get a new economic policy. Because much of what is being done by the German government, is, in fact, a reflection of what they know the U.S. government expects them to do.

It was like a miracle that Schröder in 2002 chose to publicly declare that he was not going along with the Iraq War. This is unheard of! And, this is what won him the election, despite the fact that people had been suffering four years of the Red-Green economic catastrophe.

The present situation with the Social Democrats—just to give you an example, we have here in Hesse, in Biblis, a nuclear power plant which has been running for close to 30 years. It has set several world records in electricity production per year, in terms of kilowatt-hours, and now the candidate whom the SPD chose to run as governor of the state, a lady by the name of Andrea Ypsilanti, made it a campaign plank to shut that nuclear power plant down, and replace it with 1,700 windmills!

EIR: Oh no!

Hartmann: And we have already so many windmills, that it’s nearly as much installed capacity, as we have in nuclear power. It’s some 22 gigawatt capacity in nuclear, and 17 GW in windmills. Now, of course, that works only one-seventh of the time.

There are more windmills on the other side of the Rhine, in the state of Rhineland Palatinate, where they have had a Social Democratic government for quite some time. But this is what the SPD in Hesse wants to change.

Now, imagine what would happen, if, in this Wiesbaden election, I were to get more votes than the Green candidate. You see, these politicians in the SPD are not green because they’re green; they’re green because they’re opportunists. And they would feel that the wind is changing, and then you would meet a lot of them who would suddenly discover that they’ve always been pro-nuclear, and in fact, they were always thinking these windmills are nonsense. In East Germany, we called such people the *Wendehälse*—people who cannot remember that they were ever part of the Soviet-linked ruling SED party, despite the fact that they were functionaries in the party!

It’s important, because the SPD is part of our Grand Coalition government in Berlin. And in terms of economic policies, the free-trade part comes from the CDU, the conservatives. But a big, big problem is that in terms of infrastructure development, some conservatives say, “We need more investment



IRNS/Chris Lewis

Alexander Hartmann campaigns in Wiesbaden on Jan. 13. "Here in Germany, we never really got rid of the oligarchy, so people tend to see themselves less as citizens, and more as subjects," he said, vowing to work to change that situation.

in infrastructure," and this is blocked by the Social Democrats. So, if we could catalyze a shift on the part of the Social Democrats, this would be very important, because it would unleash a lot of the economic forces that are now being held back, which we urgently need to rebuild our industry, our infrastructure; but also in terms of building up whatever Third World countries need.

If you go back to the '70s, at that time, we had a contract, that we would export 12 nuclear power plants to Brazil! And in 1977, the key people in Germany who were promoting these policies were killed by the Red Army Faction terrorists. And the effect was, that all these projects were cancelled.

This was, of course, also the period of the Jimmy Carter government, the policy of Paul Volcker, who said, we need a "controlled disintegration of the world economy." And before that, you had Henry Kissinger, who actually said, in his National Security Study Memorandum 200, that Third World countries should be prevented from growing, both in terms of their population *and* in terms of the economy, because America could only keep being a superpower if it had unfettered access to all the raw materials of these countries. This was a geopolitical policy, preventing Third World development. Now, if you look at the world, and look at where we need power plants to produce fresh water—power plants do not build themselves. You need skilled capacities to do that. And Germany would be one of the countries which could provide this technology for the world.

This is also part of my campaign here in Wiesbaden. Actu-

ally Wiesbaden has been—although it's a city of a quarter-million people—aside from these industrial centers down on the Rhine, the historical Wiesbaden has always been a bureaucratic center. It's been the seat of the Nassau dukes since 1800; it was the seat of the province of Nassau after 1886, when Bismarck basically conquered Hesse, and annexed it, in the process of German unification. It was the Prussians who basically forced industrial development on this region. The local oligarchy never liked it.

Although there was ingenuity in the population. For example, here in the Taunus Mountains is the place where Nikolaus Otto was born, inventor of the car engine. You had Albert, as I said; Dyckerhoff was very important in the development of cement; later came Fresenius, which has grown to be a company with 60,000 people working in the medical field. There's a lot of potential.

And what I propose, is that we change the character of Wiesbaden by founding a technical university here, to develop all the technologies to make the world fit for the next 50 years. One obvious area is what we would call the "isotope economy"—that means, that we develop the knowledge of how to control the nuclear processes of transmutation, changing one element into another in a controlled way. Then, if we want to get rid of nuclear waste like plutonium, which has a half-life of 20,000 years, we can just turn it into another element whose half-life is only 90 years, so it's much easier to handle. And instead of going through the world and looking for raw materials, and then starting wars over these raw mate-

rials resources, instead of that, we can invent techniques to develop new raw materials from what we have, where we are.

This is the future of humanity. And accepting this challenge and building the university here in Wiesbaden, would turn Wiesbaden into a city which really is useful for the rest of the world.

EIR: Has Hesse seen the kind of sleight of hand, where private interests come in and buy up, and shrink, not only industrial and commercial operations, but also housing, water, or other utilities? It used to be called privatization, but now it's called public-private partnerships. It involves some really rotten guys, transatlantically, such as Felix Rohatyn and associates.

Hartmann: In certain areas we do have that. But here in Germany, there's a funny variation in some areas. For example, we have a Federal rail system called Deutsche Bahn, and they used to run the German rail system. Only in very outlying areas, where you had some trains operating on coal and steam for tourists, would these railroads be operated privately. Now, the state of Hesse has founded a company which is state-owned, but it's managed like a private company. According to the European Union, companies have to bid for the license to operate certain lines. And this newly founded state company undercut the prices of the other companies; they did it, by hiring people whom they paid some \$300 less per month.

It's not like it is in the United States, where a company can exclude trade unions. In Germany, labor has factory councils, which are legally guaranteed. But there's a different wage agreement between unions and the state, for these licensed railroads. And by founding a new company, they went outside that wage agreement. And that's how they were able to undercut the wages.

We have the same thing in Wiesbaden. This was done by the Hesse Gov. Roland Koch, who is a very good friend of former governor Tommy Thompson from Wisconsin. He's peddling Thompson's state as a model, forcing people to work; if they don't agree to work, they don't get any welfare. With a "slight" disadvantage, that there are no jobs available! So, this is just a way to cut the social welfare budget.

And out of the office of this Herr Koch, comes Mr. Müller, who is the CDU candidate for mayor here in Wiesbaden. As treasurer, he's responsible for the fact they did the same thing with the bus system. They sold half of the bus operation of the city of Wiesbaden, to the city of Hamburg, which is also CDU-run. And the bus system of Hamburg paid for their share of the new company in part by providing new buses. Now, Hamburg is a flat area, and Wiesbaden is hilly, so the buses from Hamburg can't get up the hills!

In Wiesbaden, we also have the corporate seat of Linde Gas, which is one of the world's leading gas producers for industry or medical use. They merged with a British company, and now the headquarters of the joint company is moving to Munich. They also made forklifts, and that branch of the

company is staying here, but it has been sold off to one of these hedge funds. Shortly before that, Linde shut down its refrigeration division. Carl von Linde was the inventor of refrigeration systems—he also came from Wiesbaden—more than 100 years ago. And now that part of the company, just in the last one or two years, has been shut down and moved to the Czech Republic.

EIR: Before the show, you were talking about the problem of pessimism that arises, when people look at the danger of war, when they see people like Bush and Cheney in power in Washington.

Hartmann: It's of historical dimensions. For example, when Albert wanted to found his company here in Wiesbaden, in the 1860s, he couldn't get permission from the dukes of Nassau. In fact, the industrialization of Wiesbaden was prevented by these guys. Only after Bismarck had conquered the place, with the Prussian policy of industrial development, did Wiesbaden become big. Under the Nassaus, we had a population of 25,000; now it's ten times that.

EIR: And according to the Nassaus, you were supposed to be growing crops, and weaving, and dancing.

Hartmann: Yes. And these rich, oligarchical families, are still here. The ruling family of Nassau that was deposed by Bismarck, inherited the Duchy of Luxembourg. The Grand Duke of Luxembourg, in fact, would be the Duke of Nassau if he hadn't been deposed.

EIR: We've heard that the BüSo party has been putting out high-circulation statements by Helga Zepp-LaRouche.

Hartmann: Yes, a big chunk of our operation is in the national capital, in Berlin. We have a lot of young people, quite comparable to what you're doing in Washington. And they are getting out the news there, and we are getting it out here. And wherever we are, this is, I think, a very important factor in *remoralizing* people. You know, part of the demoralization of the citizens here, is that they look at the United States, and they say, "They elected Bush, they *re*-elected Bush, even after he did all the things that he did."

Here in Germany, we never really got rid of this oligarchy, so people tend to see themselves less as citizens, and more as subjects. And this is important to stress, that I'm not the "*Meister*" of the subjects, I'm the "*Meister*" of the "*Bürger*," and the "*Oberbürgermeister*" [mayor] gets elected. I'm the representative of the citizens, and this is important, I think, to get across this spirit.

And now in the United States, we see that you have a new majority in Congress, we see that now some of these people are moving. But there are a lot of people here who have a "wait and see" attitude to that, and they won't believe in an impeachment of Bush until it has happened. But if it happens, that's really going to unleash positive forces also here in Europe.