

---

## Science & Technology

---

# Green party's hoax exposed: Pollution is *not* killing the German forests!

by William Engdahl in Wiesbaden

The issue of West Germany's forests and the reported dramatic increase over the past several years of forest disease have exploded across the political map of the Federal Republic of Germany in recent weeks. Using scientifically fraudulent methodology, government officials and leading anti-industry organizations have created a popular perception of ecological catastrophe which will have profound economic consequences across Western Europe.

The West German Forest Ministry on Oct. 16 issued a startling new report which claimed that wholly 50% of all German forests were in some form to be classed as "damaged." The release of this report, subject of sensationalist and slanted media coverage, clearly created an issue of broad sympathy which significantly increased the showing of the neo-Nazi Green Party in the North-Rhine Westphalia and Baden Württemberg elections.

The real story of the "Germany's forests are dying" tale reveals a shocking manipulation of scientific fact. As was done over the past decade or so in the United States around the argument against leaded gasoline or chemical pesticides, a duplicitous minority is creating an irrationalist movement to deindustrialize the nation.

The issue, labeled "forest death" (*Waldsterben*) by the Greens, is being used to ram through a series of environmentalist laws which, as earlier in the United States, would have a devastating impact on the German steel and transportation industry—the heart of the export-dependent German economy. The notable fact is the absence of cause-effect rigor in the public debate. The Green case is based on scientific fraud every bit as much as the recent arguments to ban lead in gasoline in the United States (see *EIR*, Aug. 28, 1984). The actual source of the forest damage of the past three years and its cure have been under intensive study by a leading group of the West German chemical and fertilizer industry.

### Scientific fraud promoted

The Green argument, today probably a majority "opinion," is a scientific fraud. It takes government statistics and

plays manipulative games on the ignorant or unsuspecting populace. The first and, in many ways, most vicious fraud is the organization of a movement "Against Forest Death." Cars and shop windows across Germany feature traditional tombstone crosses mourning the "death" of the German forest. Government statistics, they argue, point to the fact that the increase in the rate of the "dying" of the forest has become astronomical. The popular media, beginning with the glossy weeklies *Der Spiegel* and *Stern*, have fed this most fundamental fallacy of composition in the Green argument. What are the facts in the "forest death" first?

There are three main categories used to classify what silviculturists term "forest damage." According to the report of the Federal Ministry for Agriculture and Forests, issued from Bonn on Oct. 16, 1984, the latest survey of the 3.7 million hectares of German forest land reveals that a dramatic 50% of the forest to be damaged. They maintain that this is an increase from a 34% figure the previous year. Whether this is strictly true, or, as some maintain, partially a result of a compilation methodology using incomparable statistics, is of less importance for the present. What is important is the specific degrees of damage or disease.

According again to the Forest Ministry's report, the by-far largest category of damage is that of "lightly damaged" trees. This makes up a substantial 33% of the total forests. Another 16% of total forest area is in the "moderately damaged" category. Now, this totals almost 49% of the otherwise alarming figure of 50%. It is some 110,000 hectares or only 1.5% of the total forest area of the Federal Republic of Germany which are correctly classified as "very sick," or "severely damaged to the point of dying." And this percentage, 1.5% or thereabouts, has been estimated to be relatively constant over longer historical periods, as the proportion of trees which can be appropriately labeled "dying forest."

### Causes of recent forest damage

But what about the significant rise, especially of mildly damaged forest land, over the three years such attention has

been focused on the trees by the press and government? Is the apparent three-year rise in such phenomena as yellowing of pine-tree needles or slowing of normal growth rates of certain forest areas an irreversible first step—caused by speeding Mercedes traffic through the Black Forest or the Bavarian Woods? Is the air pollution of the auto emissions going onto the trees in such a way as to begin a process of irreversible “forest death,” as the Green Party and their oligarchic friends who own the forests of West Germany would have us believe?

Indeed, this is being regarded as scientific fact. It is the basis on which two political parties are demanding drastic, irreversible structural change in the vital German transportation sector through introduction of catalytic converters on exhaust systems of autos, conversion to the inefficient lead-free gasoline, and reduction of speed limits to “Tempo 100” (100 kilometers per hour). The social and economic impact of these changes could well destroy the German auto and high-technology machinery industries, the backbone of German industry. The disastrous experience of the U.S. auto industry since the “Ralph Nader” campaigns of the 1970s is being ignored in the German press.

First, there is no causal relation between auto or even coal power plant emissions, i.e., so-called air pollution, and the recent forest damage phenomena. Aside from the fact that the regions where the damage is most visible, the Franconian and Bavarian Woods in the rural region near the Czech border, or the Black Forest, are hardly intense areas of automobile traffic, the entire air pollution argument is sheer nonsense.

I spoke at length with the German Chemical Industries Association (VCI), which has been conducting detailed scientific analysis and tests to determine cause-and-cure possibilities for the recent problems of the German forests. Studies show that the amount of sulfur-dioxide emissions in the air, primarily from power plants and heavy industry, is more or less the same as in the 1930s or 1940s, at about 3 million tons/year. In 1910, it was about 2 million tons/year. So, the so-called effects of “acid rain” argued by the friends of the trees, actually would predate the age of the automobile. For some six to eight years, according to detailed studies published by the VCI, the air content from nitric oxide has been relatively stable. Vehicle emissions account for about 55% of this source of air emission. Hydrocarbons in the atmosphere, whose source is mainly the auto emissions, home heating, and industry, has also been stable in recent years. So, these sources of atmospheric emission cannot be direct causes of the damage visible over the past two to three years.

Similarly, as the VCI has documented from various official and private studies, the ground level concentrations of nitric oxide, sulfur dioxide, and hydrocarbons have been steady over recent years, and, in fact, have actually decreased in industrial areas by one-third to one-half owing to introduction of various emission controls, higher stacks, and so forth.

The deposition sources have also been measured by the Western Meteorological Synthesizing Center’s Cooperative

Program for Monitoring Long-Range Transmission of Air Pollutants in Europe (EMEP). The results here are equally dramatic in refuting the Green case. For example, in the Bavarian Woods, more than 80% of the depositions of various sulfur oxides from the atmosphere found on the trees comes from Czechoslovakia. Only 20% comes from inside West Germany. Similarly, for the Harz Mountains, some 75% comes from the regions across the border in East Germany. And in the South Black Forest, 73% of the sulfur emissions originates from the French Saar region. So, even were it true that air emissions are causing damage to the forests, which they are not, the Federal Republic of Germany could shut down all industry and power production and ban all auto traffic and it would not curb the problem. Further, the amount of auto traffic in the East is vastly smaller than in West Germany, so again, on this count, the case of the Greens and their friends fails the test of causality.

### Reviving the trees

Fortunately, the health of Germany’s vast forests does not depend on the unlikely cooperation of the Warsaw Pact or other industrial states. I spoke at length with one of Europe’s leading silviculture chemistry experts, Dr. M. Haeberle, leader of the BASF Working Group on forest damage, at Ludwigshafen. After reviewing the basic conclusions of the above VCI report, in which he participated, Dr. Haeberle stated bluntly: “The increase in forest damage in the past three years definitely is *not* due to any air pollutants. I think much of the damage is quite simple in origin: two seasons of unusual drought in 1982-83 combined with abnormal temperature.”

Why does this cause such a problem now? This he attributes to an almost total lack of basic understanding of scientific agriculture as applied to forestry, considering forestry as merely a specialized application of tending of the Earth as the “Garden of Man.” “I went back to the basic 1855 text of Justus von Liebig on Agricultural Chemistry. I saw that many of the basic ideas which have been used for the past century in agriculture must be systematically applied to the care of the forests.” Why has it taken us so long to learn this? “In farming, you see the results of successful treatment or failure immediately within one or two growing seasons. With trees and forests, the life cycle shows the same over an 80-200 year period, so it takes longer to see the deficiencies.”

What Dr. Haeberle’s research group, in cooperation with researchers from several universities across the Federal Republic of Germany, has begun is detailed soil chemical analysis together with careful tree sample testing. This allows researchers to determine exactly which deficiencies exist in which soils, preventing normal growth of the trees or making them susceptible to yellowing during drought periods.

“It has been very well known for at least one-two decades,” Haeberle noted, “that you can revitalize fir trees in your garden which have become ‘yellowed’ through adding specific elements into the chemical fertilizer applied.” Chem-

ical fertilizers have been used on German forests since the turn of the century, "but nobody bothered to analyze specific soil deficiencies."

Beginning at the end of 1983, the German chemical industry launched systematic field experiments using the systematic approach outlined by Haeberle, the applications of the fundamentals of Liebig applied to silviculture for the first time in a scientific way. The results have been remarkable. In each of the seven test regions across the Federal Republic, Bavaria, Hesse, and others, the procedure involves scientific soil analysis to determine the exact deficiencies as well as careful sample analysis of the trees—needles, roots. The deficient elements are thus determined; they are different for different regions. The lost nutrients of each soil are thus supplemented.

In addition, when there exists over-acidification of the soil, whether from soil erosion or whatever, this can be easily treated by increasing the pH content of the soil through gradual addition of limestone, magnesium, potassium, or calcium.

Haeberle cautioned that this must be done gradually and carefully so as not to allow nitrates in the ground water to decompose organic matter. But this is otherwise straightforward, as with any scientific agricultural process. Results? "We have demonstrated that we can change yellowed trees back to green in approximately six months in some cases with the proper treatment. If the media would ask scientists to do

more such basic research on the problems of the damages to trees," he concluded, rather than spread uninformed hysteria, "this would be much more help."

But—what else?—the very environmentalists who cry most over the so-called "forest death" are now attacking the use of such scientific fertilizers as "unnatural additives which destroy the forests," and also attack efforts of chemical companies which have the logical resources of groups such as the gifted Dr. Haeberle's. They argue that they only aim to sell more chemicals.

Haeberle, patiently and somewhat sadly, also gave an answer to this inane argument of the irrational Green Party storm troopers. The Chemical Industry Association made a study of what it would cost to systematically treat all the damaged areas of Germany's forests. Taking the 48% of total forest area which consist of Groups I and II (slightly damaged and moderately damaged), the VCI calculates that by applying the appropriate mixes of nutrients and fertilizers to the soils, an average of twice times over a 10-year period, the cost for the entire process would range on the order of 350 million deutschemarks per year for the 10-year period.

They note that most of the German forests are man-made and have never been scientifically attended until now, so it is a cumulative unpaid cost which must now be made if we want to actually maintain healthy and thriving green areas in Germany's beautiful forests.

## The dukes and princes who own the forests

Behind the recent growth of the organized Green Party and associated efforts lie the select families of the so-called Black Nobility of Europe. In the most effective way since the end of the war, the oligarchical families have found and cultivated a popular issue which implicitly brings the "people" into the anomalous role of defending the interests of the reactionary neo-feudal nobility against the constitutional interests of the republic and its citizenry.

How? Contrary to popular opinion, the forests are actually the privately held domain of a virulent oligarchy rather than a public domain. In recent weeks, this normally discreet oligarchy has come out openly, arm-in-arm with members of the Greens and farmers, protesting the "dying forests." On the Marienplatz of Munich, one now finds the director of the interests of the Princes von Thurn und Taxis or von Ottingen-Wallerstein protesting along with the Greens. This is the appropriate point to understand the fraud of the dying forests, as with the fraud of

the earlier movement against nuclear energy and industry.

Who owns Germany's forests? For the area around Bavaria, one need not look far to find the stamp of Duke Albrecht of Bavaria, of the infamous Wittelsbach family. The Saxon Forest around Hamburg is dominated by the family interests of Ferdinand Prince von Bismarck. Joachim Prince zu Fürstenberg is a major owner of the Black Forest. The Prince Richard zu Sayn-Wittgenstein is the major owner in Southern Westphalia, while Johannes Prince von Thurn und Taxis is holder of immense forests in Bavaria.

King Carl Gustaf of Sweden is a major owner of forest lands in the Saxe-Coburg region. In the Hessian Woods, the major interests lie in the hands of Otto Prince zu Ysenburg-Büdingen. The list goes on, though many of the actual documents of ownership have been carefully buried to hide the actual control over these vast forests. These are the decadent oligarchs who are generically committed to a return to a bucolic feudal age without industry or automobile. For those who would like further documentation, I point you to the International Board of Directors of the World Wildlife Fund in Morges, Switzerland.—*William Engdahl*