

I. International

German Farmers and Allies Lead Nationwide Mass Action for the Right to a Productive Existence

by Alexander Hartmann and Marcia Merry Baker

Jan. 12—The removal of the tax exemption for agricultural diesel was the straw that broke the camel’s back, the spark that ignited a conflagration of protests. The long-simmering discontent over the senseless and destructive Green policy, and the arrogant way in which it is being implemented by the European Union and the Federal government, has broken out into a mass-wave of demonstrations and rallies, with farmers in the lead, but joined by all sectors of the population. The government “Traffic Light” Coalition (Red=Social Democratic Party, Yellow=Free Democratic Party, and Green=The Alliance 90/The Greens) of Chancellor Olaf Scholz is in big trouble.

Joining the farmers in protest are truck and bus drivers, railway workers, teachers, doctors, skilled tradesmen, construction workers, bakers, restaurateurs, small businessmen of all kinds, and others who are affected by various budget cuts, resulting in price hikes, and unlivable, unworkable conditions. The “savings” from looting the physical economy this way, are going to finance budget outlay increases to military build-up and “climate protection.”

Gigantic, coordinated protests got underway Monday, Jan. 8, for a Week of Action of tractorcades and



EIRNS/Christopher Lewis

German farmers were out in force for their Week of Action against the government’s anti-agriculture policies—about 100,000 tractors and trucks just on Day One, all across Germany. Shown: tractors in Mainz, Jan. 8, 2024.

more demonstrations of all kinds, to culminate in Berlin Jan. 15 with a mega demonstration. To kick it off, on Day One, around 100,000 tractors and other vehicles took to the streets in all 16 federal states, to protest on an unprecedented scale and with conspicuous, broad popular support. A Round Table discussion is set for Jan. 15 with the government in Berlin, but whatever happens, the Week of Action is viewed as just the beginning of protest, which will continue until economic and related policy measures are taken in the interest of the nation. It is a break-out situation, with a new sense of sovereignty manifest among the German people.

[EIR.News](#) has provided a day by day video round-up of the Week of Action.

The scale of events is amazing. On Day Three—Jan. 10, there was a large rally in Dresden with several hundred tractors and 20,000 demon-

strators. In Augsburg and Mainz, 1,000 tractors rolled into each town; farmers also demonstrated in Kassel and Düsseldorf. In Plauen, 500 tractors drove into the city. In Wilhelmshaven, tractors blocked access to the container terminal. In Bremen all access roads to the port were blocked for an entire morning, paralyz-

ing operations, so ships could not be loaded, nor embark. By pre-arrangement, however, the farmers and demonstrators closed their protest in time to allow port functions to resume. This typifies the spirit of community cooperation.

Also on Jan. 10, the locomotive drivers and railway workers started a three-day protest strike. Their pay has fallen way below inflation, and German Rail, a government company, is refusing to fix this, and is also neglecting rail infrastructure upkeep and expansion. Commuter trains were allowed to keep running for people to get to work, but 80% of rail freight was halted in the strike.

On Day Four, Jan. 11, even larger actions were reported from Flensburg, Lübeck, and in the financial center, Frankfurt am Main, each involving 1,500–2,000 tractors. In Brandenburg and Saxony-Anhalt, tractors blocked dozens of motorway entrances. When Chancellor Scholz came to Cottbus (state of Brandenburg), on a pre-arranged visit to inaugurate a new railway depot, 500 tractors formed the backdrop as he encountered farmers' association representatives.

The Right To Produce Food

As the farmer activists emphasize, the confrontation is about more than just the state subsidies that the government wants to cut, raising agriculture diesel fuel prices, hiking taxes on farm machinery, and the like. More generally, the demand is to move away altogether from the wrong EU agricultural policy. Farmers insist that the Berlin Round Table have a serious discussion about the value of agriculture, and the protection of agriculture and farmers from self-proclaimed “Green” ideologues. At stake, is the right to produce food, an “issue” which



EIRNS/Christopher Lewis

Mainz, Jan. 8: “Do you have to starve before you get it?”



EIRNS/Christopher Lewis

Mainz, Jan. 8: “They don’t sow, they don’t reap, but they know everything.”



EIRNS/Christopher Lewis

Mainz, Jan. 10: “If there are no more farmers, your dinner plates will be bare.”

could not be more in the common interest of the whole population.

In May 2020, the European Union issued its Green Deal “Farm to Fork” program, mandating member nations to implement, by 2030, sweeping reductions in their livestock numbers, land under cultivation, fertilizer and crop defense chemical use, and other food-reduction measures, all in the name of reducing objectionable emissions and “climate change.” A raft of regulations and directives have come from Berlin, and other national capitals, intended to implement this anti-food, anti-farmer policy, including everything from re-introducing and protecting wolves (for biodiversity), to restricting crop cultivation (for re-naturalization).

In recent years, farmers hit the streets against this destructive nonsense in Germany, the Netherlands, France, Italy and other places. But now is the breaking-point moment, given the additional pressures on farming from the energy crisis, military budget shift, and other factors. Typical farmers’ protest slogans have declared, “No Farmer, No Food!” and “No Farmers, No Future!” A current favorite this week is, “Without blood, one turns white; without air, one turns blue; without a brain, one turns Green!”

Common Interest, Cross-Over Collaboration

Attempts by the government and mainstream media to discredit the growing uproar by claiming it is infiltrated by “right-wing extremists” have failed utterly and are likely to backfire. Anthony Lee, a leader of the farm group *Land schafft Verbindung* (Land Creates Connection), summed up the true farmer and public sentiment, in an interview in the early hours of Day One, as the tractors were pulling out in Lower Saxony:



X/@V of Europe

In cities across Germany, farmers demonstrated and rallied to demand that Germany abandon the European Union's ruinous agricultural policies. This rally in Munich on Jan. 8 drew 20,000 farmers and non-farm supporters.

This is only the tip of the iceberg, to be honest, because ... we are all united in getting rid of politicians who are trying to get rid of us. We are sick of the lies, we are sick of them trying to get rid of our jobs.... Everybody is sick of politicians who have no idea what they are talking about, who have no education, who tell us what our lifestyle should look like.... We've tried talking to, and educating them, but now we have no choice but to demonstrate.

Lee spoke on the [X blog](#) of Dutch journalist Eva Vlaardingerbroek, who had reported on the 2023 Dutch farmer uprising, to the U.S. livestock group R-CALF USA, last August.

In all protest actions, the participants have been very disciplined and have coordinated their actions with the police. The chairman of the German Police Union, Rainer Wendt, told *Das Bild* newspaper Jan. 8,

The protests so far have been disciplined and responsible. We expected nothing less; all attempts to criminalize our farmers and push them into the right-wing corner have failed. Emergency routes are planned and secured, and arrangements and cooperation with the local police are in place. All of this distinguishes this proper, democratic protest from the criminal arbitrariness of the tactic of the so-called climate-change activists who glue themselves to road surfaces.

Helga Zepp-LaRouche, Chairwoman of the Schiller Institute and the German *Bürgerrechtsbewegung Solidarität* (Civil Rights Movement Solidarity, *BüSo*)

political party, emphasized in a conversation with activists Jan. 8:

These actions are incredibly important for Germany, because several farmer leaders have said very clearly that they have the courage to step forward to defend the interests, not only of the farmers, but of Germany as a whole against a government that many describe as “total rubbish.”... Many voices point out that the entire agricultural policy is made from Silicon Valley, Wall Street, BlackRock, and the international cartels, not by the government.

All in all, the artificial “parallel reality” that politicians and mainstream media have tried hard to create has vaporized.

Tractors Not Tanks!

BüSo members were present at the protests in many cities with posters that read “Tractors Not Tanks!” They distributed leaflets with the headline “Swords to Plowshares,” calling for a conversion of military-industrial capacities to produce goods for peaceful economic development.

The expansion of protests is being followed closely in other countries, particularly in the Netherlands and France, both of which have traditions of very energetic protests; but also in the United States.

On-Site Reports

From the U.S., a number of leading farm activists sent an open message of support to the German demonstrators with the headline, “Let the Tractors Roll!”

(Text of the message follows this article.)

The following are firsthand reports from activists from *BüSo* and the Schiller Institute, from major rallies in various large cities during the opening days of the Week of Action.

Berlin: The farmers' actions this week are probably the best coordinated of any protests in the capital. Everything goes according to plan and in an orderly manner. The blockade positions on the motorway entrances are well organized as the collection points for tractors, but also for trucks and other vehicles. The speeches have a clear message: the government is hopelessly incompetent and out of touch. Its policies are ruining agriculture, even threatening farms that have been passed down from generation to generation for over 500 years. At the demonstration at the Brandenburg Gate there were not only farmers Jan. 8, but also building contractors, freight forwarders and many citizens who simply want to show their support.

Many say that when "the drop [diesel price hikes] hit the barrel, it not only overflowed, but burst!" Some are already coordinating with neighboring European countries. Our message of restructuring the arms industry and the fight against the international cartels and the financial oligarchy is attracting increasing interest.

Munich: Around 6,000 tractors were in the city for the biggest rally, most of them on the Mittlerer Ring and in the Oktoberfest meadow. Only a few were on the famous Ludwigstraße and Leopoldstraße, which were closed to them from the rally site, Odeonsplatz, to Münchner Freiheit. There were still 8,000–10,000 people on the square, including representatives of other sectors. A listener said that he had not seen such a large demonstration in Munich in the last 40 years, and that this sealed the downfall of the Federal government.

Speakers at the rally were the President of the Bavarian Farmers' Association (BBV) Günther Felßner; the chairman of Land Creates Connection (LsV) Claus Hochrein; the President of the Bavarian Forest Owners' Association Josef Ziegler; and Balthasar Höfer for the young farmers. Short statements of support came from representatives of the Bavarian Economy Association (VBW), the bakery trade, the butchers' association, the millers' association, construction contracting companies, and the hotel and restaurant association. All speakers criticized the fact that the federal government, with the highest tax revenue of all time, was not in a position to create a budget that complied with the constitution and wanted to save a billion euro by stiffing the farmers, but not touching, for example, eight

billion in subsidies for aviation fuel.

The speakers all called on the government to resign and allow new elections. The only speaker from the government parties was Bundestag member Karl Bär from the Green Party, who gave a pitiful picture because he apparently didn't want to understand why the farmers were fed up. He was massively booed.

Felßner welcomed several CSU (Christian Socialist Party) representatives, including MEP (European Parliament member) Manfred Weber, Bavarian Agriculture Minister Michaela Kaniber, other ministers from Bavaria and members of the state parliament. Apparently they want to bring the CDU/CSU back into government, which is why the DBV, which is otherwise always reserved, is also fully involved in the actions.

Stuttgart: Some 2,000 demonstrators gathered in the city center Jan. 8, around 500 of whom had come from all over the surrounding area with their tractors or other commercial vehicles. In particular, craftsmen and the logistics sector were strongly represented alongside farmers. The main demands on their signs were aimed at the resignation of the Traffic Light Coalition and the general appreciation for the work of agriculture.

Almost without exception passers-by expressed their solidarity with the demonstrators as the column of tractors drove from the central assembly point to the rally; cell phone recordings were taken by both the spectators and those riding in the heavy machines.

Right from the start, the organizers emphasized that you could see smooth cooperation and friendly camaraderie with the police, and that no traffic-related incidents were reported. From the public address van, the speakers thanked the large turnout and overwhelming support for the farmers' demands from the city's population.

After three short speeches from farmer representatives who denounced the incompetence of the Traffic Light Coalition, and the lack of credibility of the Federal Agriculture Minister Cem Özdemir, who is from Stuttgart, the microphone was opened for further statements from the crowd. In addition to two union representatives, and a goat farmer from the Swabian Alb who had brought three of his four-legged friends with him in his trailer, "ordinary citizens" and craftsmen spoke. They praised the farmers' initiative and called for the protests to be extended to other professional groups.

A representative of the Schiller Institute addressed the crowd, assuring the farmers and demonstrators that solidarity with their protests even went beyond federal borders and that, in addition to the active participation of farmers from the Netherlands, France, Poland and Hungary, mes-

sages of support were coming in from the United States. He read out a few lines of the statement of solidarity from leading farm representatives from eleven U.S. states to date, which was met with cheers from the crowd, and grateful comments from the organizers.

Wiesbaden: Around 2,000 tractors and trucks were involved in the demonstration Jan. 8, which included many young farmers with their families, some of whom came from distant places such as Fulda, 140 km away, from where they had set off early at 2 a.m. At the final rally in front of the Hessian State Chancellery, the Chairman of the Hessian Farmers' Association (HBV), Karsten Schmal, presented the head of the State Chancellery Axel Wintermeyer with a resolution.

The HBV had expected "only" 1,000 tractors. Schmal's deputy Thomas Kunz told *Hessischer Rundfunk*:

We are very, very positively surprised by our own people and our environment. This shows the high level of motivation that exists in our professional field, but also in rural areas.

A 13-year-old student's school essay on the topic: "Why is the government so stupid as to ruin the farmers?" was met with great approval when his father read it from the podium. One sign ridiculing the government said, "They don't sow, they don't reap, but they know everything."

There were also a number of trades and professions represented in the crowd in front of the State Chancellery—bakers, restaurateurs, trade unionists. An older, well-off couple demonstrated with a sign: "Save the German Economy!"

Mainz: Around 2,000 demonstrators and tractors



X/@PeterSweden

German farmers occupy Dresden with 4,000 tractors and trucks on Day 3 of their Week of Action, Jan. 10, 2024.

took part in the Day One rally at the Mainz Exhibition Center. Photos taken from the highway overpasses show long lines of tractor convoys but no traffic jams because the organization was incredibly good. According to police, the main convoy consisted of up to 1,000 tractors and trucks, and was 20 km long. The state chairman of LsV, the President of the Farmers' and Winegrowers' Association (DWV), and the President of the German Hotel and Restaurant Association (DeHoGa) in Rhineland-Palatinate spoke at the rally.

Dresden: The protesting farmers blocked the motorway entrances around Dresden Jan. 8, which was accepted and supported by the population. Around 900 participants were expected at the rally in the city, but the crowd swelled to 5,000 by midday, and in the evening the media even reported around 13,000 people taking part. The crowd included not only farmers, but also many others who are suffering from the Berlin government's policies, including the nursing services, as well as skilled craftsmen, and people from all along the food chain, from bakeries to restaurants.

U.S. Farm and Ranch Leaders' Message to Germany: Let the Tractors Roll!

Jan. 13—The following open message of support was sent by U.S. farm and ranch leaders to German farmers and their allies during their Jan. 8–15 Week of Action.

We U.S. farmers and ranchers send our support and admiration to German farmers and their co-dem-

onstrators—truck drivers, railroad workers, and all in the food chain—who are holding the Jan. 8–15 Week of Action in Germany. You have the guts and courage to defend the right to produce food, and demand a productive economy for all citizens. You are an inspiration and example to all farmers through-

out the world, to activate and fight.

The German farmer rallies, with thousands of tractors so far this Winter, from Berlin to Stuttgart, have put you on the front lines defending all humanity. The planned Jan. 15 Berlin mass rally is a world-important event. We have seen tens of thousands of farmers in Europe hit the streets in recent years because of the emergency; now is the breaking point.

Farmers all over the world are facing manipulation by the agro-financial-complex of commodity conglomerates, controlled by London, Wall Street, Chicago, Amsterdam, and other commodity financial centers. It is destroying family farming, reducing food production, driving up food prices, and perpetuating hunger. This globalist mechanism creates conditions for depopulation.

The German government is knowingly ruining family farm food production by hiking the diesel price, banning certain agro-inputs, taxing farm machinery, and other moves.

Farmers the world over are now standing up to this. We commit our support to defeat these enemies of humanity in 2024. We can work together to bring about development and peace for all, and total food security.

Let the tractors roll! We are alongside you in the cabs and on the streets!

Signators, as of Jan. 9:

Jon Baker, Harper, Iowa. Cattle and Grain Farmer; Agricultural Bank Vice President and Loan Officer; Vice President, Iowa Stockgrowers Association

Robert “Bob” Baker, Leesburg, Virginia. Former Grain and Livestock Producer; Former Agricultural Bank Loan Officer; Director, Schiller Institute Agricultural Commission

James Benham, Versailles, Indiana. Former State President, Indiana Farmers Union; National Board Member, National Farmers Union

Bill Bullard, Billings, Montana. Chief Executive Officer, R-CALF USA (Ranchers-Cattlemen Action Legal Fund, United Stockgrowers of America)

Mike Callicrate, Colorado Springs, Colorado. Cattleman; President and Founder, Ranch Foods Direct

Frank Endres, Corning, California. Wheat and Cattle Rancher; National Board Member, National

Farmers Organization (NFO) and R-CALF USA
Dr. Taylor Haynes, Laramie, Wyoming. Rancher; President of the Board of Directors, Organization for Competitive Markets

Angela Huffman, Wharton, Ohio. Sheep Farmer; President, Farm Action

Tracy Hunt, Newcastle, Wyoming. Cattle Rancher; Farm Leader; Attorney (retired)

Wilbur Kehrli, Manchester, Iowa. Cattle, Pigs and Grain Farmer; Retired, Board of Directors, American Blue Cattle Association

Bill Kluck, Mud Butte, South Dakota. Sheep and Cattle Rancher; Chairman, Sheep Committee, R-CALF USA; Board of Directors, South Dakota Stockgrowers Association

Vaughn Meyer, Reva, South Dakota. Cattle Rancher; Former President, South Dakota Stockgrowers Association; Former President, Organization for Competitive Markets

Eric Nelson, Merville, Iowa. Farm/Feeder and Rancher; Vice President, R-CALF USA and Director, Region VII (Minnesota, Iowa, Wisconsin)

Andrew Olson, Windom, Minnesota. Grain Producer, Farm Leader; Chairman, Minnesota Schiller Institute Agricultural Commission

Mike Schultz, Brewster, Kansas. Rancher and Farmer; Vice-President, Organization for Competitive Markets

Randy Sowers, Middletown, Maryland. Dairy and Grain Farmer; Founder, South Mountain Creamery

Matthew Steele, Manhattan, Kansas. Executive Director, Kansas Cattlemen’s Association

Herman Steffen, Detour, Maryland. Beef Cattle and Grain Farmer; Farm Leader

Mike Weaver, Franklin, West Virginia. Member, Board of Directors and former President, Contract Poultry Growers Association of the Virginias

Charles White, Fowlerville, Michigan. Dairy and Grain Farmer; Farm Leader

Tork Whisler and Sawyer Whisler, Washington, Iowa. Grain and Pork Producers; Farm Leaders; Founders of *Barn Talk* (on YouTube)

Ron Wiczorek, Mitchell, South Dakota. Rancher and Farm Leader; Former Candidate for U.S. Congress; Chairman, South Dakota Schiller Institute Agricultural Commission