

Live Dialogue with Helga Zepp-LaRouche

German Farm Protests: 'This Is Just the Tip of the Iceberg'

This is an edited transcript; embedded links have been added. The full video is available [here](#).

Harley Schlanger: Hello and welcome to our weekly dialogue with Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder and leader of the Schiller Institute. Today is Wednesday, January 10, 2024. I'm Harley Schlanger and I'll be your host today. Send your comments or questions to questions@schillerinstitute.org.

German Farmers Defend Life

I want to open our discussion by asking your assessment, Helga, on two extremely important developments: One being the tractors rolling across Germany in protest against the government and the EU policies in general, which is gathering a lot of support from the population; and secondly, the hearing that's taking place tomorrow at the International Court of Justice [in The Hague, Netherlands] on a motion that was filed by South Africa, to find Israel guilty of genocide against the population of Gaza under the Genocide Convention Act of 1948.

These reflect a shift from the passivity of accepting outrageous policies, to what appears to be a change to an unwillingness to accept such kinds of policies. Do you see these events as an indication that there's a tide turning, that more people will be willing to step forward and speak out? And do you think this is a reflection of the courage shown by the leaders of the Global South in making their voices heard?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: Yes, I would definitely say

so. Let's start with the situation in Germany. I think this is really the beginning of a game-changer, because the farmers—who have been protesting and complaining for a very, very long time against the policies of the various governments, ranging back a long time, but escalating with this unspeakable so-called “streetlight coalition,” [of the SPD, FDP and the Greens] which everybody agrees is the worst government Germany has had since the Second World War—have now erupted. The farmers, and many others with them, but especially the farmers, are expressing very clearly that they see their existence threatened through a combination of



EIRNS/Christopher Lewis

Germany's farmers, with broad popular support, have erupted in demonstrations nationwide, to challenge their government's Malthusian policies aimed to destroy agriculture. Shown: a farmer protest in Mainz, Jan. 10, 2024. The sign reads: "If there are no more farmers, your plates will be empty."

ever-greater cuts—this time, the diesel fuel subsidies, but also lots of bureaucratic rules that have made their lives impossible, that they have no control over their prices—so this has erupted now.

I must applaud the German farmers. I think every German is extremely proud that some segment of their population is finally doing something. For a long time, if you would ask people in Germany, “What do you



EIRNS/Christopher Lewis



EIRNS/Christopher Lewis

At left, a scene from the German farmers' protests in Mainz, March 27, 2013. The sign reads: "Our death affects you all." At right: Out in force again in Mainz, Jan. 10, 2024. The sign reads: "Europolitics is destroying German agriculture!"

think?" Ninety-nine percent of the people would say, "Germany is crashing against the wall. The present powers that be are ruining everything that generation after generation has built up after the Second World War." But then they would normally add, "There's nothing you can do." Both the coalition government and the opposition were regarded as relatively the same—with the exception of the AfD. But many people thought that that is something you can't really vote for because of very problematic circles within the AfD.

For a long time, the German situation looked really terrible because the German economy was collapsing and collapsing, especially after the sabotage of the Nord Stream gas pipelines, where everybody suspects that [investigative journalist] Seymour Hersh is right to say that the United States did it. [He is] demanding an investigation. But people knew that the terrible collapse of the German economy, German agriculture, was in large part the result of the sanctions against Russia—which were really forced upon Germany as part of the general trans-Atlantic policy—but also the increase in the energy prices, since the gas from Russia was no longer available.

So, everybody had the feeling the country is going down and down and down, and there is no force that

has the guts to do something about it. On Monday Jan. 8, there were more than 100,000 tractors in these demonstrations. There are many videos circulating on the internet: 100,000 tractors make a lot of long, long, long lines! Demonstrations took place in 100 cities, in all 16 German states. They were supported by truckers, by workers from the construction sector bringing in their trucks, or cement machines, or other construction vehicles and also craftsmen. And if you went through some towns in Germany, you'd see in the windows signs reading, "We support the fight of the German farmers."

I think this is now the beginning of something. I do not see how it can be undone, because the action of the farmers has given them a new sense of confidence about what they can do. The actions, the speeches, were extremely peaceful, contrary to the vicious attempt beforehand to criminalize this movement, saying it was subverted by rightwing circles.

The media tried to blow up an incident where Robert Habeck, the Economics Minister, on his way back from a visit to a North Sea island, when the ferry carrying him was approaching the dock in Schleswig-Holstein, farmers were there to talk to him. Nothing big happened; there was no violent attack, but the captain of the ferry decided to turn the ferry around and not

land there with Habeck.

This incident was blown up as a big, big thing, that this is the sign that the farmers are trying to topple the state. I think it was nothing of that sort. The former head of the police trade union, Rainer Wendt, totally ridiculed all of these attempts, and everybody praised the farmers, the police, and the collaboration between them.

I think this was a very excellent demonstration of statecraft, of really taking responsibility, and this will go on, I think, until the “streetlight” coalition takes the cuts back. We will see. There are more demonstrations scheduled for the whole week. Next Monday, Jan. 15, they have called for a huge, national demonstration and for the whole week for local demonstrations, with cutting off access to highways; blocking roads is going to continue. As of today, the strike of the locomotive driver’s trade union has been going on for three days.

So, I think there is a real shift in Germany, and the good thing, that’s also being reported by all the media: about 90% of the population supports the farmers, and only 10% complain, “they are disrupting my daily work.” People really understand that the German farmers are fighting for all of Germany. So, this is excellent.

Farmers from all over the world are sending supporting telegrams. You who are listening to this show, whether or not you have anything to do with farming, send your support telegrams, make short videos to the German farmers, because they are now the spearhead of the fight to bring the economy back to a correct basis.

Now, as to the second event you mentioned: Tomorrow starts the hearing in The Hague, on the demand by the South African government to investigate if Israel is committing genocide in Gaza. Many organizations and many individuals, many hundreds of organizations have joined to support South Africa. Here, again, I would say, it is a sign of the times that it is a country of the Global South—of Africa, of the BRICS—that is taking the moral leadership to try to stop what is going on in Gaza, which is absolutely horrible and getting worse by the day. There are now estimates that every day, thousands of people are dying from hunger and thirst. It is estimated that in the next several months, a quarter of the entire population of Gaza, that is, 500,000 people, are in immediate danger of dying of disease, because of the collapse of sanitation: No clean water or things like that.

It’s super, super-urgent that there be a ceasefire, and peace negotiations. And that a comprehensive approach, like that proposed by China for a Middle East Peace conference be put on the agenda. But the fact that a country of the Global South, and not of the so-called “values-based, Western rules-based order,” is showing this moral leadership, is I think a sign of the times. It just means that leadership is shifting to the Global South, because the West obviously has lost it.

German Public Supports German Farmer Demonstrations

Schlanger: Now, Helga, you sort of answered this, but we have a question from someone who asked: “Is the German population supporting the farmers’ protest?”

Zepp-LaRouche: Yes. I think it is a very, very important sign. In past struggles, you would have misunderstandings and so forth, but this time, they are, for the reason I already touched upon. I had many discussions in the last year, and whoever I spoke with, bakers, farm workers, entrepreneurs, Mittelstand managers, they would all say, “Germany is collapsing!”

It is collapsing! You have an absolute shrinking of the middle-level industries, you have many towns becoming ghost towns, where shops are closing in the city center, restaurants are closing down, and that has all to do with the high energy prices and that simply because if customers are becoming poorer, then they don’t go to restaurants and shops as much.

In the past, the official farmers’ association, the *Deutscher Bauernverband*, and the sort-of alternative organization, *Land schafft Verbindung*, which has more spontaneously existed for some time, were never on the same page. The good thing is that now they are working together, and I think this is really extremely important. There is also a lot of support from—I would say almost all—segments of the population. That is extremely important.

And I have the feeling that this could be the beginning of a change of the situation in Germany altogether, by asserting more sovereign rights, more the real interest of Germany, which in the recent period was completely trampled upon by the so-called “former” occupying powers, but some of them still think they are in charge, and are trying to dictate policies in Germany which are absolutely detrimental to the interest

of Germany. This is now presenting the bill for that.

Trust in German Government Coalition Plummets after Nord Stream

Schlanger: We have a question from Philip who asks: “Do German policymakers realize that the U.S. destruction of the Nord Stream pipelines was an act of betrayal by their so-called ally? And is it possible this will provoke some kind of action to hold the U.S. accountable for what it’s done?”

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, it may not have been in the mainstream media, because they totally, ridiculously sell all the cover stories: that it was some yacht with somebody from Poland, and some Ukrainian crew. This was the cover story. Whereas many military experts have pointed out the fact that to have an explosion like that that would sabotage the Nord Stream pipelines, you can’t do that with the kind of equipment on a sailing yacht—you just don’t have the adequate equipment for deep diving, etc.



Danish Defense Command
Gas bubbles rise to the surface of the Baltic Sea at the site of one of the explosions that wrecked the Nord Stream pipelines, Sept. 27, 2022.

Biden said something along the lines that “we will get rid of it.”

Scholz just stood there next to Biden, like a little “poodle under the shower” (that’s a German idiom), a “wet poodle,” as we say. The fact that the German government is not capable of representing the interests of the German people and that the whole German economy is collapsing as a result—that was not in the mainstream news!

But I can assure you it was a subject of a lot of discussions, and I think it was one of the major reasons why trust in the government has eroded, and the government in the polls right now is at an absolute low. It could even be, if the government does not make an agreement [with the farmers and others] and this continues, the government could be pushed out in a very short period of time. The only problem is, how you organize an opposition which is worth the name—given the fact, for instance, that the head of the CDU [Friedrich Merz] is the former Chairman of the Supervisory Board of BlackRock Germany (2016-2020)—and that, indeed, raises some questions on what the CDU policy might be.

But anything which changes the present trajectory is good and opens up the way to have a real discussion for where Germany should go.

BRICS Dynamic Supports Survival of Small Countries

Schlanger: We have a question from Chris K. in Panama, who has been watching the transition that has been underway for a while in Panama, from being a physically productive economy to one based on finan-



White House/Adam Schultz

When President Joe Biden, with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz next to him, told the press, “We will get rid of the Nord Stream pipelines,” Scholz just stood there like an obedient “wet poodle.” Bali, Indonesia, Nov. 15, 2022.

The media always would present these cover stories, and there was no discussion!

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, in February 2022 was at this famous [press conference](#) with President Joe Biden, where Biden said, “There will be no longer a Nord Stream 2. We will bring an end to it.” And the reporter then asked a second time what about it, and

cial services utilizing the dollar. He reports that shipping traffic in the canal is down, and so government revenues are down. He asks: “How will countries such as ours, Panama, survive when they’re dependent on financial services related to the dollar? How can they survive? What can they do?”

Zepp-LaRouche: Obviously, this battle is not settled; it is becoming more ferocious, in the effort to increase the role of the dollar again, clearly being pushed, as in the case of Argentina.

On the other side, I think that this year, 2024, will be a year when the new economic system of the BRICS-Plus, the Global Majority, the countries that altogether represent 80-85% of the world’s population, who are trying to create a new economic system—maybe even a new reserve currency—but are putting economic cooperation on the agenda for the benefit of all participants—that is becoming the dominant tendency. With Russia, on Jan. 1, assuming the presidency of the BRICS—the BRICS-10—and with more than 30 countries having applied for membership in the next period, I think that will become the dominant dynamic.

The financial system which only is good for the speculators—at least for the time being, before some major crash occurs, which only seeks the profit maximization of a relatively small part of the population while neglecting the common good of the vast majority—is now, in my view, really not going to last forever. This was the prediction of my late husband, Lyndon LaRouche, in 1971 when President Richard Nixon replaced the fixed exchange rates, with floating ones. At that time LaRouche pointed out that if you would continue on that road, it would lead inevitably to a collapse of the system and even if it took half a century, which is a little bit longer than we could anticipate because we did not quite judge the enormous methods of the central banks to manipulate the markets, to use derivatives, but that derivatives system may be the final nail on the coffin, because you now have \$2 quadrillion in outstanding derivatives that are unpayable. That whole game is coming to an end.

There is hope. It’s not a settled battle. In Mexico, many people would often say, “We only have two problems: one is history and the other one is geography.” I think Panama is not very far away from such a dilemma. But now there are many countries, really determined, that have strong leaders. In the BRICS, there are several strong leaders. South Africa’s case against Israel in the International Court of Justice in The



CC/@Mazur/catholicnews.org.uk

In his Christmas message, Pope Francis invoked Isaiah 2:4, that swords shall be beat into plowshares, and that nations shall no longer study war.

Hague is another proof of such leadership strength. So, I would not give up hope, and would try to hold out.

‘Turn Swords into Plowshares’ Act

Schlanger: You mentioned the role of BlackRock. We have this question from a regular viewer: “You used to discuss the military-industrial complex, or the MICIMATT as Ray McGovern calls it. Now, you’re calling it the military-financial complex. Does this reflect the role of companies like BlackRock, Vanguard, and Silicon Valley?”

Zepp-LaRouche: Yes. I would suggest that you go on our website where we have a [fact sheet](#) Before Christmas we started the campaign to “Turn Swords into Plowshares” because the expenditures for the military-industrial complex in the West, in the United States, but also increasingly in Europe, is just such an enormous destruction of physical wealth that we went back to the old *Isaiah 2:4* demand that swords should be made into plowshares. There are many, many references in Church history where this demand was put forward. Just a few days later, Pope Francis, in his Christmas message, also came out demanding exactly that. In the meantime, many more religious leaders have picked up on that.

We have to stop this incredible destruction of physical capacity and physical assets which are so much more urgently needed for the common good—infrastructure, hospitals, schools, an enormous demand to overcome poverty, hunger, to develop fresh water. All of these things require exactly those capacities which are now being thrown away in war and destruction.



Wafa/Ali Hamad



UNICEF/Omar Al-Qattaa

Two scenes from Gaza: Smoke and flames consume a residential high-rise in Gaza City after an Israeli air strike, Oct. 7, 2023. A 5-year-old boy amidst the rubble that once was his home in the “safe” Sheikh Zayed City, Jan. 11, 2024.

We looked into who is actually owning these military industrial firms; it turns out it’s not the industrial forces, but it’s the major financial investment corporations of Wall Street, the City of London, and other financial centers, which manage their stocks and equities. So, you can really see that the name should be changed from “military-industrial complex” into, at least, “military-industrial-financial complex,” and then you have the ownership.

What to do about it? Well, we are working on legislation; we have written a first draft for the United States, called “The Swords into Plowshares [Act](#) of 2024.” We are working on similar legislative proposals for other countries. *This has to come to an end*, because if you don’t do it, and you keep militarizing the economies, like the crazy EU is now proposing, if you say that we have to prepare for war with Russia, which is what they’re saying openly now in Sweden, in Finland; or in Germany, where Defense Minister Boris Pistorius says we have to make Germany “war ready”—who wants to become “war ready”? We don’t want to end up in a situation where we will have World War III, as it would be a war nobody would survive!

So, anybody who says we should become war ready, should better go and see his or her doctor for a referral to some other doctor (I don’t want to elaborate that; you know what I mean).

This is insane! We should absolutely mobilize the population to transform the military industry into peaceful production, and then we could find solutions to everything.

Schlanger: As you were answering that question, someone wrote in: “How can we get Congress to introduce the ‘Swords into Plowshares Act’?” People should take it out and organize with it. Read it, study it, get the details of what Helga was just discussing, in terms of who’s running the military-financial complex, and get this to your congressman. Be bold! Don’t hold back.

The Charge of Genocide by Israel

Here’s a question from Stockholm, Sweden: “Even if South Africa’s court case against Israel succeeds, what official authority does the International Court of Justice have? They don’t have a police force, do they?”

Zepp-LaRouche: No, but the International Court of Justice (World Court) could do the investigation, and then give the entire package, so to speak, to the International Criminal Court, which has a much larger jurisdiction. The South African government has provided already an 84-page documentation, which is very detailed and very thorough, so a lot of work has been done already. If that would be further investigated by the ICC, and it became an issue of public discussion among the governments in the in the UN Security Council, in the UN General Assembly, and other such *fora*, it would change the dynamic.

This whole system of the world has only functioned because there was a tremendous manipulation of public opinion. You didn’t have truth, but you had the narratives which were promoted.

For example, the narrative on Gaza changed! For a very long time, several months, the narrative was

that it was all on the attack by Hamas on Israel which caused all of this trouble, completely leaving out the fact that there was an over-proportional reaction by the Israel Defense Forces (IDF); that the military power of the Israeli army is so vastly superior, that they cordoned off the entire Gaza area, cutting off people from food, medicine—all of that for a long time was not reported.

It really only broke, maybe two weeks ago, that the news became so overwhelming, that even the media which in the beginning had completely left out the overreaction of the IDF, which clearly revealed that the aim was not just to punish the Hamas for its Oct. 7 attack. Various Israeli government Ministers in the meantime came out saying openly they wanted to depopulate Gaza of all Palestinians, that they wanted to transfer them to the Sinai, or to Jordan, basically admitting to ethnic cleansing. Only slowly, slowly did the narrative change, and the truth came out.

The advantage of having such a case in the International Court of Justice is that truth and justice again have a chance to be visible and heard. And that is, I think, the absolute precondition for any remedy for the situation.

The Great Chance of 2024

Schlanger: We have a few comments. Louisa writes, “The world is dark, and you are lighting the world. Thank you for what you are doing.” Another: “I will get on my Congressman’s rear end as soon as possible, on this Act.” Someone named “Violin Hunter 2” wrote: “Germany needs to stop supporting Ukraine.” I think you would agree with that. Do you have anything to add, to finish our discussion today?

Zepp-LaRouche: I think people should really become active. This is a moment when, to sit on the fence, or to sit on the couch, or sit anywhere and not move is not forgivable. There are periods where for a long time nothing happens, and people have a certain reason to say, “Oh, one cannot do anything anyway,” which is a sentence I have wanted for a long time to outlaw with the punishment of dungeon. I have said, if anybody says this, they should have 10 years in the dungeon, because it’s demoralizing other people.

Joking aside, I think right now is the moment when you have—I would not say it’s *like* 1989; but it could *become* that. Remember that, in 1989, when millions took to the streets in East Germany, the Berlin Wall came down, and there was for a short period of time, a

chance for what we called the stellar hour of mankind. We know by now, and even published a [book](#) about it, called *The Missed Opportunity of 1989-90*, that that chance of ’89 was lost, for many reasons: One reason was geopolitics, that the German unification, with the potential of having a peace order, including with Russia, was clearly not in the design of George H.W. Bush (U.S.), Margaret Thatcher (UK), and François Mitterrand (France). So, definitely, there were manipulations to quash that potential.

If you ask people from East Germany today what they think about 1989, they have a quite bitter view. They think that they were taken over by Western imperialist forces, that their entire life’s work was cancelled, so there is a lot of bitterness in East Germany. I think that that is part of the reason why they never believed the narrative about the reason for the war in Ukraine, because their own experience was very different.

I think we can learn the lesson, and say that if a system is coming down, as described in the Declaration of Independence—I don’t have the exact words now, but you all know it—that you can endure a wrong government for a very long time, but a point comes when you have to change it. That’s the same subject as in *Wilhelm Tell*, the play by Friedrich Schiller, which has beautiful formulations, exactly like in the Declaration of Independence, that there are inalienable rights hanging from the sky. And sometimes you have to reach and bring down the powers of these stars to Earth. I’m modifying it a little bit, but basically the idea is that these inalienable rights are there, they are part of creation, part of the universe, and they work.

We have now this unbelievable change with the former colonial countries rising. They don’t want to be in this position anymore, and they’re taking steps to develop themselves. All the people in the West, in the United States, in European countries have to do is somehow form themselves into institutions to say, “We have to cooperate with the Global South and create a new paradigm in the entire planet for cooperation.” Every problem can be solved if we take that road; that’s the reason to be optimistic. However, it does require a lot of people to be active. Join the Schiller Institute, get active with us: We have lots to do.

Schlanger: Helga, thanks for joining us today. We’ll see you again next week.

Zepp-LaRouche: Yes, thank you, Harley!