

money itself is available, but according to the conditionalities imposed by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, these countries are only "allowed" to use these funds for settling outstanding debt balances, not for imports of goods. "If these countries had the money, they would certainly buy fertilizers, since the demand is there," commented an official working in the Development Aid Ministry in Bonn.

Lack of potash causes famine

The fact that production capacity for potash and for fertilizers in general is more than one-third greater than actual current consumption in agricultural production, can be blamed on two interrelated causes: 1) the International Monetary Fund's palpable intervention into the ostensibly "free" world fertilizer market in Africa, Ibero-America, Asia, and, since 1989, also in eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union; and 2) the monetarist motives behind the deliberate reduction in the amount of agriculturally usable land in western Europe and the United States over the past few years. Here lie the real causes of the "cutthroat competition" between the few remaining potash producers, so that smaller and ostensibly "very expensive" plants such as those in Thuringia are shut down without any thought to the consequences.

As for western Germany's potash industry—one of the participants in this cartel warfare against jobs in Germany's east—one can only be amazed at how the industry is violating the very principles which its leading representatives had been publicly professing as late as two years ago. Back on May 27, 1991, Dr. Otto Walterspiel, then chairman of Kali und Salz AG, delivered a speech at the Second International Potash Congress in Hamburg, on the theme, "Adequate food for a growing world population can only be ensured through a health potash industry." He explained how "there is no substitute for potassium as a plant nutrient," which can considerably increase the yield and storage life of food products such as corn (maize), as has already occurred in southern Africa. "If corn does not get enough potash, it leads to poor kernel formation, especially at the tip of the ear; its resistance is lowered and its susceptibility to fungus diseases increases." Walterspiel said it was lamentable that especially in Africa and Asia there is still much too frequent use of less efficient fertilizers made out of organic waste, even though the soil in many areas is quite low in potassium. Some African countries launched experiments right after gaining independence in the 1960s, in order to develop their own domestic fertilizer supply, but they ran up against what he called difficulties (in reality, the power of the world market cartels of the former colonial powers, and the banks' credit blockade) in the buildup phase, and thus, as in the case of the Congo, according to Walterspiel, "collapsed in 1967 after only seven years."

"The continually growing world population, must, however, be fed," Walterspiel continued. "Especially in the developing countries, food production must be increased with

Zepp-LaRouche: 'Hunger strikers, courage!'

Helga Zepp-LaRouche, a leader of Germany's Civil Rights Movement Solidarity, delivered the following speech to the striking workers at the potash mine in Bischofferode in eastern Germany on June 17.

I would like to express my admiration and the total support of the International Civil Rights Movement Solidarity, because your heroic fight here for the defense of productive jobs is valid not only for your own mine, but in reality for the interest of Germany and human society as a whole.

The most important thing I want to say is this: Your actions are morally right and economically competent. Politicians and all your critics are incompetent from an economic standpoint; in reality, they are very dumb people. These politicians, and the Treuhand, and the IG Bergbau und Chemie [trade union] are completely on the wrong track, and are pursuing a policy which cannot work. If this mine is shut down, then the whole region, and with it, the existence and earnings of a large part of the population, will be ruined.

The Bonn government's decision to shut close this mine is the result of a policy which is based on the absurd, false assumption that the economic crisis can be overcome by eliminating productive jobs and implementing brutal cuts in all areas. The truth is that cuts only make matters worse. If the budget is cut and productive capacities are eliminated, then productive employment is reduced, and with it, the tax base, so that the budget deficit grows even larger than if nothing had been done at all. This budget-cutting policy is an austerity spiral which winds ever

the help of increased application of fertilizer. We can therefore also expect powerful surge in demand for potash." Walterspiel said there are indeed barriers to achieving that goal, but that these have nothing to do with pricing policy and cost-cutting within the potash industry itself (e.g., through closing potash plants which have become "too expensive" to operate, as is now being promoted); rather, they touch upon the fundamentals of economic policy: "Because of a lack of purchasing power and appropriate infrastructure, and also particularly because of a failed agricultural policy, consumption in Latin America, and especially in Africa, has for a long time not been rising as quickly as the need to ensure food supplies for the population would require, and remains at a level which is much too low."

downwards, without ever reaching bottom.

Bonn's decision is not based on national interest, but on private interest and personal profit, which harms entire country. Why does Bonn do something that goes against Germany's interests? They are adapting to the policy which is characteristic of the International Monetary Fund, and the British and U.S. governments. All you have to do is take a look at the desolate condition of the British economy to realize what Margaret Thatcher achieved with her ridiculous ideas. What she did was to take an already sick economy and destroy it with her budget-slashing. The policy of budget-cutting is no policy; rather it is a sickness which guarantees the patient will die.

The Bonn government has to realize that it is making errors, and that it must liberate itself from this crazy Thatcherite budget-slashing policy. Germany's interests do not lie in the budget-cutting demands of the IMF and [European Community bureaucrats in] Brussels, but rather in the well-being and future of all our citizens. It is simply not true, that there are no markets for the products of the miners here. A large proportion of humanity is starving, in the South and in the East. Worldwide, there is a scarcity of almost everything. The problem is that the Bonn government has submitted itself to an international policy which is insane. In eastern Europe, this shock therapy policy has reduced productive capacities by one-third to one-half. In Russia, as a result of this policy, the danger is the consolidation of a new imperialism which feels betrayed by the West—and which, in fact, is being cheated by mega-speculators like George Soros. This is very dangerous; it is insane. This radical deindustrialization policy seems to have taken hold in Germany since the assassination of [Deutsche Bank head Alfred] Herrhausen [in November 1989] and [Treuhand chief Detlev] Rohwedder [in April 1991]. Did the assassins want to kill



Helga Zepp-LaRouche speaks to hunger strikers and their supporters at the Bischofferode potash mine.

the ideas of Herrhausen and Rohwedder. . . ? Did they want to bury the idea of economic progress in the coffin? The Bonn government finally has to learn that it cannot go on like this, that the current course leads to catastrophe.

The only way out of the crisis is the maintenance and further creation of productive jobs, through infrastructure and advanced technologies; and the creation of a productive *Mittelstand*, through investment in industry and agriculture. This is the only way to balance the budget, because it is the only way to increase tax revenues without raising taxes. What counts is Germany's real productivity. The service sector is very unproductive, it contributes nothing to national welfare. Therefore, not only must this potash mine be kept running, but the Bonn government has to change policy for all of Germany.

Hunger strikers, courage! You have the interests of Germany and you have justice on your side. Good luck!

Make development aid count

Walterspiel's conclusion was not the cartels' argument which one hears everywhere today, that the African countries should be written off as bad customers, and thus that their populations, even though we know full well about the dramatic collapse in food supplies there, should just be left to starve. On the contrary, Walterspiel declared, "We should not tire of repeatedly making those in positions of responsibility in the industrialized countries aware of how sensible *increased application of potash is in the framework of development aid, accompanied of course by an improvement in infrastructure, education of farmers, and not least by an agricultural policy which promotes production*" (emphasis added).

This is identical to what mining union officials demanded

at demonstrations two years ago, though they now seem to have forgotten it. And now the miners of Bischofferode are raising the same demand again. Let us hope that they will not break off their protest and buckle under to the diktat of the potash cartel. Their strike must force the German potash industry and the government to finally do something to improve the situation in sub-Saharan Africa, and with development aid resources—some of which are already available right now—to orient fertilizer production toward the immense needs of the developing countries. The DM 1.3 million, which according to Goldman Sachs's report to the Treuhand would have to be spent to shut down Bischofferode and parts of western German potash production, is better invested in increasing development aid, and will ensure a future for the jobs which are ostensibly "irrevocably lost."