

## Agriculture by Rosa Tennenbaum

### German farming: full steam backward!

*If the SPD wins the Oct. 16 election, Greenpeace's Monika Griefahn could be Germany's agriculture minister.*

Over recent weeks, the chancellor candidate of the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) has been putting out the names of his shadow cabinet members. Rudolf Scharping made one announcement likely to send chills down the spines of farmers: There will no longer be an agriculture portfolio in a future SPD government. Instead it will be subordinated to the Environmental Protection Ministry. The best person for the job would be Monika Griefahn, he said.

Griefahn is no mystery woman. For the past four years she has been environment minister in the state of Lower Saxony and always in the headlines, because she never misses a chance to take aim against nuclear energy and nuclear waste storage. In her opinion, all nuclear power comes straight from hell and should be shut down. Her profound scientific insights were gained in the international environmentalist outfit Greenpeace.

This multinational's leaflets and actions call farmers "poisoners" and "environment destroyers" who pollute the drinking water with "poison and liquid manure." Among the organization's clever campaigns are a total ban on manure ("no more manure should be allowed in the fields") and of course also on "chemical fertilizers" and "pesticides" which supposedly "endanger" all our drinking water. The only salvation lies in a radical "ecological reform of agriculture," which Greenpeace is pulling for.

Such charges appeared, for example, in 1989 in a Greenpeace fundrais-

ing appeal, while Griefahn was still chairing Greenpeace Germany. The specter of polluted drinking water and poisoned food obviously served their purpose then, of browbeating their audience into "regular contributions."

Griefahn not only led the German executive body of Greenpeace, but she also sat on the international executive of this eco-multinational and therefore must also answer to the public for its actions, statements, and programs. Her husband, Michael Baumgart, is also in the environment business, and a master fundraiser. He has been criticized for drawing up an "environmental scorecard" of industrial firms, in which all the companies that got good marks are lavish funders of his Hamburg Environment Institute (HUI). As reported by the *Hannover Allgemeine Zeitung*, he wrote the puzzled firms an overbearing letter informing them of his plans and demanding some \$3,000 from each ("We require that each participant. . .").

In Griefahn's era as chairman, Greenpeace Germany also put out declarations such as the assertion that world cattle stocks are much too high and ought to be drastically reduced, because the innocent beasts were guilty of emitting ammonia and methane gas and hence causing the threat of global warming. Of course, the cows also digest, which is especially disreputable, because their manure not only bothers finicky city folks' noses, but also contains mineral nutrients which act as natural fertilizers to increase the yields of fields and pastures. Hence, the Lower Saxony Environment Min-

istry has been fighting, ever since Griefahn took office, for a new manure law, under which a maximum of only 1.5 units of dung may be applied per hectare per year.

The food supply has no priority for these ladies and gentlemen, and modern agriculture none whatsoever, because it feeds far too many people. So it must be shut down. Measures to that end have been widely tested in the last few years in selected regions, for example, in protected wetlands; and fertilizers and pesticides were further restricted. In the long run, at best, what would remain would be what these authorities think of as "ecological agriculture" covering the landscape. In an interview with the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, Griefahn said that she wants more "extensive farming" i.e., low-technology farming. She also wants to end farm subsidies and "to open up other income sources" for farmers, "such as in tourism or through the use of renewable energy sources." To do this, she is mainly promoting non-farm "moonlighting" occupations.

"We want an agriculture which gives farmers a chance—the family farms in the West and the quite differently structured farms in the East," she stated. Thus we will "assuredly not make it so that each individual company can be kept." Not by a long shot. The "family farm's sideline business" no longer needs any public support, as the family gets its income from outside agriculture and only works the farm in their free time. The "quite differently structured farms in the East" will survive in such a framework only as writeoff objects for wealthy flight capitalists.

Griefahn would do well to put the farmers on an endangered species list, because if Scharping wins and puts her in office, soon there will be fewer of them than the baby seals everyone makes such a fuss over.