

## Agriculture by Rosa Tennenbaum

### Farmers rally on German-Polish border

*They demonstrated against the Darwinian free market policies of the IMF, GATT, and the Maastricht Treaty.*

On Sept. 12, farmers from Germany, Poland, and France gathered on the German-Polish border to demonstrate against the ruinous economic policies now in effect in Europe, and to resolve to overthrow these with programs for the good of farmers and people of all nations.

On the German side, in the town of Forst, the crowd, numbering about 60, was attended by 10 members of the press. There were around 40 farmers and two tractors, with dozens more running around with TV cameras, microphones, and notebooks. Across the border in Poland, 50 farmers rallied.

The speakers on the western side included leaders of German Agriculture Organization (VdL). The head of VdL East is Frank Richter of eastern Germany; the VdL West was represented by Helmut Eichinger of western Germany. Representing France was Mr. Danielle, of the French group Rural Coordination.

During the German rally, these speakers were joined by two delegates from the Polish Union for the Self-Defense of Farmers. Other Polish farmers, lacking passports, waited at the border, where they were interviewed by the press.

Following the German rally, an indoor meeting was held, where a chapter of the VdL was founded for the region. Then the crowd went over to the Polish side, where Andrzej Lepper, the president of the Union for the Self-Defense of Farmers, and 50 other farmers were waiting.

Lepper was surrounded by a mass of people with a dozen microphones,

two TV cameras, and at least five photographers. A few steps away, police cars staked out the scene.

Lepper and the representatives from the West read messages of support from abroad. Excitement rose over greetings from Sonora, Mexico, from the Minnesota farmers union, and from Sweden. The Swedish Christian Farmers Association sent greetings, as did the Swedish Farmers Association.

Lepper said in his speech that not only Poland, but the whole world is at a moment of profound change. The austerity demands of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the free trade policies of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the European Community's Maastricht Treaty on European Union are exacerbating the crisis, he charged.

"In Poland, there is a tragedy in preparation, not only in agriculture but in every sector and social layer," Lepper continued. "We want to form a joint organization to fight against this in Europe, maybe even in the whole world. It should be an organization that respects man as a human being. Today man is worth nothing; the only thing that counts is money, money, money. Even in our country, which is a Christian country, they forget that man is the highest good. Too many are making a fortune with lies and stealing. But the world is not only us here; it is Africa and Asia as well, where tens of thousands are dying every day. The world is today incapable of feeding 5 billion people, despite the fact that it could nourish 10 billion easily."

The French representative from Rural Coordination said that his group was founded to defeat Maastricht and the Common Agriculture Policy of the European Community, which is based on a free market approach. "This policy will have the same disastrous consequences for Europe as what is happening in eastern Europe right now. Eighty percent of French farmers will go bankrupt next year. Big companies and banks will buy up their property and we will have collective farms like in eastern Europe. Farmers all over the world are in the same fight. We must not allow ourselves to be thrown against each other all the time."

Frank Richter from the VdL East said that his organization is fighting for a true reform of the old socialist agriculture. Right now, they just rename the collective farms as shareholding companies and declare them as the ideal "competitive" farm for Europe. Richter reported that he saw "many farms in the U.S. that had 400-500 hectares and were completely indebted: They can no longer make it. This is the proof for us that this is wrong."

Helmut Eichinger from the VdL West said that this meeting is the proof that international cooperation is possible. "We have the same problems, so we can and must battle against them together. Together we have to fight against IMF, Maastricht, and GATT. We need parity prices and must not compete with cheap imports from countries that pay slave labor salaries and have child labor."

Uwe Friesecke relayed to the protesters greetings from the Schiller Institute. The collapse of communism showed that societies that do not respect the freedom of man cannot exist, he said. "We find the same attitude now in the West; it is called the 'free market economy.' Our joint battle is against that."