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## DISCUSSION ON COLLECTIVE FARMING

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The ultimate factor determining one's attitude towards collective and state agriculture and its administration is the conception of the tasks which agriculture has to fulfil within the framework of the state as a whole and of the national economy. According to German ideas, agriculture has to fulfil three main aims if it wishes to do justice to the needs of Germany's present situation. It must:

(i) Make the rural population the inexhaustible source of the blood of the nation and maintain and promote the special racial character of the people.

(ii) Make agriculture the steadfast guarantor of the existence of the State and thus constitute a firm core for the mass of the people.

(iii) Make agriculture the upholder of self-sufficiency in food supplies, thereby bringing security to the economy of the state.

The totality of these aims exceeds by far the purely economic attitude in agriculture, as is the main aim of other branches of the industrial system. They require that the principle of blood and soil be substantiated, which sets its centre of gravity in the racial problems of peasantry, and which implies, in addition, the national economic demand for as high a total yield as possible, but which, on the other hand, pushes individual economic efforts to obtain as high a net yield as possible, to an extent advantageous to the community. That is the tremendous change from the opinion of the past, which valued the soil simply and solely as a means of production in the course of business, completely neglecting, on the other hand, the peasants as upholders of the race, the state, and economic existence.

If we consider the collective economic system from this point of view, we must dismiss it. The reasons for this dismissal lie as much in the sphere of state and economic life as in the domain of race.

The most penetrating effect of collectivism is in connexion with the political value of the rural population. The adherents of the collectivist idea believe that they can secure the stability of the economic system through the machine-like efforts of the masses. National Socialism believes that the state functions best when it is borne by the responsible co-operation of as many independent citizens as possible. This is most true of people from the land, who by their

work have a deep inner tie with the soil which they till. To take away the personal quality of their work would be equal to depriving them of their soil and destroying their most valuable forces. No true peasant will ever understand being dispossessed of his land, much less agree to it. This conception is 100 per cent. true of German peasants who are most intimately bound up with the soil as a result of their history and settlement dating back many thousands of years.

The preliminary conditions for collectivism in Russia were more favourable than in Germany in two respects, if the mental attitude of the peasant to the soil is taken into account.

First the Russian *Mir* system, which regarded the soil more as the property of the village community and gave the individual peasant only a limited period of usufruct, did not root the idea of property in the Russian farmer as is the case with us. In addition, the idea of personal freedom had not developed to such a pronounced degree in the Russian feudal system. At the same time, from a purely psychological point of view, the fundamentally passive attitude of Russian mentality offered a far better preliminary condition for expropriation than that of the splendidly active vitality of the Nordic-Germanic peasantry. If, then, a communal property in the soil is conceivable for Russian agriculture, for German peasants it is simply unthinkable. It would undoubtedly make the truest and most devoted people of our nation the greatest and bitterest enemies of the state.

In addition, however, the goal of promoting the nation in relation to numbers of population and race is hard to reach with a collective economic system. The creation of a high quality future generation is only conceivable within the framework of a family of high cultural value.

The more the family has been morally strengthened and trained in a generation-long experience on its own property, the more it offers the best possible basis for the development and promotion of good qualities. In this sense the peasant population is the cradle of the people, judged not only by numbers but also by the racial character.

The new development of the birth-rate on the Russian plain proves that the collective system of agriculture has caused the utmost injury even among this people with formerly a high birth-rate. To-day's general reduction in births in Russia can be traced to two causes. On the one hand, the opinion that the industrial proletariat of the towns hold about the child has taken root among the peasants in conjunction with their proletarianization. Apart from the general propaganda, the transfer of town dwellers to collective farms or state-managed farms has seen to this. Of equal importance is an economic

reason based on the wage system of the collectives. Wages are paid only according to work actually done, and the number of children is totally disregarded in the sharing of the food rations of which the wages mainly consist. As, on the one hand, motherhood and the bearing of children imply a reduction of the woman's share of the work, and as, on the other hand, children are merely burdensome mouths to fill without being able to do any work on the collective farm, the Russian collective peasant to-day is opposed to an increase in his family.

The superiority of independent family farms is seen even more clearly when the maintenance and improvement of the race are kept in view. The collectivist form of economy, with its desolate equalizing process, must in time reduce the level of its people rather than raise it. Against this the responsible management of their own property and the possibility which goes with it of developing their own qualities gives quite a different stimulus and more scope for the building up of a distinctive individual character. The natural development of the race is thereby promoted. That is, of course, all the more decisive, the more the whole of agriculture and economic life is adapted to the leader-principle.

Finally, the collectivist idea of economics has its great weakness also in relation to food self-sufficiency, under special German conditions. The causes lie in the natural foundations of agriculture as well as in the peculiarities of the farm organization. Nature has a restricting effect by reason of the variety of soils and the marked change of climate. Both factors demand a great deal of technical skill and devotion if yields are not to suffer. To this is added the degree of intensity of central European agriculture which dictates a certain farm organization. A gross yield, as high as possible, is to be expected from our present-day agriculture only if on the one hand the nutrients withdrawn from the soil are replaced, and, on the other hand, measures are taken for the best possible utilization of the by-products. This twofold goal can be achieved with us only by means of a mixed farm organization which lays equal stress on crop farming and live-stock farming. Specialization and mechanization, the main factors of a collective farm, are consequently impracticable in German agriculture. Both natural difficulties and the peculiarity of farm organization combine to make it possible only for a peasant family farm to exploit the soil properly. Not only are considerable knowledge and versatile technical ability demanded, but personal devotion and readiness to work hard are equally necessary to achieve success. These qualities can be expected in full develop-

ment only among the independent peasants who put their whole spirit of enterprise and their whole professional pride into the improvement of their farms. Here and there these qualities may be encountered with quite different mentality, even among the members of a Russian collective farm, if such member is deeply convinced of the rightness of the ultimate aim of the State policy. The mass of dependent labourers who do not enjoy responsibility do not follow the policy, as is proved by the complaints of Russian economic leaders about the defective will to work of the collective peasants.

A collectivized agriculture, in these circumstances and with this political objective, is impracticable for Germany, because in its inflexibility and extent it resembles a strait-jacket, which stifles the personal and economic self-respect of farmers and thus in course of time destroys their value for the state. Our ideal is the family farm unit bound to nature, which in its attachment to the soil contains an absolute security for the maintenance of race, nation, and state. The hereditary farm system (*Erbhof*) based on the ancient German hereditary law (*Anerben*) provides as a matter of principle that the farm business shall be protected from economic hazards and the damages of a liberal constitution.

The measures concerning market adaptability, the provision of credits, and regulation of prices provide, in addition, that the peasant shall be able to perform his racial and political-economic tasks in absolute economic security. We shall in future, with all the means of the state forces and political skill, not only maintain the peasant farm, but also develop it. The law for the new formation of German peasantry will help us in this work, because we shall rapidly settle people on vast areas of the big estates. The new and decisive factor is that, in this settlement, economic points of view will not be given the primary consideration but that the settler's racial and peasant suitability for the solution of the national political tasks will be placed in the forefront.

We are, indeed, quite clear that it will be necessary first of all to prepare our peasantry for the solution of its political tasks. For this purpose a certain corporative framework is necessary if this education is to be highly effective. The system of organization, as it developed in the past in German agriculture with the purely private economic motive, certainly does not offer the necessary lever; it was perhaps capable of promoting, here and there, one or the other type of business, but in its arbitrariness and its lack of unity it can never offer the security for the execution of the main agrarian policy all along the line. The decided defects of this one-sided, private

economic system of organization can be overcome only by a unique and completely new form of agricultural corporation, as built up by the Peasant-Leader, Darré, in the *Reichsnährstand*. The main characteristic of this organization consists of stimulating all the forces of our agriculture for the aims of agrarian policy without resistance from the soil and its people to delay or even to hinder the work of national reconstruction.

The corporation of the *Reichsnährstand* is based on principles which guarantee the desired success. Self-government is the main principle which it is intended to apply to German agriculture. The old German idea of the corporation means that each co-operating group shall be autonomous in all matters concerning it alone. This idea will also be realized for agriculture in the constitution of the future German economic state. The omnipotence of the former *Marxist* state, which tried to control everything and finally did not accomplish anything, is being replaced by a sensible decentralization of the large industrial and agricultural groups.

The state has two essential duties towards the *Reichsnährstand*. Chiefly it can arrange for the farming community the fulfilment of necessary tasks. Thus every single peasant obtains a definite place in the whole economic life and thereby increases the active participation of the farmers in the framework of the general economic policy. At the same time, the state limits the activities of this corporation so as to protect others. The state, by continuous supervision, sees to it that the activities of one corporation do not harm the interests of others or the well-being of the nation.

In order that the *Reichsnährstand* might solve the problems confronting it there are two National Socialist principles applied to its organization. First, there is the principle of an all-embracing membership. The *Reichsnährstand* is an incorporated body, membership of which is compulsory for all engaged in agricultural production and distribution. Neither peasant nor any member of his family nor employees nor workers can evade this organization. All are under the supervision and influence of the corporation. It is essential that the qualified and progressive should regard this organization not as compulsion but as offering them a possibility to work as honorary officers according to their abilities and inclinations. Every one acquainted with the *Reichsnährstand* knows that the organization has succeeded in mobilizing many highly qualified men for the benefit of the groups and of the whole community.

Second, there is the principle of leadership. In every stage and in every department professional men will hold the leading positions

in the future—men who have taken over the management from a consciousness of responsibility and personal leadership. It is a great advantage that these peasant leaders possess the necessary degree of personal independence on their farms in order to pursue with all their energies the measures which they consider right. The professional official is mainly confined to administration; the creative initiative lies in the hands of the hereditary peasant himself.

The organic structure of the *Reichsnährstand* is based on these principles. Horizontally, it embraces every branch and sphere of agriculture. The four main departments include (i) the welfare of the people, (ii) the advancement of agriculture, (iii) the development of agricultural co-operative societies, and (iv) the linking of agriculture with commerce and the manufacturing industries. Every possible care is taken to obtain organic development in all these fields. In the vertical direction, the organization leads from the smallest village, over county and province, to the centre of government. Here we have an uninterrupted, real and personal chain, which despite its extent is elastic and full of purpose.

The German *Reichsnährstand* is thus an organized framework which binds together the individual farmers. Machine-like interference with ownership or management has never been planned; every one remains entirely responsible for the conduct of his business and the interests of his family. On the other hand, we attempt to secure the voluntary co-operation of every farmer in solving the great political and economic problems. Compulsion, much less the crude force of the magistrates, is not the means for us of attaining our agrarian objective. We appeal simply and solely to the goodwill and the idealism of our peasants. We know that a vast amount of education is needed in order to instruct and to win over the peasants to these tasks; in the *Reichsnährstand* there is the means which should smooth the way and show to each his place in the work. As it is a difficult problem which has to be solved if we are to carry Germany over her present difficulties for a long time to come, this organization can only succeed if every peasant is ready to put his whole energy into it. The basis of this agricultural corporation is thus the absolute faith in the sound sense and feeling of responsibility of the German peasants. This belief alone to-day gives the leaders of the organization and the mass of its members the moral force and personal strength to tackle day after day these difficult problems.