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Chapter X: The Reichsnährstand in its relationship to other official bodies, and its own leadership crisis in 1936/7.

The RNS has so far in this work been described mainly in economic terms in respect of its impact upon agriculture. But in addition to that, as a comprehensive organization for one sector of the community socially and politically it was bound to come into contact, which turned out occasionally to be opposition, with both Party and State. This chapter will try to map out exactly how friction did take place, and explain its origin and causes. In 1936/7 the RNS suffered a severe crisis in its leadership; the events of this quarrel had some bearing on the organization's connections with other sections of the community including the State and the NSDAP, since the exact nature and position in society of the RNS was a prime cause for the differences of opinion among the leaders. Consequently the whole episode has been included in this chapter for its relevance to the general theme in this respect.

With regard to the division which will be made here between Party matters and those of the State it must at once be stressed that many of the latter's officials in the Third Reich were members of the NSDAP as well.¹ The criterion used in selecting the heading for any particular issue discussed here is that of areas of authority: where the State, at any level from local authority to national government, came into conflict with the RNS on a matter over which its machinery had normally exercised control prior to 1933, the question will be treated as one affecting the relations between RNS and State, whether the latter's representatives were Party members or not. The section on Party/RNS friction will deal with intra-Party disputes, particularly where different branches of the NSDAP quarrelled over questions of who exactly was responsible for what.

The RNS and the State

- (i) There were two grounds for bickering between the RNS and the State

machinery, the first being simply the question of mutual co-operation, and how the RNS seemed to neglect taking Civil Servants or local government officers into its confidence. The second, and more important, issue was concerned with fields of competence in agrarian administration, and evidence will later be offered to demonstrate how in some areas the RNS attempted actually to supplant the more traditional authorities of government altogether.

As far as co-operation, or lack of it, was concerned, this became the cause of friction almost immediately after the formation of Darré's new organization. As early as July 1934 local government officials were attacking it on this score, one even going so far as to describe the RNS as "a State within a State" because of the air of private empire which it wore in its attitude to the apparatus of governmental administration.² The RNS clearly had a duty to keep this apprised of its intentions but apparently was failing to do so. By November 1934 the Regierungspräsident in Hanover was complaining about a lack of co-operation which went right down the ladder of command to the lowest rung; in particular, no information about marketing arrangements, such as the formation of new Verbände, was being afforded to local government officials. At the middle level of administration there was no liaison between the KBFs and the police for example, and as far as price regulations were concerned, a tendency in the RNS to exclude local government completely had been noted.³ From Stade came the same type of comment, the RNS there being described as "dictatorial" and never ready to consult; the first that local authority in the district heard of new RNS measures was when the peasants came to complain about them.⁴ Osnabrück reported RNS attempts to exclude local government officials from its new measures at the middle rung of administration.⁵ On the other hand, it was stated that at Hildesheim co-operation was proceeding wholly without friction,⁶ so that conditions clearly varied, individual personality on both

sides being no doubt important.

That in general, however, the relationship to the local authorities left something to be desired can be seen from Darré's decision to call a conference on the question in November 1934, to which all Prussian heads of local government were invited, and at which RNS leaders promised a smoother organization on their part in the future. Dr. Saure of the Staff Office pointed also to the fact that there were now 514 KBFs in Germany, all relatively inexperienced in administration, but whose capacity would improve in time.⁷ Similarly, efforts at a more successful partnership were also made at regional level; in Lower Saxony the LBF convened a meeting in April 1935 to which State representatives were invited to discuss the question of achieving a greater degree of collaboration with the RNS in the area.⁸ If reports in July of that year are any reliable guide it would seem that the conferences had been worth while, since the relationship appeared by then to be distinctly better.⁹ This is not to say that no friction ever occurred again: it was reported from Cologne in 1937 that the whole apparatus of state administration was threatened by subsidiary organizations, including some attached to the RNS, whose existence led to confusion among the public, unable to discover who was responsible for what. The situation appeared to be extremely unsatisfactory, in that opposition developed between the various bodies, each of which tried to shut itself off from the others.¹⁰

It would seem, in other words, that the creation of the RNS had produced problems for the State machinery, although these were more pronounced in 1934 than afterwards. Despite some improvement in the matter, however, the essential point remained that by erecting an organization to deal with agriculture in all its aspects the NSDAP had indeed produced a "State within a State" which was bound to conflict with existing channels of government, by intervening in matters hitherto dealt with by them. Even more indicative of private imperialism by the RNS were the efforts to take over some duties

from local or regional government altogether.

(ii) One point must be made clear in advance in this respect; the early programme of the NSDAP had called for a strong central governing authority for the country.¹¹ As a result, the Party began to downgrade State governments in the interests of that of the Reich as a whole almost as soon as acceding to power, by means of a law placing them under the central regime, among other moves.¹² In the field of agriculture there was an amalgamation of the Prussian Ministry of Agriculture with the REM, effective from 1st January 1935:¹³ by this means the friction that had existed between them under Weimar would be eliminated. Exactly how much worth Darré laid upon uniformity of administration in agrarian matters can be seen from the meeting he called in 1935 between himself and the two Secretaries in the REM, Backe and Willikens;¹⁴ the motive for the discussion was the alleged failure of Department I of the Ministry in getting its ideas and policies actually carried out in the various states, especially in the South, as a result of which the Department was taken out of Williken's control and handed over to Backe, a change which the former greeted by a certain display of temperament.¹⁵ That Darré was willing to risk a row at this level in the interests of uniform administration suggests that he considered it to be of some importance as a principle. Indeed, prior to 1933 he had described German agricultural administration as the worst of any developed country precisely because of its lack of unity;¹⁶ this situation he was determined to rectify, and the takeover bids by the RNS for various State functions must be seen against this background, and also within the general framework of a movement towards centralization at the expense of the individual states over the whole governmental field in the Third Reich.¹⁷

This is not to say that the initiative to replace the State always came from the top of the RNS; in 1934 the local branch in Bavaria wrote to Darré suggesting a takeover of certain state duties, and officials, in that

region.¹⁸ There was a similar onslaught in Württemberg upon traditional State duties, in this case viniculture and cattle-breeding which the LBF, Arnold, tried to get transferred to his sphere in 1934; negotiations broke down over finance.¹⁹ In February 1935 Willikens took the matter up again, basing his argument on the need to bring the South into line with Prussia, where the Agricultural Chambers had always performed some duties which the State governments had done in the South:²⁰ (this meant of course that they had come under the RNS in Prussia when that body absorbed the Chambers). Willikens line of approach was thus the need for uniform practice to be established throughout Germany. The question was discussed at a meeting between the LBF and representatives of both the Württemberg government and the RNS headquarters in the following October.²¹ Eventually it was agreed in March 1937 that the RNS would now assume responsibility for cattle-breeding and viniculture in the area, the Württemberg government promising to afford Darré's organization the same sum which it had spent on these matters itself: with effect from July of the same year the state officials concerned became employees of the RNS.²²

As well as for those aspects of agriculture referred to above the RNS made an attempt to draw the running of vocational training schools on the land under its wing in the same region of Germany, but seem to have been unsuccessful. This started again with the LBF Arnold approaching the State government and using the same approach as Willikens, by drawing attention to the fact that such institutions were under the Chambers, (and therefore now the RNS) in most areas, and only under the State in three, Baden, Württemberg and Bavaria.²³ Arnold suggested that professional training, in terms of imparting skill and professional honour, should be in the hands of the RNS as representing agriculture as such; the RNS should have this responsibility in a corporative State.²⁴ This was a very large claim, too large it seems, since the government decided to leave things as they were in the following

month.²⁵ There was a long hiatus in the matter until 1938, when Rust, the national Minister of Education, produced a Bill for the whole country.²⁶ This put agricultural school supervision under his Ministry, whilst leaving the erection and maintenance of the buildings to the RNS everywhere in the country. Resistance to the measure appeared to come from the REM as by autumn 1942 no real agreement had yet been reached as the latter would not agree to RNS officials i.e. the teachers, being under another Ministry.²⁷ equally it would not accept staff for the schools who were not in the RNS, which produced a deadlock.²⁸ The RNS in education seems to have been unsuccessful in gaining control, but at least in conjunction with the REM it preserved its own independence. It is interesting to notice that whether the Education Ministry or the RNS ultimately won, the State government, was bound to lose.

In Bavaria also the RNS took over cattle-breeding from the State, which provoked considerable ill-feeling among government officials in the region, including a couple who were themselves in the NSDAP. At a conference presided over by the Minister President they attacked the RNS for its proposed takeover, to which the LBF, Schuberth, did not reply; during the ensuing discussion phrases like "complete failure" were used of his organization, with an example to do with the shortage of flour. The Minister President commissioned three officials to draw up a memorandum on RNS inefficiency.²⁹ There is no doubt that relations were bad in the region between the State and Darré's organization, which seem to have been occasioned partly by its alleged lack of ability and also by its desire to take over in areas of State jurisdiction.

At lower levels of civil administration there was also considerable friction due to RNS poaching, for example, in regard to tenants on State farms; hitherto the domain of government officials, the latter were now not merely excluded, but not even told what was happening in the relations

with the lessees.³⁰ In one district even peasant complaints about the police were dealt with by the RNS.³¹ As already described,³² the peasants tended to treat their Bauernführer as Jacks of all trades, so that almost against its will the RNS became the vehicle for matters formerly the preserve of other bodies. So much did the local authorities become pushed into the background that at a meeting of dairy-owners in Göttingen the assembled businessmen were apparently surprised to be told that the supervision of their firms was still a government affair in any respect whatever.³³ Perhaps the zenith of RNS intervention was achieved by the KBF in Lower Saxony who informed the head of a parish administration that he had no objections to the proposed official budget for the district.³⁴

It would seem that more and more in the Third Reich the new organization encroached upon the old; sometimes this was out of the desire for uniformity in administration, sometimes because the RNS simply assumed authority for agriculture in all its aspects, which in rural areas was bound to bring it into conflict with existing channels. A typical example in this respect was debt-relief now organized via the KBF, which excluded the parish administration altogether. The best summary was perhaps that from Osnabrück already quoted, that the RNS was a "State within a State". This has obviously some bearing upon the size of the new organization and its cost to the members in the form of annual subscriptions; in assessing how high these were, it must be borne in mind that the RNS performed more duties than the previous professional bodies which it had replaced. In a certain sense it was the only genuine body in the Third Reich which could have been fitted easily into the framework of a corporative state; the Reichsnährstand was the estate of agriculture, in the medieval use of the word "estate". But in the Middle Ages, there was no sophisticated government apparatus with which such a corporation could conflict; transplanted to the modern era the "estate" was bound to cut across lines of existing civil administration,

the basis of which is one apparatus for the whole of society, irrespective of trade or profession.

RNS and the Party

(i) As will be recounted, the Party also did not take kindly to RNS pretensions to be the sole representative and leader of the agrarian sector. There was a great deal of trouble in the Third Reich between Darré's corporation and various organs of the NSDAP; in general two broad areas of conflict can be distinguished as the centres of this struggle. Firstly, there were those NSDAP groups, such as the DAF or the NS Frauenschaft which quarrelled with the RNS over where the boundaries lay between their respective fields of competence: this arose especially with the Gauleiters, whom Hitler wished to become his viceroys.³⁵ As will be seen, the donation of regional sovereignty to them almost inevitably provoked strife with the RNS over the question as to who had the final say in agrarian matters.³⁶ Secondly, there were people in the Party, again including some Gauleiters, who simply did not accept the concept of a separate corporation for agriculture; these people were more serious opponents for Darré in that had their will prevailed, there would have been no RNS at all rather than merely a more circumscribed one. Before the strife which these differing viewpoints produced is described, it must be said that the friction arising from contact between Darré and other leaders of the NSDAP was in some instances occasioned by personal characteristics; in this connection it has to be remembered that the RBF had come to the Party relatively late in comparison with the "Old Fighters" of the movement, and his rapid rise to power seems to have provoked some degree of jealousy, for which evidence will be produced.

(ii) As far as conflict with the Gauleiters in general was concerned this started quite early after Darré's initial appointment in 1930. For example, he came into collision almost at once with von Corswant, Gauleiter of Pomerania, over the question of Polish labour, on which the two held

differing views. Darré wanted to phase this out gradually from German agriculture, as too abrupt a break would have caused difficulties for the sugar-beet sector, where foreign labourers were employed.³⁷ The Gauleiter, himself an estate-owner, wrote an article on the subject and sent it to Darré at Munich for approval, giving him eight days to read it; the latter, piqued, returned the article stamped "Not approved - Darré" across it, and in a covering letter said that he was a member of the Reichsleitung, which was over the Gauleiters, and he would not dance to von Corswant's tune.³⁸ This drew a reply from the Gauleiter saying that as an old member he refused to be dictated to by any new arrival anxious to display what he could do.³⁹ Recriminations apparently terminated in a threat to report Darré to the Party's tribunal of arbitration (Uchla): to this the reply from the new man was to the effect that as leader of the agrarian section of Department II at Munich he was superior to Gau organizations.⁴⁰ Von Corswant carried out his intention of raising the issue with the arbitration office, but did not get very far in the matter; the latter body replied that it was not up to him to dictate to Darré in agrarian questions.⁴¹ This gave a decision firmly in the agrarian section's favour, and confirmed its precedence in agriculture: Darré had won a decisive first round against regional political leadership. Apart from that, the affair is interesting in that it illustrates Darré's tactlessness in dealing in such a fashion with a senior Party member only five months after joining.⁴² This attitude, coupled with the issue of conflicting areas of competence, was bound to provoke trouble in the Third Reich, a tendency which the Hitlerian edicts of two years later obviously strengthened.

A clash was not long postponed after the formation of the RNS, which was in effect Darré's private empire.⁴³ In East Hanover, the local Gauleiter, Telschow, allegedly sent out an instruction to his staff that the nomination of Bauernführer required his counter-signature; Darré promptly

wrote to Hitler declaring this to be illegal as a claim, since the RNS was a public corporation with legal powers and as such needed no outside permission to name its own staff.⁴⁴ (he sent copies of his letter to Hess and Goering, presumably to win as much support as possible at the top.) His energetic reaction seems to have won the day, since there is no evidence of further trouble from Hanover.

In Pomerania, however, even greater difficulties were experienced with the Gauleiter, Karpenstein, who had replaced von Corswant. His dislike of the RNS was quite pronounced, and in a circular to his subordinates, which came into Darré's possession, he described it as having cut itself off from the NSDAP altogether, and that its officials refused to speak to the Gauleitung, and were in general acting as though the RNS was completely independent.⁴⁵ Karpenstein told his staff that he had waited to see if things would improve, but as they had not, his patience was exhausted; if the RNS could not accept Party leadership then its members should leave the NSDAP.⁴⁶ The Gauleiter had apparently taken somewhat more active measures just previous to his circular; when the LBF had been due to speak in June 1934 the Gauleitung tried to dissuade Bauernführer at lower levels from attending, by threatening expulsion from the Party for anyone who did so. Rumours had apparently been spread to the effect that the LBF's salary was 36,000 RM annually, which was announced at an OBF's meeting by the political leadership: attempts were being made to subject the RNS Press to Party censorship, and the corporation was described in the Gau in general as bad, a pest and non-National Socialist.⁴⁷ The war between Party and RNS was evidently more bitter than in Hanover, although the grounds were basically the same, viz. the efforts by the political leadership to make the agricultural corporation subject to their control, although of course in theory the RNS was an autonomous professional organization, certainly not a branch of the NSDAP. How this particular battle in Pomerania would have ended is difficult to say,

but in July Karpenstein was relieved of his office by Hitler personally.⁴⁸

(iii) But of all the clashes between Gauleiter and RNS in the early days of the Third Reich the most serious took place in East Prussia, partly due to the temperament of the local Party chief, Erich Koch, a real old warrior of the NS movement;⁴⁹ he had apparently always ruled the province in a somewhat autocratic manner; the SA and SS had never been allowed to come to the fore, for example, as in other Gauen.⁵⁰ Even prior to 1933 he could not get on with the peasants, with whom he had little in common;⁵¹ by March 1933 his personal unpopularity had become such that the Party press was constrained to deny a rumour that he was about to be exchanged with a Gauleiter from another area;⁵² the grounds for his lack of empathy for the peasantry seemed to reside in a certain tendency towards collectivization on his part as the correct goal to pursue in agricultural matters.⁵³ A highly-explosive mixture existed, all in all, in the shape of an autocratic Party viceroy not at one with the farmers, faced with the sudden formation of a new corporation in his domains, not always loath to claim independence; the outcome was a first-class row.

In July 1933 Koch called a meeting of Party officials and those of the Agrarian Office in Königsberg and delivered a speech; accounts of this differ considerably. The Gauleiter himself said that he had stated that the NSDAP had not defeated 36 other parties in order to create a similar number of factions inside itself, and that the task of the Agrarian Office was to turn the peasants into National Socialists; there would be only one line of development in East Prussia and anyone against it could start thinking about a concentration camp; according to Koch his remarks received a mixed reception, but the LGF, Otto, walked out.⁵⁴ In view of the tenor of the Gauleiter's remarks, aimed quite clearly at RNS pretensions to independence, this was hardly surprising. Ten days later he delivered an open attack upon Koch: another member of the Agrarian Office, an LKF called Witt, went further

and gave out a distorted version of the original Königsberg speech at a farmers' meeting, alleging Koch to have said that anyone in East Prussia who talked about a free peasantry would be drowned in the Zehlau bog.⁵⁵ The theme was taken up by another Party member who happened to be a farmer; according to him the Gauleiter had said that if he could get the Landesbauernschaft under his thumb it would be an end to the free peasantry in the region: the fat was now in the fire and Koch arrested Witt via the S.A. and had the farmer critic thrown out of the NSDAP.⁵⁶ He adopted the same procedure in the case of another LKF, Bethge, ousted from the movement after a disciplinary process.⁵⁷

War was now declared between the corporation and the Party in East Prussia; Witt wrote to Hitler protesting about the treatment he had received.⁵⁸ Twelve days later Willikens took up the cudgels with a letter to Major Buch, head of Uschla at Munich, complaining of the Gauleiter's interference with agrarian self-government.⁵⁹ Koch retaliated by arresting Otto as well; this drew Darré into the affair, and he wrote to Goering; when this letter came into Koch's hands he read it out in public with alleged misrepresentations.⁶⁰ The sequel was a formal proposal by the RNS leader that the Gauleiter should be expelled from the Party.⁶¹

It should be made clear at this stage that not all of the RNS officials in the province were necessarily opposed to Koch in his desire to keep the corporation under his direction; one LKF wrote to Otto in support of the Gauleiter, pointing out that to build up a professional organization on the land without political supervision would be merely to construct another "Green Front."⁶² This standpoint was apparently based on the assumption that the RNS was purely technical, although of course it was in reality dominated by NSDAP members, just as anxious to convert the peasants to National Socialism as the political side of the Party: the corporation was never just another "Green Front."

By autumn moves in headquarters were under way to bring about some degree of reconciliation, and Uschla suggested to Koch that he should meet Darré himself;⁶³ the latter then underlined his independence of the Gauleitung by nominating Otto and Witt as LBF and deputy respectively, despite the row with Koch on their part.⁶⁴ The matter was now so out of hand that Munich forbade any public discussion of the affair in order to avoid possible damage to Party prestige:⁶⁵ as this came just after Darré's appointment of the LBF it would seem in retrospect that this latter move had really been rather a provocation on Darré's part; certainly Otto did nothing on his side to heal the breach, as he seemingly did not contact Koch in any way to discuss agrarian matters with him.⁶⁶ Hess apparently now intervened as things had gone so far, and in late September Meinberg was despatched to East Prussia to try and settle the affair by personal contact;⁶⁷ the subsequent report revealed that the Gauleiter had instituted a virtual reign of terror in the province for the peasants.

In one Kreis seven peasants, presumably hostile to Koch, had been arrested and remained in prison for a month; on their release they were compelled to sign an affidavit not to take action against the State for their imprisonment.⁶⁸ From another source came the information that in some districts the Kreisleiter were levying contributions from the peasants to pay for personal expenses; in Rosenberg two pounds of grain were taken every morning from each farm to settle the local Party's debts. In Heiligenbeil much the same state of things prevailed under the title of "Winter Help and Work Creation" which was both subsidizing an NSDAP newspaper and providing a Mercedes for the Party office: in this district the head of Department I of the RNS had been arrested on a false charge.⁶⁹ A police official told Meinberg that the Gauleiter now scarcely dared to walk the streets of Königsberg in daylight because of feeling against him.⁷⁰ Koch had also overstepped the limits of his jurisdiction in attempting to install a certain LKF as

president of the local Agricultural Chamber, which the official had refused, as the Gauleiter had no competence in the matter: Koch promptly ordered him to resign all his offices or he would be sent to a concentration camp, adding "For people like you there are special taxes."⁷¹

Clearly, local officials had been reduced to the belief that almost no-one could work with the Gauleiter: the Regierungspräsident of Friedrich said that even if Otto were replaced his successor would soon experience the same problems: if on the other hand an LBF similar to Koch were installed the peasantry would be driven to desperation: one old Party member was franker still, and said that either the Führer did not know what was happening or he did not care, in which case confidence in him would be lost.⁷² It should be pointed out that not merely the peasantry, but also the estate-owners were experiencing trouble from the Gauleiter: the LVO organization which had given the Prussian régime trouble under Weimar, was engaged in activities against the Party chief in its turn, due to fears that Koch was an enemy of the larger-scale farmers. Anti-NSDAP activity was currently reported from several districts in the province;⁷³ in assessing this, however, it must be seen as partly due to the resignation of Hugenberg on 27th June 1933, as one Party communication of the time speaks of the LVO as trying to persuade the peasants that the former Minister had been their only true friend.⁷⁴ It is quite clear nonetheless that although this ferment was partially coincidental the estate-owners' fears of "agrarian Bolshevism" from Koch was at least a contributory factor.⁷⁵

With the degree of antipathy to him from all shades of agrarian opinion in a largely rural province it seems astonishing that the Party chief could have survived at all, yet he did so, although eventually obliged to accept Meinberg as the LBF;⁷⁶ there seems little doubt that the installation of Darré's deputy as head of the East Prussian RNS was to ensure that Koch found himself faced with someone, if not of equal standing, at least more

important than the average LBF.⁷⁷ In February 1934 there was a last rumble of the affair when Darré issued a decree on agrarian administration in which he described Koch's measures as having been harmful to agriculture.⁷⁸ This drew a reply from the Gauleiter protesting against the tone of these observations, and asking Darré to see that his subordinates did not speak of "old fighters" for the Party in this way.⁷⁹

In attempting to disentangle the threads of a complicated matter, it would seem that there were four main issues; firstly, Koch's attitude towards the peasantry, and indeed agriculture in general, which was clearly controversial, secondly his personality, which was stormy and apparently capricious; thirdly, there was the tendency on his part to distrust Darré as a new man, comparatively speaking. The final issue is the most important, the role of the RNS in relation to the Party; the Gauleiter told Meinberg that he had nothing against the corporation as such, only "some pests" in it.⁸⁰ A review of his activities on the land does not support this statement: Koch was clearly a man who took the Hitlerian injunction about vice-royalty literally. Under these circumstances he was almost inevitably bound to conflict with the RNS over decisions about competence, and areas of authority. Like Telschow and Karpenstein, the Party chief in East Prussia wanted all administration under his wing; ultimately, the blame for the friction must in all cases be laid at the door of Adolf Hitler, who by accident or design had created personal empires based on geographical area for the Gauleiters and one based on a single profession, irrespective of geography, for Darré.

(iv) As a result of the repeated clashes of 1933/4 the top leadership in the Party saw itself obliged to intervene, Hess being the arbitrator in this instance; he called a general Gauleiters' conference on 13th December 1934, and the question of Party/RNS relations was discussed.⁸¹ The outcome of the meeting was a communiqué to the Press two months later regarding the differences in general.⁸² The preamble stated that as the RNS had

received a commission from the Führer to guarantee German food supplies, the Party was henceforth forbidden to intervene in the corporation's professional affairs, i.e. in the leadership of agriculture at a purely technical level. The announcement continued by saying that all future appointments of Bauernführer would be made in consultation with the appropriate Gauleiter (which perhaps implies that the RNS had not been doing that in the past). Hess referred also to the question of women in rural areas, which had also been the subject of friction, in this case between the RNS and the NS Frauenschaft, the Party organization for all adult females.⁸³ In future, the RNS would not have its own office to deal with rural housewives etc. but would use its influence to enrol them in the NS Frauenschaft: all section leaders in the agrarian corporation concerned with women's matters would in future be experts from the Party organization, but the latter would only issue orders after consultation with the RBF when dealing with questions affecting women on the land. Hess's announcement finished by saying that all public meetings and demonstrations for peasants etc. were henceforth to be a Party matter, except where the subject matter was wholly technical.

The deputy Führer then expressed the wish that close co-operation would be possible in future between the Party and the RNS, with the political primacy of the first being maintained. This seems indeed to have been the keynote of his announcement; true, the Gauleiters could not meddle in purely professional questions, but these, judging from the evidence of conflict cited in this work, had never been the cause of the strife in the first place. The real issue, who was the leader in the political sphere, seemed to have been resolved wholly in favour of the Party and its regional representatives, the Gauleiter. In this respect a firm limit had been put to Darré's private imperium, which was now to be seen as a professional corporation under the political aegis of the NSDAP.

The intervention by the Führer's deputy did not by any means settle the tension between Party and RNS, although it is true that a temporary peace was patched up. But that trouble continued to exist may be inferred from Darré's allegations in 1938 to the effect that two different Gauleiters, Bückel in the Saarland and Lohse in Schleswig-Holstein, were both trying to set up new agrarian-political branches in their organizations, independent of Darré.⁸⁴ According to the latter, Bückel was using an ex-employee of the RNS itself as his instrument.⁸⁵ Clearly, despite the ban by Hess on Party interference, some Gauleiters in the Third Reich always cherished hopes of getting agricultural leadership totally under their own wing.

The RNS and the DAF

(i) In his announcement Hess spoke also of the landworker question, which also presented a thorny problem in terms of overlapping authority, as the RNS was the corporation for agriculture but Dr. Ley's Labour Front (DAF) had the monopoly of labour. Who then administered farm labour? As will be seen yet another struggle took place in the corridors of the Third Reich on this issue, the importance of which may be gauged from the fact that in 1929 the farm workers had had the largest single working-class union in the country.⁸⁶ They were also in general badly-paid, poorly housed and had a low status socially.⁸⁷ To improve their lot was a large job, over which the DAF and the RNS came into strife with one another; basically both organizations were motivated by the desire to overcome the class-struggle on the land, partly by raising the labourer's status, partly by uniting peasantry and worker as essentially complementary pillars of agriculture.⁸⁸ The issues in the strife therefore were not on principle but rather over approach to the problem. It is suggested here that the RNS basically was a rather conservative organization in that it tended to lay its stress upon the peasant and his family as the core of German agriculture: it will be shown that the DAF almost inevitably as a labour corporation started from the standpoint

of the labourers' welfare. There were in sum two areas of conflict; who should deal with agricultural labour, and who was to be given first priority, employer or worker. Before the events in the struggle are described, it must be said that the March 1930 programme for agriculture had promised the aspiring landworker the chance to better himself by becoming a settler; discussion of whether this promise was fulfilled has been included in the chapter on the settlement programme as a whole, and will not be touched on here.

(ii) The occasions for the clash between the DAF and the RNS were usually the living-conditions of farm labour, and its social status, vis-à-vis the employer. Of course, the RNS did make some efforts to improve both these areas: a system of using particular workers as labour representatives was built up in each locality. These men were appointed by the KBF to be responsible for the "legal and social importance of his work comrades in the area."⁸⁹ There was apparently more than one in each village, as one list gave fifty-three names for twenty-five localities in the Kreisbauernschaft.⁹⁰ The KBFs themselves were always ready to deal with bad conditions for labour where this existed; after a visit to one holding a KBF wrote to the Bauer concerned that he should provide a separate bed for each labourer and improve accommodation in general, but this was a request rather than an order.⁹¹ An estate-owner in the Rhineland was told that insufficient bread was being provided at breakfast for his workers, that working hours were too long and that the manner of his agents towards the labourers was "unsocial."⁹²

It can be seen from the foregoing that Darré's corporation made genuine efforts to improve conditions in general for the landworker. However, the sheer scale of the problem defeated them in most cases; not the least of the difficulties which the RNS had to overcome was the traditional peasant attitude to hired labour, which was often backward in the extreme. Many employers regarded their farmworkers simply as "beasts of burden."⁹³ In

As for landworkers' wages, a law in 1934 established "Trustees of Labour" to act as independent arbitrators between employers and employees to fix remuneration and terms of service in general:⁹⁴ the regulation of wages was therefore not within the province of RNS jurisdiction. As in 1933 there had been no fewer than 281 different regional agreements in force in this respect for agricultural labour alone, a certain field for rationalization obviously existed.⁹⁵ The new system brought in for Pomerania, replacing 28 old ones, can be taken as an example of what the Trustees in fact introduced, and which determined working hours, wage rates etc. according to the workers' status and district.⁹⁶ It is known that the REM did not object to the new agreement,⁹⁷ but the fact remained that the whole question had been lifted away from the jurisdiction of the RNS.

Apart from wages the new Act also regulated "social honour" for workers, including those on the land. From now on employers and labour were to work as a team "for the common good of people and state" in the object of overcoming the class-struggle.⁹⁸ There is every reason to suppose that Darré agreed with such an aspiration, but the new law created possible difficulties for his corporation by establishing special "Courts of Honour" where workers with a grievance could lay them before the tribunal. This possibility, of course, was equally valid for farmworkers and there is no doubt that they took advantage of its provisions: in 1935 nearly one quarter of all recorded cases were in respect of agriculture.⁹⁹ One such instance concerned a peasant who had failed to treat a day-labourer correctly; when reprimanded by the DAF he dismissed him, was hauled before the Court of Honour and fined 1500 RM.¹⁰⁰ Here the possible clash of competence between the DAF and Darré's corporation was really brought out into the open, since after all the RNS was being supplanted in a case where it had failed to take action. Moreover, in other areas too the DAF was not backward in intervening in rural matters; the relief of overwork by farmers' wives was held to be a duty of its female

section in 1935.¹⁰¹ Again, this kind of action could really only be seen in the RNS as a reflection upon itself.

(iii) Something had to be done to define the limits of responsibility more exactly, and in 1935 Dr. Ley and Darré managed to reach a settlement: announced at the Harvest Festival at Bückeberg (Lower Saxony) that year it became known as the Bückeberger Agreement, which delineated the frontiers between DAF and RNS in five clauses.¹⁰² Under these, the RNS officially became part of Dr. Ley's organization in principle, replacing the former Section 14 of the DAF, hitherto responsible for agricultural labour: RNS members were to enjoy DAF facilities, such as "Strength through Joy" holidays, and would then contribute financially to Ley's organization. RNS leaders would automatically get places in the internal governing structure of the other body, and the RBF would appoint his advisers in socio-political matters in agreement with the DAF. In theory, this looked like a solidly-based accord but it seems that in practice the RNS subordination to the DAF was a form of words only, with little grounding in reality.¹⁰³ Moreover, if landworkers paid a subscription to the DAF they would naturally utilize it, in which respect the agreement was a dead letter almost at once.¹⁰⁴ This had the corollary of arousing the ire of agrarian employers who evidently did not want their workers in a different corporation to themselves, perhaps because they felt that the RNS was more "peasant-orientated" than the DAF; in one case at least a maid and a labourer were dismissed by the farmer when they paid DAF subscriptions.¹⁰⁵

Friction between the RNS and the DAF seems in fact to have recommenced almost as soon as the Bückeberger Agreement had been promulgated; by June 1936 the district office of Ley's organization in Niederberg was trying to give orders to the RNS, whose official had to draw attention to the fact that Section IB2 of his office was responsible for rural labour.¹⁰⁶ Tension between the two bodies eventually came to a head in 1938 when an enraged

Darré wrote to Hess, indicting Dr. Ley's organization on three counts. These consisted of attempts to take over enterprises already affiliated to the RNS, the enrolment of individual members in a similar way, and the stirring up of trouble on the land between employers and employed; this came about as a result of DAF concentration upon the living-conditions of the latter without remarking on how badly-off the peasants were as well: In support of his thesis Darré produced evidence of DAF encroachment on his domains from Munich, Dortmund, Schleswig-Holstein, Thuringia, Saxon-Anhalt and Pomerania, a formidable list.¹⁰⁷

In particular he found it irritating that the impression was now being given in Party circles that nothing had been done for the workers on the land until the DAF came along, in which propaganda the Party journal "Der Angriff" was involved. Darré cited two recent issues in his letter, and attached copies. Number 54 described how only the DAF had the landworkers' confidence, whilst Number 99 had run an article on living-conditions on the land under the title "In the land of the poor people": this described the pleasure brought into landworkers' lives by "Strength through Joy" holidays in the Rhön Valley. Darré pointed out to Hess that the RNS had provided many similar facilities itself (which no doubt explained his pique over the articles). He finished his letter by attaching a seven-point draft to delineate the frontiers of responsibility between himself and Dr. Ley, and demanded that the RNS be given greater support by the Party to enable it to carry out its duties. His complaints were laid before Hitler who does not seem to have been moved to any action.

However, Dr. Ley did reply to Darré in writing, in a way that rubbed salt into the wound: the DAF had only intervened on those occasions when the RNS had appeared to be not doing enough. He drew attention to the fact that whereas farm sales had increased by nearly two and a half billion RM between 1933 and 1937, agricultural workers' wages had gone up by only about

one tenth of that amount. The whole problem of the landworker, he suggested, required an integrated approach by the Party and its agent, the DAF.¹⁰⁸

The position was now so confused that Hitler had apparently decided to take some action to define the area of responsibility for the DAF.¹⁰⁹ Whatever the Führer said to Dr. Ley does not seem to have made much difference in actual practice for by September 1938 Darré was bitterly complaining once more. The RBF was able to enclose examples of DAF encroachment from twenty-five different places in the Reich at this time.¹¹⁰ This kind of dual responsibility was undoubtedly leading to confusion on the land as can be seen from Darré's own evidence; he quoted one RNS official from Wismar who had said that the rural population itself could not understand the apparent double administration of both his organization and the DAF: he referred to "over-organization" for agriculture as a whole. Similarly, from Landau it was reported that the DAF had taken on the administration of Italian landworkers as though the RNS did not exist.

Despite the Chancellery letter about Hitler's intention to define the DAF areas more exactly, nothing much seems to have been done and by January Darré was again in communication with the Führer's deputy:¹¹¹ Ley's officials had now denied that the farmers in the Cologne/Aachen area were exploiting their employees, but referred nonetheless to the "general belief" that they were. The DAF had spoken also of the difficulties inherent in getting labour disputes settled as the farmers simply refused to accept Labour Front authority on the grounds that they belonged to the RNS. Darré refuted indignantly any suggestion that the RNS could not deal with such matters off its own bat anyway and quoted figures to suggest that his officials were more adept in the matter.¹¹² The Minister felt that the whole stress of the DAF was upon employers' failures on the land, a tendency which he designated as Marxist: leadership of people on the land could not be separated from farm management (presumably this was intended to imply that the RNS were

better placed to deal with the combined approach necessary). Darré sent Hitler a copy of his letter to Hess, and apparently tried to get an interview with his leader, since a Chancellery minute states that the Führer had not yet decided when he could see Darré.¹¹³ The correspondence then ends, which may mean that foreign affairs were now occupying the Führer's attention.

(iv) It seems clear in retrospect that the dissension between Dr. Ley and Darré had its origin mainly in the old question which arose so often in the Third Reich of private empires colliding at certain points: it may well have been that Hitler intended this, on the principle that if Darré quarrelled with the Gauleiters or with Ley then he would not have time to conspire against the Führer himself. This principle of leaving subordinates to attack one another had the added advantage of making Hitler a kind of one man Appeal Court, to whom Darré, among others no doubt, frequently had recourse in order to obtain a definitive ruling on some matter or other. This line of thought may be held to be based on supposition only, but it can be pointed out in extenuation that Hitler's edicts on such bodies as the RNS, or the DAF, or the position of the Gauleiters, created such an obvious clash of interest in terms of administration or political power that it becomes difficult to imagine that this was not clear to him at the time.

As a final postscript to farm labour, the comments of various contemporary observers regarding its condition seem to suggest that the provision of various bodies to assist its status did not in the long run produce a particularly favourable result, as of course the land-flight shows in itself. The RNS did try to improve matters and was proud of its achievements in this respect:¹¹⁴ but how farmers continued to regard their labour is clear from an indignant letter from a Bavarian employer complaining of DAF activity on the land; in passing, he wrote angrily of labourers who now demanded meat six days a week.¹¹⁵ This leads to the feeling that perhaps DAF intervention

was overdue; certainly farm workers seem to have been conscious of their social inferiority, so much so that one RNS official in 1938 commented, in describing RNS welfare work for labourers, "We should not grow weary if we experience failure, even ingratitude, and encounter hate."¹¹⁶ The farm labourer's view of his own position was far from happy.

(v) As mentioned, not all friction between Party and RNS occurred on the issue of what the corporation should do, but rather whether it should exist at all. There was a hint of this attitude in Ley's comment to Darré in 1938 that the landworker problem could only be solved by an integrated approach by the Party and the DAF.¹¹⁷ At the bottom of such statements was the whole issue of the corporative State as such. The rights and wrongs of this concept cannot be discussed here in principle: what is however pertinent to this work are the conflicting beliefs in the NSDAP itself on the question. In theory, the movement accepted the kind of corporation of which the RNS was an example, namely, an autonomous estate representing all engaged in one trade or occupation. The opening sentence of one contemporary work on the new farm entailment law ran "In principle, the National Socialist State strives for a political structure based on estates."¹¹⁸ As against this, the Party spokesman on the corporative state wrote that the NSDAP did desire to organize according to estate but only in an economic sense "The National Socialist professional build-up does not have the State as an object."¹¹⁹ To add to the confusion, there was a third school of thought, which did not desire the corporative state at all, and it was indeed averred at Darré's trial that this was the view of leading Party members.¹²⁰ To judge from Hitler's own remarks to the Reichstag in March 1933, he may well have been in the latter group, since he went out of his way to draw attention to his opinion that German economic recovery should be left to private enterprise, and that no elaborate bureaucratic mechanisms would be erected to solve the problem:¹²¹ the Führer was no economic theorist.

To sum up a confused situation, some National Socialists wanted German economic life to be organized on a corporative basis, some hankered after the same idea as the foundation for the whole State even in political terms¹²² and some really did not wish for the concept in any shape or form, desiring to use the Party itself as the sole instrument of leadership: Koch was probably in the latter category, to take one example. If it seems difficult to imagine that such dissension on so important an issue could have prevailed within the ranks of one movement, it can be pointed out that leading National Socialists were quite frank about the degree of uncertainty: Ley said that he had never met two Party members with the same views on the corporative State and its organization, and Rauschning averred that in some Party circles the whole idea was anathema even in principle.¹²³

A great deal of the opposition to the RNS already cited here must be seen against this background; there simply never was general acceptance in the NSDAP of the agrarian corporation in particular, because there was never any such recognition in some Party quarters of the corporative State in any respect, or for any profession. As a typical instance may be quoted the views of Terboven, Gauleiter in Essen and later Commissioner for occupied Norway, in other words a man of some standing in the NSDAP: he displayed considerable aggression towards Darré's organization in a conversation with the Rhineland LBF. The RNS was roundly accused of waging war on two fronts, against the Party on the one side and on the rest of the economy on the other. Terboven suggested that the NSDAP motto should be "Away from the corporative principle and back to the Party and the DAF (cf. Ley). He ended by asking the LBF if he really believed that the RNS was the right vehicle for the peasantry: in reporting the conversation, the latter predicted that Terboven would soon be at Goering's ear with this viewpoint.¹²⁴

A similar hostile attitude also prevailed in respect of the Agrarian Office, which continued to exist as a branch of the NSDAP after 1933,

although it obviously had little or no significance after the RNS had been built up; it could nonetheless have been used as a bridgehead by Darré to influence the Party, and there is some evidence that he was aware of this possibility; in 1938 he wrote to the effect that the task of the Agrarian Office was to conquer the Liberal/Marxist views still current inside the Party in some circles; he was, however, obliged to accept that this was not taking place, and that under Motz, the leader, the office was going to come too much under Party influence.¹²⁵ Lack of finance seems in any case to have crippled the organization; in 1937 the Party head office refused to sanction more funds, as such things as the Nuremberg rallies and building costs in general were making money short;¹²⁶ it is not suggested here that this excuse was not genuine, but the net result was that Motz's section was so starved of funds that it was to all intents and purposes paralysed as a medium of internal propaganda.¹²⁷

The internal leadership crisis of the RNS 1936/7

(i) Certain leading members of the NSDAP clearly suspected the RNS of being a private empire outside Party control: a crisis in the leadership of the corporation in 1936/7 suggests that at least to some extent this belief was well-founded; the row which took place, and ended with Meinberg's dismissal as deputy RBF, was partly fought on the issue of just how independent the RNS could be in practice, particularly of State control. As it happened the internal crisis coincided temporarily with the introduction of the Four Year Plan: as Meinberg, the chief advocate of peasant autonomy was the loser, the change in leadership ultimately assisted the Four Year Plan in the sense that the RNS came to be placed more under the wing of the REM and lost all pretence of self-government. This seems in retrospect to have been quite coincidental, and it is not suggested here that the introduction of the new Plan was the occasion for Meinberg's dismissal; as will be seen, other issues were involved. The sacking, and eventual reinstatement, of the

LEF in Westphalia, Habbes also became connected with the Meinberg affair, again quite coincidentally. Because these events did happen at the same time, and because the relationships of Party, RNS and governmental leadership were so interconnected as causal factors, what may be termed the Habbes-Meinberg affair is presented here as a unity. To try and describe it in sections under the headings so far used of "Party and RNS" or "State and RNS" would be to split the narrative in such a way that the question of the crisis in internal leadership of the agrarian corporation would be obscured.

(ii) From August 1936 until the following January Darré was absent from duty due to illness, leaving his deputy RBF in charge of proceedings.¹²⁸

Meinberg was a man who seemingly regarded the RNS as a genuinely autonomous organization, created for the sake of the peasantry, rather than as a member of the body economic as a whole.¹²⁹ This affected his leadership of the RNS, in that he was loath to take orders from the State, and in Darré's absence waged a steady war with Backe over the question of agricultural administration, the latter as Secretary of State in the REM being the representative of the government; on his return Darré found evidence of what he called a "Battle of the Diadochi" between the two.¹³⁰ The RBF made it quite clear on whose side he found himself, by saying that "in the authoritarian NS State" the REM Secretary must take precedence over the deputy RBF:¹³¹ this clashed with the Meinbergian idea of an autonomous estate, the government of the peasants by the peasants for the peasants.¹³²

As well as this basic difference in attitude which the RBF's enforced absence had uncovered, his deputy had been guilty of various personal leadership failures: a subsequent disciplinary commission found these to include "derogatory utterances" about the top Party leadership, the illegal promotion of his favourites to posts within the RNS and the unjustified use of the title "Bauer" for himself.¹³³ So much had Meinberg contrived to further the interests of himself and his cronies that Darré felt like resigning at once

when he first found what had happened in his absence.¹³⁴ Even the struggle with Backe had been partly due to ambition by the deputy RBF, who apparently regarded his colleague as a broken reed, and untrustworthy;¹³⁵ he even went to the lengths of trying to arrange a speech by Backe to be followed by one of his own, in order to show how superior he was to the Secretary of State.¹³⁶

The net result of his intrigues and incorrect promotions was a series of official enquiries which shook the RNS badly, and eventually resulted in the dismissal of the deputy RBF, two departmental leaders and three other officials, and the reprimanding of the Department I leader, Haidn.¹³⁷ One at least of the sacked leaders, Granzow, speaker of the National Peasant Council, was shown to have been anti-Darré: he seemed to have two main grounds for this, one being the general bearing of the RBF and his habit of travelling in rather elaborately-organized motorcades when visiting the peasants, which Granzow evidently found to be pompous and arrogant. In addition Granzow felt that Otto had been badly treated by Darré in East Prussia.¹³⁸ Evidently this referred to the installation of Meinberg as LBF in the province; it is interesting to see that the Koch affair of 1933 was still rankling in 1937.

Meinberg himself was offered three choices by Darré, as open dismissal would have given the RNS opponents a chance to attack it with redoubled strength, according to the RBF. The former deputy could either abandon agrarian politics altogether, or try to defend himself, in which case Darré threatened him with a decision from Hitler: alternatively he could take up a new post.¹³⁹ Meinberg's reaction to this missive may be judged from his remark to Granzow "If I go to him it'll be with a dog whip."¹⁴⁰ A somewhat cooler view eventually prevailed, after a meeting between the deputy RBF, Goering and Granzow: the Reichsmarshal told Meinberg bluntly that after a discussion in which Himmler and Hitler had taken part, it had been decided that he must give up his post and take a new one connected with agricultural

credit; on this condition the disciplinary process against him would be broken off.¹⁴¹ To cover the actual row it was announced that the Four Year Plan required a unified control of credit and investment for agriculture which Meinberg would take over; Gustav Behrens was appointed as his deputy.¹⁴² Rumblings of the affair continued for some time, with the former deputy still failing to control his tongue; he once referred to "Caeserdom" in the RNS on the part of a "certain person" at an agrarian bank committee meeting for example.¹⁴³ When he was due to speak at meetings in Westphalia on the Four Year Plan he was prevented by the REM, as Backe was responsible:¹⁴⁴ in view of Meinberg's alleged appointment in connection with the Plan, this was a curious prohibition, and gives rise to the feeling that Meinberg's new post was in reality just a politically necessary fiction.¹⁴⁵

How serious the whole affair had been can easily be inferred from the importance of some of those dismissed quite apart from the deputy LBF. As well as prominent officials at headquarters these included Vetter, General Inspector of the RNS and Granzow, who held several posts, such as LBF in Mecklenburg, speaker of the Peasant Council and Commissioner for the reconstruction of the peasantry. Darré himself said that it had taken an "almost superhuman effort of will" to win back the confidence of Hitler and Goering.¹⁴⁶ From the observations of Terboven already quoted,¹⁴⁷ even the lower ranks of the NS leadership felt the same, as the Gauleiter's remarks must be seen in the context of the RNS crisis of spring 1937, which was when they were uttered. Another corollary of the affair was the facility with which Goering integrated the RNS into the framework of the Four Year Plan; one historian has suggested that prior to 1936 the RNS leaders tended to see it more as an organ of agriculture as such than as an administrative apparatus of the State;¹⁴⁸ from evidence presented here it seems unlikely that Darré ever looked at it in that particular light.¹⁴⁹ But with Meinberg the RNS probably lost the last man of any consequence likely to have defended its alleged autonomy against

state direction, so in that sense there was a change of attitude in 1936, due to a change in personnel. By 1939 all pretence at being anything other than an instrument of governmental policy had been abandoned for the corporation: the frictionless introduction of a wartime food system, attributed to the RNS, was advanced as the justification for its existence.¹⁵⁰

(iii) Unfortunately for the RBF another problem presented itself in RNS leadership even before the Meinberg troubles were over; this centred around the person of Habbes, the LBF in North Westphalia. As in the case of the deputy RBF, personal failures were a contributory factor in the situation, but the question of religious feelings among the peasantry and the relation between RNS and Party leadership at Gau level also entered into a complicated affair. Almost inevitably, the temporal coincidence of the Habbes crisis with the events just described led to an alliance between him and Meinberg; there seems to have been little real connection, except on the basis of "my enemy's enemy is my friend."¹⁵¹ what united the two men was common cause against Darré. Nonetheless rumours soon circulated to the effect that both were being dismissed because they favoured a reliable RNS leadership from the peasants' viewpoint.¹⁵² It is certain, as will be shown, that the dismissal of Habbes provoked no little unrest among the rural population in his area and shook their confidence in the RNS.

By April 1937 news had reached Darré of a row in Unna (Westphalia) which was causing unrest on the land, and he appointed a commissioner to investigate.¹⁵³ The following day he received Habbes and put him on leave pending a commissioner's report: it would seem that the preliminary information leading to this step emanated from the Gestapo.¹⁵⁴ By May he had received sufficient facts to induce him to demand a disciplinary enquiry against Habbes, on the grounds of his rule of the peasantry in his area;¹⁵⁵ the LBF was principally accused of "Asiatic despotism" in terms of personal administration, of trying to make the RNS hostile to the State in the old RLB leadership style for a

farmers' union and of hostile action towards Catholics in the Landesbauernschaft offices, forcing them to work on Corpus Christi among other things, and mixing Catholics and Protestants in agricultural schools for no factual reason.

These last points were of particular significance in the region: the strength of Zentrum/Church influence in North Westphalia was undeniable. The vote for the Zentrum in the March 1933 Prussian Landtag elections is a clear indication, as in Habbes region that party had received almost as high a share of the poll as the NSDAP itself.¹⁵⁶ Moreover, as Darré pointed out, the Agricultural Chamber prior to 1933 had naturally contained Zentrum officials, taken over into the RNS after the amalgamation of that year.¹⁵⁷ The impact of an LBF on the area addicted to remarks like "Christianity and Bolshevism are the same thing" can easily be imagined. Darré's charge against Habbes in this connection was that he had given grist to the Catholic mill.¹⁵⁸ The effects of his tactlessness were soon obvious, and led Eltz-Rübenach to suggest a Catholic head of Department III in the North Westphalian Landesbauernschaft in order to appease feeling on the land in the area.¹⁵⁹ So much unrest had been caused that "certain (unspecified) reactionaries" used the occasion to fish in troubled waters, and on 25th April placards derogatory to the RNS as a whole were found on a Kreisbauernschaft office in Lüdinghausen.¹⁶⁰ It was later reported by the local Gauleitung that the whole affair had shaken the confidence of both the Party and the rural population in Darré; he quoted the donations to "Winter Help" as evidence for peasant discontent, these being heavily down in comparison with the previous year.¹⁶¹

In addition to causing resentment among the peasantry the Habbes affair also occasioned some ill-feeling between Party and RNS. This arose mainly through the facts of geography: the Landesbauernschaft for Westphalia crossed the frontiers of two different Gauen, those of Westphalia-North and

Westphalia-South. This entailed negotiations over Habbes' dismissal and the nomination of his successor between Darré and the two Gauleiters concerned, Meier in the north and Wagner for the south. To complicate matters, they did not agree over the ability of Habbes, the southern Gauleitung being on the latter's side. At a discussion with Darré's commissioner the deputy Gauleiter expressed surprise over the RNS treatment of Habbes and seemed to be somewhat anti-RNS in general.¹⁶² He then wrote to Darré to inform him that he had the right to remove the LGF without informing the Gauleiter.¹⁶³ This was technically correct; Darré could do as he wished with Habbes in his capacity as LBF, an exclusively RNS appointment, but Habbes as LGF was subordinate in principle to the Gauleitung. Wagner then took up the cudgels with a letter telling Darré that Habbes must remain LGF until a Gau court had pronounced a verdict upon him.¹⁶⁴ Darré claimed that Hitler himself had suspended Habbes from office,¹⁶⁵ but he did not reply to Wagner with this information. The Gauleitung moved to action, and apparently as a reprisal forbade several RNS officials of the Landesbauernschaft, including the deputy LBF, to speak at a meeting;¹⁶⁶ this drew a complaint from Darré to Party headquarters at Munich.¹⁶⁷ A guerilla war seemed to have broken out with the Party in Westphalia-South.

The next move was that the proceedings against Habbes were broken off by the Party court, as it had been found impossible to prove that he had actually intended any detriment to the NSDAP, whatever he had done.¹⁶⁸ Habbes now began to demand rehabilitation quite energetically;¹⁶⁹ the Party court then suggested to Darré that this should be allowed, and asked the RBF's opinion of a notice for the Press to the effect that no lack of honour had been proved against Habbes.¹⁷⁰ Darré agreed in principle provided that the sentence "His removal was on technical grounds" was added;¹⁷¹ this was intended no doubt to cover Darré for having suspended Habbes in the first place. Pending an investigation of the LBF's professional ability Darré was

now obliged to reinstate him;¹⁷² this was done provisionally only until 31st December 1938, as the Minister declared himself uncertain as to whether or not Habbes had been the cause of unrest on the land.¹⁷³

This reappointment may have satisfied the Gauleitung of Westphalia-South but it provoked a strong reaction from the northern Gau. The Party chief, Meier, stated that he was shocked to hear of the reinstatement, as Habbes was certainly not the man to lead the peasantry in a political sense;¹⁷⁴ the next day Meier informed Habbes in writing that he could not accept him.¹⁷⁵ Darré now found himself in the unfortunate position of having first offended one Gauleiter with the suspension of the LBF and now having shocked a second by bringing him back. However his embarrassment was ended quickly in this respect, when Meier relented after meeting Habbes: he would now have him under two conditions: the past must be forgotten, and the Gauleitung Westphalia-South must retract their punitive measures against Darré's staff.¹⁷⁶ As far as Darré himself was concerned he still felt that Habbes was unfit for his post, and pointed out that in the long run the technical tasks in a Landesbauernschaft should not suffer because of differences of opinion between two Gauleiters: he accepted that at the moment, however, the re-installation of Habbes was the lesser of the two evils.¹⁷⁷ Presumably he meant by this that the greater would be a continuing political row.

Whatever the ultimate decision taken over this LBF, there can be no doubt that the affair occasioned unrest on the land and shook confidence in the RNS, peculiarly unfortunate for Darré, just at a time when the reverberations of the Meinberg crisis had scarcely died away. There seem to have been three issues involved in all; firstly, the reaction of Catholic RNS officials and the local peasantry to an agrarian leader who trod on religious sentiment apparently without respect or consideration to those under him. Secondly, like Meinberg, Habbes appeared to have been for a professional approach in the RNS, rather than regarding it as a means of integrating

agrarian measures into the framework of State policy. It is an interesting commentary upon the alleged autonomy of the corporation that a leader who took this claim seriously, like both Habbes and Meinberg, should lose his post or be threatened with disciplinary action merely for doing so. Thirdly, there was the question of overlapping political frontiers, and the disagreement over Habbes between the two Gauleiters responsible: in this latter respect the case affords yet another instance of the difficulties inherent in the administrative structure of the Third Reich, which ended with a man whose technical ability was in question according to his leader being left in office in order to avoid any further political row, hardly the best way to govern agriculture.

1. In 1937 81% of all Prussian Civil Servants were in the NSDAP, the proportion for the rest of Germany being 63%: Schoenbaum p.205
2. Regpräsident Osnabrück: see Goering to Darré 31st August 1934: BA-R43 II/193
3. Regpräsident Hanover to Prussian Ministry of Agriculture 20th November 1934: NSA 122a XXXII 80
4. Regpräsident Stade to Prussian Ministry of Agriculture 19th November 1934: Ibid
5. Regpräsident Osnabrück to Prussian Ministry of Agriculture 20th November 1934: Ibid
6. Regpräsident Hildesheim to Prussian Ministry of Agriculture 20th November 1934: Ibid
7. Conference minutes 26th November 1934: Ibid
8. Conference minutes 3rd April 1935: Ibid
9. See reports from Regpräsidenten Hildesheim, Osnabrück, Aurich, Stade and Lüneburg to Prussian Ministry of Agriculture July 1935: Ibid
10. Regpräsident Cologne to Ministry of Economic Affairs report for October-November 1937: HSA(D) 1068
11. Point No. 25: Feder "Das Programm der NSDAP"
12. "Gesetz über den neuen Aufbau des Reiches" quoted in Dr. K. Emig "Das Dritte Reich im Aufbau" vol.IV p.381
13. Ministry of Interior to State governments 8th January 1935: HSA(S) 913/E 130/IV
14. Minutes 14th June 1935: ADC Darré
15. Which included a threat to write to the Führer on the subject
16. Darré circular to LGFs 15th February 1932: ND 145. It must be accepted that prior to 1933 agrarian administration in Germany had varied quite widely; for example, rural parishes in the Reich as a whole spent an average 0.63 RM per inhabitant per annum on furthering agriculture, but in Württemberg, the figure was 3.85 RM a quite

substantial difference: in Prussia, notoriously frugal, some parishes did not even possess a reliable pair of scales to weigh the cattle at their market-places: See Minister of Finance Württemberg to Minister of State 31st October 1934: HSA(S) 653/E 130/IV

17. By 1936 it was alleged that the individual states (which had had a measure of independence under Weimar) had in economic affairs become mere adjuncts of the central government: Finance Minister Württemberg to Minister of State 30th December 1936: Ibid
18. Lbsch Bavaria to Darré 6th October 1934: BA-R2/18291
19. Minister of Economic Affairs Württemberg to Minister of State 24th November 1936: HSA(S) 653/E 130/IV
20. Willikens to Minister of State Württemberg 15th February 1935: Ibid
21. Conference minutes 24th October 1936: Ibid
22. Minister of Economic Affairs Württemberg to REM 19th July 1937: Ibid
23. LBF to Ministry of State 5th January 1934: Ibid
24. Apparently in October 1933 the RNS in Hesse had managed to take over schools from the state: See Education Minister Württemberg to Ministry of State 22nd February 1934 for this information: Ibid
25. Ibid
26. "Gesetz über die landwirtschaftlichen Schulen" draft copy 7th May 1938: BA-R2/18187
27. Prussian Ministry of Finance to Ministry of Education 22nd August 1942: Ibid
28. Rust to REM 21st September 1942 regretting the lack of a decision in the matter due to this insistency by the REM "in opposition to all other parties concerned": Ibid
29. Hergenröder (Bavarian government) to deputy LBF Bavaria 3rd March 1937: ADC Reichsnährstand B
30. Regpräsident Lüneburg to Prussian Ministry of Agriculture 19th November

- 1934: NSA 122a XXXII 80
31. Ibid
 32. See Pages 186/7
 33. Regpräsident Hildesheim to Prussian Ministry of Agriculture
20th November 1934: Ibid
 34. KBF Hamlin/Bad Pyrmont to Bürgermeister Hagen 24th April 1936:
NSA 331 B.35
 35. See his memorandum on Party organization "Denkschrift über die
inneren Gründe für die Verfügungen zur Herstellung einer erhöhten
Schlagkraft für die Bewegung" 20th December 1932: ND 128.
 36. Almost simultaneously with the memorandum (in Note 35) Hitler had
taken the RNS under his own supervision and therefore outside
normal Party jurisdiction; for agriculture he had in effect created
by these acts two competing authorities, the professional corpor-
ation on one side and the sovereign political leader on the other.
 37. Darré to Scheringer 30th December 1930: ADC Darré
 38. Darré to von Corswant 30th December 1930: Ibid
 39. Von Corswant to Darré 3rd January 1931: Ibid
 40. Darré to von Corswant 9th January 1931: Ibid
 41. Ushla Munich to von Corswant 3rd January 1931: Ibid. (As this
letter refers to one from the Gauleiter dated 29th January, the
date presumably should be 3rd February)
 42. Not only von Corswant experienced this side of Darré's character;
von Rohr, who served with him as Secretary of State in the REM for
three months described the RBF as "horribly vain": personal inter-
view
 43. This is not to say that there was no further friction between Gau-
leitung and Agrarian Office from January 1931 until the Third Reich;
in November 1931 Strasser and Darré sent out a joint letter to all
Gauleiters 3rd November 1931 reminding them that LGFs were responsible

for agrarian policy in toto as well as being advisers to the Gauleiter: ND 142. This letter was produced as a result of previous friction, according to one historian who points out that in March and June 1932 Darré was obliged to repeat the delineation of frontiers of responsibility, as a result of further trouble with the Gauleiters: Gies p.349 Note 30

44. Darré to Hitler 13th June 1934: BA-R43 II/203
45. Vide the "state within a state" criticism by the Regpräsident Osnabrück. ~~see page~~
46. Darré to Hitler 23rd June 1934 encloses this circular: BA-R43 II/203
47. Darré to Karpenstein 18th June 1934 contains the allegations listed: Ibid
48. Hitler to Karpenstein 7th July 1934: ADC Karpenstein. It is not being suggested here that Darré's grievances above caused this, as Hitler's letter refers to a "long list" of complaints" received about the Gauleiter's conduct
49. His membership number was as low as 90; Koch had been a comrade of Schlageter in the fight against the French occupation of the Ruhr and a Freikorps soldier against the Poles in Silesia: ADC Koch
50. M. Brozsat "The Concentration Camps 1933-45" in H. Krausnick (Ed) "The Anatomy of the S.S. State" p.408. Unless otherwise stated all references to "Brozsat" designate this monograph from now on
51. In September 1933 one local Party member told Meinberg that the real tragedy was that the East Prussian peasant and this "rootless propagandist" had nothing in common: ADC "Angelegenheit Ost Preussen"
52. V.B. 15th March 1933
53. Kreisleiter Samland to Gauleitung E. Prussia 27th July 1933 reported that the land population feared "agrarian Bolshevism" emanating from Koch: IfZ Fa 508

54. Undated report by Koch: Ibid
55. Ibid
56. Undated report: Ibid
57. Bethge to Uschla Munich 1st August 1933: ADC D 932/3. This LKF had been asked to recognize Koch's authority over the Agrarian Office and when he refused to do so the disciplinary procedure was opened: Koch had several other Party members expelled, vide Darré telegram to Buch (Uschla) 2nd August 1933: Ibid
58. Witt to Hitler 19th July 1933: Ibid
59. Willikens to Buch 31st July 1933: Ibid
60. Darré to Goering 4th October 1933: Ibid. One of Koch's remarks during his public reading was alleged to have been "Where was this Herr Darré when the National Socialists were struggling for power?" Like von Corswant the Gauleiter did not care for newcomers
61. Darré to Buch 29th September 1933: Ibid
62. LKF Liedke to Otto 15th July 1933: IfZ Fa 508
63. Buch to Koch 8th September 1933: Ibid
64. WTB 20th September 1933
65. Bouhler (Munich) to all Party leadership channels 26th September 1933: IfZ Fa 508
66. Meinberg's official report 28th September 1933: ADC "Angelegenheit Ost Preussen"
67. The information about Hess can be deduced from Meinberg's report; when he contacted Koch by telephone on arrival in Königsberg the latter had to be reminded that Meinberg was Darré's deputy and came on Hess's commission before the Gauleiter would even agree to see him: Ibid
68. Meinberg's official report: Ibid
69. Raiffeisen Co-operative Königsberg to Darré 25th September 1933: Ibid

70. Meinberg report: Ibid
71. LKFs report to Meinberg: Ibid
72. Ibid
73. See letters from Kreisleiter Heiligenbeil, Wehlau and Pillkallen, to Gauleitung 15th, 12th and 13th July respectively: IfZ Fa 508
74. Kreisleiter Heiligenbeil above cit.
75. Kreisleitung Samland to Gauleitung 27th July 1933: Ibid
76. For evidence of this appointment see ADC Meinberg
77. Meinberg can hardly have been nominated through his knowledge of the province as he came from Westphalia, where he had always been in agriculture: Ibid
78. Darré to RNS Landesbauernschaften 22nd February 1934: BA-R43 II/207
79. Koch to Darré 16th April 1934: Ibid
80. Koch to Buch 4th October 1933 refers in part to this conversation with Meinberg: IfZ Fa 508
81. "Berliner Tageblatt" 12th February 1935
82. Ibid for the following summary of the announcement
83. In East Hanover for example, the NS Frauenschaft had actually forbidden the publication of an RNS pamphlet "Die deutsche Frau" on the grounds that all such matters were in its province exclusively: Darré to Hitler 13th June 1934: BA-R43 II/203
84. Darré to Hess 8th July 1938: BA-R43 II/194
85. Darré to Hess 2nd September 1938: Ibid
86. With 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ million members, in comparison with the building workers union whose membership amounted to 1.3 million only: "Schleswig-holsteinische Volkszeitung" 5th June 1929 "20 Jahre Landarbeiterverband"
87. Evidence for these statements will be found in Appendix L
88. See RNS official speech at farmers' meeting in the Kurmark for this

kind of statement of policy: V.B. 13th February 1935

89. See appointment of one such representative by KBF Niederberg (Rhineland) 12th June 1936: HSA(D) 127
90. Undated list for Kbsch Niederberg: Ibid
91. KBF Hamlin/Bad Pyrmont to Bauer 19th October 1935: NSA 331 B.35
92. KBF Niederberg to estate-office 3rd March 1936: HSA(D) 127
93. KBF Niederberg to Lbsch Rhineland 28th May 1936 uses the phrase to describe peasant attitude to labour: HSA(D) 127
94. "Gesetz zur Ordnung der nationalen Arbeit" RGB (I) p.45
95. Wunderlich "Farm Labour in Germany 1810-1945" p.222
96. Published 15th August 1935: BA-R2/18197
97. Minute 28th September 1935: Ibid
98. According to the Minister of Economic Affairs, Dr. Schmitt: Cabinet minutes 12th January 1934: BA-R43 I/1468
99. 45 out of 204; in 1939 the proportion was even higher, 32 out of 120: Wunderlich above cit. p.217
100. V.B. 11th January 1935
101. Speech to DAF female workers Berlin, V.B. 28th February 1935
102. Text in Darré to all Ministers 27th September 1935: BA-R2/18291
103. According to Dr. Reischle of the RNS Staff office: personal interview
104. KBF Niederberg to Lbsch Rhineland February 1936 reported that workers were increasingly turning to the DAF to whom they paid a contribution: HSA(D) 127
105. KBF Niederberg to farmer 8th June 1936: Ibid
106. KBF Niederberg to DAF Kreis office Niederberg 19th June 1936: HSA(D) 127
107. Darré to Hess 20th May 1938: BA-R43 II/194
108. Ley to Darré 25th May 1938 in his capacity as a Reichsleiter of the NSDAP rather than as head of the DAF: BA-R43 II/194

109. Chancellery to Darré 26th August 1938: Ibid
110. Darré to Hess 2nd September: Ibid
111. Darré to Hess 20th January 1939: BA-R43 II/194
112. In the Cologne/Aachen area he maintained that the RNS had settled 1637 disputes in twenty-two months, the DAF only 22: Saxon-Anhalt also allegedly showed a similar disproportion in favour of the RNS
113. Minute 17th February 1939; a summary of the whole affair went to Hitler on 30th January, and a note accompanying this states that Darré had tried unsuccessfully for an audience in the previous August: Ibid
114. See for example KBF Niederberg to Lbsch Rhineland 29 June 1936: HSA(D) 127
115. Farmer to Lbsch Bavaria 22nd January 1938: BA-R2/18291
116. Koeppens "Das Deutsche Landfrauenbuch" p.116
117. Ley to Darré 25th May 1938: BA-R43 II/194
118. L. Weiss "Die Abmeierung" p.1. The existence of special courts for the peasantry (see Chapter XII) was in itself a reinforcement of the idea of the corporative state.
119. Dr. M. Frauendorfer "Deutsche Arbeitsfront und Ständischer Aufbau" in "NS Monatsheft" No. 54 September 1934 p.819. The concept of a wholly economic corporative state ran contrary to the views of the Strasser group, who in 1925/6 had tried to get the Party to adopt the idea for the political organization of a future Third Reich i.e. with each estate having its own political representation as opposed to liberal democracy, where everyone votes for the same Chamber: R. Kühne "Das Strasser Programm "Zur Programmatik der NS Linken" in VJH 1966
120. "Trial Brief" p.20
121. Domarus p.233
122. Rather along the lines of the Encyclical "Quadragesimo" of 1931, in

which Pius XI suggested the corporative State to overcome the class-struggle: quoted in "Ideengeschichte" p.154. Many South Germans were influenced in this connection by the work of Dr. Othmar Spann, who advocated some such political organization in a number of works: among those leaning intellectually in this direction was Dr. Merkel, himself a member of the Reichsnährstand: personal interview.

123. Quoted in Schoenbaum p.129
124. Eltz-Rübenach to Darré 26th April 1937: ADC Eltz-Rübenach Habbes
125. Darré to Reischle 25th October 1938: ADC Reichsnährstand B
126. NSDAP (Munich) to Darré 20th September 1937: ADC Darré
127. A memorandum 30th June 1936 shows the total Agrarian office annual budget as 80,400 RM: ADC Darré
128. The medical reports of his operation are in ADC Darré
129. This was Goering's impression of the deputy RBF in 1936, when he accused him of having no idea of the RNS's place in the economy as a whole: Goering to Darré 27th October 1936: ND 146
130. That Darré had no inkling of what was happening when he was away can be deduced from the fact that as late as November 1936 he was describing Meinberg in glowing terms, in answer to the criticisms of Goering mentioned in Note 129: Darré to Goering 1st November 1936: Ibid
131. Darré to Meinberg 27th March 1937: ADC Reichsnährstand Meinberg
132. Meinberg's desire to preserve RNS autonomy was confirmed by Dr. Krohn, leader of Section G of Department II of the RNS at this time: personal interview
133. National Peasant Council Commission report 24th May 1937: ADC Reichsnährstand Meinberg
134. Darré to Meinberg 27th March 1937: Ibid
135. At the National Peasant Meeting in November 1936 he allegedly

described Backe as "the Strasser of the RNS": National Peasant Council Commission report above cit.

136. Ibid
137. Darré circular 7th June 1938 lists those punished: Ibid
138. National Peasant Council investigating commission report 21st April 1937: Granzow believed that Darré would be sacked in a matter of weeks: ADC S.S. Habbes-Eltz-Rübenach
139. Darré to Meinberg 27th March 1937: ADC Reichsnährstand Meinberg
140. National Peasant Council Commission report 24th May 1937: Ibid. Darré had reported the remark to Himmler 9th April 1937: Ibid
141. Meinberg to Darré 18th May 1937 reporting the discussion, which took place 19th April: Ibid
142. Darré to LBFs and department leaders 21st April 1937: Ibid
143. LBF Silesia to von Lettow-Vorbeck (Darré's adjutant) 10th May 1937: Ibid. The LBF had been among those present.
144. Willikens to LBF South Westphalia 15th July 1937: Ibid. He stated that the step would not have been taken had he not thought that the authority of leading persons and the success of the Four Year Plan would have been in jeopardy otherwise.
145. An examination of his personal records suggests that he worked at the Hermann Goering works in the Harz in reality: ADC Meinberg
146. Darré to Meinberg 27th March 1937: ADC Reichsnährstand Meinberg
147. See page 317
148. Petzina "Autarkiepolitik im Dritten Reich" p.92
149. See in particular Darré's essay of June 1933 quoted on Page 167
150. Darré to Minister of Finance 25th November 1939: BA-R43 II/202a
151. According to the LBF in the nearby Rhineland; Eltz-Rübenach to Darré 26th April 1937: ADC S.S. Habbes-Eltz-Rübenach
152. Telephone message Eltz-Rübenach to RNS Berlin: minute 7th May: Ibid
153. Darré to Giesecke (Commissioner) 9th April 1937: ADC Reichsnährstand

Meinberg. Unna was the seat of the Lbsch.

154. Minute 10th April 1937: ADC S.S. Habbes-Eltz-Rübenach. Habbes was relieved of his post as LGF as well.
155. Darré to Party Court (Munich) 7th May 1937: Ibid
156. 31.3% for the Zentrum and 33.5% for the NSDAP: "Handbuch für den Preussischen Landtag 1933" pp.285/7
157. Minute 10th April 1937: ADC S.S. Habbes-Eltz-Rübenach
158. Ibid:
159. Eltz-Rübenach to Darré 26th April 1937: Ibid
160. Lbsch to RNS Berlin report for April 1937: Ibid
161. Gauleiter Meier to Darré 6th January 1938: Ibid
162. Minute of conversation Giesecke-Vetter (deputy Gauleiter) 23rd April 1937: Ibid
163. Deputy Gauleiter to Darré 5th May 1937: Ibid
164. Gauleiter Wagner to Darré 17th May 1937: Ibid
165. Darré to Lbsch Westphalia 10th June 1937: Ibid
166. Giesecke-Vetter minute above cit.
167. Darré to Bormann 22nd June 1937: Ibid
168. Party court resolution 17th July 1937: minute in Ibid
169. Correspondence in ADC S.S. Habbes-Eltz-Rübenach
170. Party Court Munich to Darré 24th September 1937: Ibid
171. Darré to Party Court Munich 6th October 1937: Ibid
172. For details of the investigation proposed see Habbes to Darré 14th December 1937 and Darré to Habbes 15th December 1937: Ibid
173. Darré to Habbes 5th January 1938: Ibid
174. Meier to Darré 6th January 1938: Ibid
175. Meier to Habbes 7th January 1938: Ibid
176. Meier to Darré 25th January 1938: Ibid
177. Darré to Bormann 4th July 1938: Ibid

Chapter XI: The Erbhof law: the background to its introduction, its provisions and reception upon the land.

The object of the first of two chapters dealing with the new law on hereditary farm entailment (EHG) passed in September 1933 is to explain how the actual legislation came to be produced, in particular regarding the law's forerunner in Prussia. Legislation was unavoidably restricted to that state alone in the first place, as Dr. Hugenberg's tenure as Minister of Agriculture for the Reich precluded the initiation of such a measure for Germany as a whole, except with his approval. Judging from the way in which the actual law was worked out behind the scenes by National Socialists only, it would seem that the men responsible for it did not wish any DNVP Minister to be informed about what was being prepared. In this respect the new law, although the product of national circumstances, can be seen as a wholly NS measure.

The details of the legislation will be discussed, and the goal of its introduction; a brief statistical survey of the number of people affected is necessary in order to get some idea of the impact of the EHG upon the rural scene. Finally there is the question of how the peasants themselves saw the legislation and what sort of objections were made to it in agrarian circles. A description of the actual litigation involved under the law will be dealt with in the next chapter.

The actual legislation; its preparation and enactment.

(i) The NSDAP's Agrarian Office decided quite soon after accession to power that a reform of the farm inheritance laws should be initiated, in order to ensure that in Prussia at least only one heir would henceforth be able to receive all the land available on the family holding. This was common practice already in north and east Germany, but the intention now, as promised in the March 1930 programme, was to turn practice into a legal obligation. In early 1933 only Prussia could be considered for new legislation,

since the Minister for the Reich, Hugenberg, was not in the NSDAP, whereas in Prussia Willikens reigned as Secretary of State with no Minister of Agriculture above him to raise possible objections to National Socialist ideas.

By April discussions were in full swing over a reform, the prime movers being Backe, Willikens and Kerrl, the Prussian Minister of Justice who was also a member of the NSDAP: on 15th April Backe sent an interim report on the proceedings to Darré for his information.¹ There were several points about the proposed Bill on which agreement had not yet been reached: in particular, there was the question as to whether inheritance should be closed in the male line exclusively, as well as the problem of what size range of farms should be comprised in the legislation; finally, there was the very difficult issue of compensation for those sons and daughters who would now become barred from receiving actual land.

The normal practice in districts with closed inheritance (Anerbenrecht) had been to give them monetary payments in lieu, a custom known as Abfindung: this had in recent years led to considerable indebtedness, however, as low prices meant limited incomes for farmers, so that debts had been incurred because Abfindung could no longer be paid from current receipts, as independent sources confirmed.² Of course, this did not apply to districts with partible inheritance (Realteilung) as all family members there received land anyway, which was why the indebtedness in the Rhineland was the lowest in Germany.³ The National Socialists could not accept Realteilung, however, as it led in the long run to fragmentation of agricultural ownership, and was in any case the practice in limited areas of the country only. As this possibility was excluded, as was Anerbenrecht with Abfindung, then the only choice remaining clearly seemed to be Anerbenrecht without Abfindung. On this point Kerrl was strict;⁴ he took the line that children not allowed to share in land inheritance should be entitled to receive vocational training only at the heir's

expense, but no lump sums in lieu of land, as had been the custom; daughters should be entitled to a trousseau, but not to a dowry. To the farming community, accustomed to giving monetary payments to all family members other than the sole heir this was a sharp departure from recognized practice, but it has to be accepted that the logic of mounting indebtedness seemed to compel anyone wishing to solve this problem to take radical measures.

Before the narrative of the April conference is left, it should be pointed out that one issue not discussed was in some respects the most important of all, viz. should the new law be obligatory or not.⁵ A compulsory law would mean protecting all the peasantry against speculation, on which Backe himself had reservations, as this would entail sheltering the "less worthy" as well as the others.⁶ This is interesting; when the Act did come out it had been made obligatory and thus included not merely the racially sound, but also the biologically "less worthy." In retrospect this is curious, as by the NSDAP's own standards the latter could hardly have been considered suitable as the "life-source" of the nation.

To resolve all outstanding points on the actual provisions, a further meeting was to be held on 19th April, according to Backe's letter. He suggested that Darré should have a word with Willikens before hand, and also inspect the draft before it went to Hitler. What the RBF personally contributed cannot now be determined, but it can be said that he, Backe, Willikens, Kerrl and a Civil Servant in the Ministry of Justice, by name Gustav Wagemann, were the begetters of the legislation as ultimately framed.⁷ Kerrl seems to have been particularly influential, and himself referred to the law as "my finest work" when opening a new court of law in Celle, designed for litigation under the new Act.⁸ It is interesting that the first President of the court later described the old Anerbenrecht law in Hanover as Kerrl's inspiration as he came from Lower Saxony.⁹ As Hanover did have a compulsory law of this nature until its abandonment in 1866,¹⁰ there seems no reason to doubt the

truth of this statement.

(ii) The Act was published on 15th May 1933, and comprehended all peasants in Prussia owning holdings of between $7\frac{1}{2}$ and 125 Ha in size:¹¹ these were to be henceforth known as an Erbhof (plural Erbhöfe), and the proprietors alone would merit the honorific "Bauer," any other landowner being called in future "Landwirt." (From now on the word "Bauer" in this work designates the owner of an Erbhof only.) No Erbhof could be sold without court permission, nor could foreclosure be applied against it in respect of unpaid debts. The farm was thus entailed in one family, since the Bauer could name only a sole heir from among his children, and the farm would be protected against the play of free economic forces. When a sale did become unavoidable, the members of the family had priority of purchase. To qualify as an Erbhof the holding had to be in the possession of a sole owner, those jointly owned being ineligible. As far as Abfindung was concerned, Kerrl had had his way; in future, this could be paid from current receipts only; no debt or mortgage could be secured against the holding in this respect. By obviating future debts on the Erbhof in this way, the family farm became even further removed from speculation, the elimination of which was the main object of the law.

Whatever else may be said of the legislation, it has to be accepted that it did not conflict overmuch with the custom prevailing in most of Prussia, and cannot therefore be said to have come as much of a surprise;¹² moreover, the NSDAP had always said that it would reform the inheritance laws to prevent indebtedness and introduce entailment on the land, so that the soil would remain in the same family line.¹³

(iii) This does not, however, mean that the Act was enthusiastically received in all respects; in Westphalia it seems to have been accepted in principle,¹⁴ although one farm journal was besieged by anxious enquiries from peasants regarding the actual details.¹⁵ Nonetheless, with the resignation of Hugenberg on 27th June 1933, the chance opened up for Darré to make the

legislation applicable to all Germany. He began his campaign with an article on another recent measure, in which he called for the Erbhof law to be extended beyond the boundaries of Prussia, in order to preserve the national peasantry as the biological fundament of the people.¹⁶ Behind the scenes the regional Bauernführer began to put the pressure on to get the law accepted in their areas. In Württemberg a conference of the state government was held in September, and the LBF, Arnold, declared that the Prussian measure should be taken up in the Reich as a whole. There was general agreement amongst the agricultural representatives present that compulsion should be extended, but some speakers, including the co-operatives' director, expressed misgivings about the Abfindung restriction; he felt the harshness of this did not correspond to local opinions in Württemberg. Most speakers appeared to believe that the law in this connection should be left to be interpreted as each region required, a viewpoint with which Arnold declared himself to be in sympathy.¹⁷

It is interesting to note that Abfindung was also a sore point in Westphalia;¹⁸ here also it was said that any possible law for the Reich could be a framework of general principles only, due to varying local conditions.¹⁹ This feeling was not to be sufficient to prevent a comprehensive Act, however, and on 26th September a Bill for the whole country was laid before the Cabinet. Not all present were particularly enthusiastic: von Krosigk, Seldte and the Prussian Finance Minister can be cited in this connection. Seldte wanted a small piece of the farm to be left outside the law, so that the Bauer could have some free economic activity. Hitler rejoined that to the peasant security was more important; he must not be allowed to speculate, as failure could mean ruin for the whole country. The peasants were the foundation of the people, and without them Germany would be reduced to thirty to thirty-five millions in 30/40 years' time. The Führer's intervention was decisive, and the Cabinet accepted the measure.²⁰

The provisions of the law in detail

(i) The new legislation was a lengthy and complicated affair.²¹ Several articles dealt with the two concepts "Bauer" and "Erbhof," which were defined as in the Prussian law except for actual farm size, the previous specific range of $7\frac{1}{2}$ to 125 Ha being abandoned. The holding, in order to qualify as an Erbhof, had now to be large enough to support the whole family so that they required no other sources of revenue in order to live.²² The owner of such a farm, the Bauer, had to be of "German or similar blood," which excluded Jews or coloured people.²³ He was compelled to prove his purity of descent as from the 1st January 1800.²⁴ The Bauer was required at first to be of German nationality although a later amendment allowed the REM to dispense with this condition where it saw fit.²⁵ To qualify as an Erbhof owner the peasant had to be as before the sole possessor of the property, holdings jointly owned not being eligible for enrolment: he similarly had to be both efficient at his profession, and honourable, a special Court being designated as the arbiter of these qualities in cases of doubt. In the event of his losing either or both the wife or heir could be designated as farm manager; if neither were available the RBF could name a new occupier. Under such circumstances the dispossessed peasant (no longer a Bauer) could ^{not?} lay any financial claims outstanding on the property under the Civil Code of 1900. Loss of the title Bauer and dispossession made no difference to the holding, which simply remained an Erbhof under new management. It was no doubt this provision for the turning-out of the Bauer who failed that led the Finance Minister to describe the Erbhof very succinctly as a kind of new feudal tenement, with the community taking the place of the lord of the manor.²⁶ The whole concept indeed is typical of the NS slogan "The common good before individual gain," and the limitations of private property which the Party had always demanded for agriculture.²⁷ As Hitler put it just after the promulgation of the new law, in a speech to assembled

peasants at the Harvest Festival "The individual is transitory, the race remains ... the NSDAP will preserve the race even if necessary at the expense of the individual."²⁸ The NS view of society was holistic in the extreme and nowhere is this more evident than in the Erbhofgesetz. The individual Bauer might have to go if inefficient but the family would still own the land.²⁹

Article XX of the new Act laid down the order of precedence in inheritance, for which only one heir could be named. This ran (a) testator's son (b) his father (c) his brother (d) daughter of the testator (e) sisters (f) any other female descendants. This was a very open preference for males indeed, not justified by normal German practice.³⁰ In order to soften the blow a special arrangement was allowed as a kind of transitional period; where no son was available when the law came into effect (1st October 1933), daughters could take precedence over the father or brothers. When any daughter so inheriting came, however, to dispose of the property in her turn, this concession would automatically lapse (Article XXI). It is important to make it clear that the Act did not establish primogeniture, merely closed inheritance. Whichever son the Bauer chose to designate as heir should be decided according to local custom in that district. Where there was none, the youngest son would take precedence. (The Erbhof Court was to ascertain what local custom was.) The thinking behind the priority for the youngest was that the older sons would have more chance to make a career for themselves if they did not wish to be farmers.³¹

Another Article, No. XXV, further softened the effect of testamentary restrictions by giving concessions as to nomination of the heir. In those districts where Anerbenrecht had not formerly applied the Bauer could designate him quite freely; this also was true of all regions where "important grounds" for deviation from the legally-determined line of precedence could be shown in court; this could even include advancing the claims of the daughters, but the onus was on the Bauer to show why this should be done in

any particular instance. In those districts where free choice of heir had been the rule this could still be exercised. The testator could also (Article XXVI) authorize the father or mother of the heir to manage the farm until the latter attained 25 years of age. This concession gave a Bauer's widow the chance to exercise control over the farm in some cases, if only for a limited period, but none of the articles referred to actually allowed her to inherit the property, which had to remain in the same blood-line. This was not perhaps as harsh as it might seem, since the normal practice was to bequeath the holding to an offspring; indeed the latter normally took over the farm anyway when the parents reached 65 to 70 years of age, a treaty being signed which allowed them to live on the farm and enjoy a certain income etc. which the heir was legally obliged to provide.³² When seen against this background the law's provisions regarding inheritance appear less restrictive than a cursory reading of them might indicate, especially in respect of those regions (the overwhelming majority) where Anerbenrecht was the established pattern already.

The designated heir was not obliged to accept the holding bequeathed to him. Under Article XXIX he was entitled to forswear his claim within a period of six months of being told of the owner's intentions. This procedure was in practice invoked; a court at Wuppertal-Elberfeld accepted an elder son as heir because "the younger son ... has renounced his right of inheritance."³³ In one case in Württemberg the local court informed an elder son that his brother had rejected the farm to which he had been nominated heir, as he was an aircraft mechanic by trade, and the elder brother then took over.³⁴ There was apparently no pressure upon the younger people to accept the running of the farm if they did not feel like taking this on.

Article XXX established a curious right known as "Heimatzuflucht," which allowed those family members not inheriting land the privilege of board and accommodation at the family holding at a time when they found them-

selves in financial need. This must be seen in the framework of the new regulations about Abfindung, now confined merely to vocational training at the heir's expense. As the old custom of granting such children a lump sum in lieu of land was now discontinued they received the education and "Heimatzuflucht" as compensation for this loss. As it happened the latter right was not normally invoked, as Germany was undergoing such an economic boom that its provisions simply did not apply. Had there been a new depression, however, the peasantry might well have been submerged under a flood of indigent relatives. That this did not occur was simply due to the poor financial treatment received by agriculture in the Third Reich as compared to the cities, where the disinherited could find far better jobs.

The same section of the Act dealt with entailment of the holding; neither as a complete entity nor in part could it now be sold without court permission; debts had henceforth to be payable from current receipts, and no mortgage could be taken up secured against the holding except with approval from the authorities. This corresponded to the Party programme of March 1930.³⁵ So strong was the NS conviction that the peasantry should not be burdened by debt in future that in 1936 a further decree came out disqualifying any holding from becoming an Erbhof where its current debts were over 70% of the total farm value at the last estimate.³⁶ Security against foreclosure was also afforded by the same part of the EHG: Article XXXII did however allow a creditor to distrain on farm produce provided it was not required for consumption by the Bauer and his family: land could not be proceeded against by a creditor under any circumstances whatever,

Wilhelm Meinberg was later to claim that the EHG had lifted the Bauer from out of "capitalist debt-servitude."³⁷ Clearly there was some substance in this statement as virtually total security of tenure was now given to the family. As against this, the individual farmer could be removed from management in favour of another person, family member or trustee, for personal

failings, a point which has to be remembered where security is concerned. Of course, the NSDAP would doubtless have accepted this, but replied that under the capitalist system he could have lost the holding by compulsory auction, which was now forbidden. One weapon against the Bauer was in this respect exchanged for another, but it has to be borne in mind that the real difference now was that whatever happened, the holding stayed in the same family: in this sense the Act realized the slogan of "Blood and Soil," as claimed in its preamble.

(ii) The actual litigation in the Erbhof courts has been postponed to a later chapter, where it is hoped to show that by their interpretation of the law the judges did at least sometimes soften its impact. In advance of this detail it can be said that even in principle, the Erbhofgesetz (henceforth "EHG") entailed rather less restrictions than might at first sight appear. In the first place, it made Anerbenrecht obligatory, but most districts had this as a custom already: had they not, the clamour for a national law could not have arisen in the twenties. Moreover, the clauses in the EHG regulating the hereditary succession were hedged around with all sorts of modifications, especially for the transitional period following the law's introduction. In particular, local custom was always to prevail in deciding which particular member of the family should inherit: in this respect, the feelings expressed in such regions as Westphalia and Württemberg, that the EHG should be a set of general principles rather than a blueprint to be followed in the same way everywhere had been met. The open admission of local attitudes had perhaps been of some influence in shaping the EHG in this way.

Similar consideration of regional objections to the regulation of Abfindung had not, however, been applied. More will be said on this later in terms of the reception of the EHG by the peasantry, but it must be pointed out whilst actually summarizing the Act that the prohibition of debts in this respect had been made universally applicable, with no regard to local practices.

Here was an issue on which Kerrl had been adamant, and the framers of the EHG had not yielded; however many compromises had been reached regarding the heir, there had been none on Abfindung. Indebtedness was to be rigorously excluded in all cases.

Two further points have to be made regarding the EHG in general; firstly, its effect in Realteilung districts not accustomed to closed inheritance. Here the obligatory nature of the legislation clearly made a greater impact than in the rest of the country, but some qualification is necessary even here. The very fact that Realteilung had led to property fragmentation meant that fewer holdings in these areas were eligible as Erbhöfe in the first place. This can be seen by comparing the proportion of farms enrolled under the Act in a region such as Westphalia with that which came about in Baden, the Rhineland province and Hessen-Nassau where Realteilung had been widely practised. Whereas in Westphalia roughly half the agricultural land was eventually comprehended under the EHG, in the three other regions named above the relevant percentages were 16.6, 15.6 and 19.4 respectively.³⁸ To summarize the Act in Realteilung areas is therefore to say that it was harsher, but that a smaller proportion of the peasants was touched by it.

Secondly, if the RNS was valid for all food-producers, it must be pointed out that the EHG was not: it applied in principle to peasant holdings only, which represented about seventy per cent of all those of 5 Ha or above in the country.³⁹ It was the Bauer and not the farmer who became specially privileged, although the latter did enjoy the benefits of guaranteed prices of course; but only the Bauer could not be evicted from his land for debts. A hint of this attitude had been given by Darré even before the NS accession when he stated that a racial state could not be built up on an agriculture based on farmers.⁴⁰ He amplified this in an essay in June 1932 where peasant and farmer were contrasted;⁴¹ the former thought of "We," that is, of his family and of passing on the holding to them, whereas a farmer was concerned with "I"

and the profit motive; he had no real attachment to the land as such, unlike the peasant, to whom it represented the work of his ancestors, so that the present occupier was one link only in the eternal chain of "Blood and Soil." There was also the question of the culture of the race, of which the Bauer and not the farmer was the kernel.

Darré's own view of this essential alleged difference did not change after his accession to office; in the article calling for the extension of the "Bäuerliches Anerbenrecht" he declared himself against the "capitalisation" of the peasant precisely on the grounds that once subject to normal price-mechanisms he would become a farmer and hence no longer the life-source of the nation.⁴² This presumably means that economic considerations would come to prevail over the future of the race as such. The fuss made of the peasant in the Third Reich will be dealt with more fully in a later chapter, but these remarks have been inserted here as a reminder that any future references to Bauer in this work or to the EHG are concerned with one section of agriculture only rather than with the rural community as a whole.

It should be stated incidentally that in exceptional cases farmers were allowed to enrol under the terms of the EHG, but only if they could show that their land had been in the family for 150 years or more.⁴³ By mid 1938 some thousand farms over 125 Ha in size had taken advantage of this;⁴⁴ clearly this kind of exception was made only very rarely, and demonstrates again that the NSDAP regarded attachment to the soil as of primary importance.

(iii) In addition to guarding the Bauer against future indebtedness the NSDAP wished to relieve him of his current debts as far as possible. This provoked some controversy in high places: on 29th September 1933 the directors of the Reichsbank wrote to the Chancellery suggesting a staggered relief system, rather than comprehensive legislation, under which all Bauern received the same treatment since they did not believe that the honourable Bauern were indebted anyway.⁴⁵ A discussion apparently took place later on the subject;

all parties concerned accepted the total indebtedness as six billion RM, but opinions varied on the amount of interest to be charged to the Bauer as his share of paying off the commitments. The REM officials wanted a variable scale from 2 - 4% according to the degree of mortgage security, Hitler's Economic Committee favoured 3 - 4%, while the Finance Ministry requested 4% for everyone.⁴⁶ It would appear that the latter Ministry was less inclined to introduce large-scale cuts in interest rates than the National Socialists on the first two bodies, in which respect it agreed with the Reichsbank. A middle way was eventually attained, as under the scheme as finally decided the Bauer registered all debts as at 30th January 1933 with his LBF provided that the property as a whole was worth 5,000 RM or more. The State took over all these debts as from 1st October 1933 with the statement "The Bauer and his farm will be free." In return the indebted peasant paid 1% of his total farm value yearly to the State and a further 2% on the debts taken over. A critic of the new plan, von Rohr, was quick to suggest that in certain cases a Bauer was less well-off under this arrangement than he would have been had Dr. Hugenberg's legislation still applied to Erbhöfe (for which the new law replaced it). The former Secretary of State chose as his criterion a holding worth 50,000 RM and contrasted how much would be paid annually by the Bauer under the two schemes described, choosing various degrees of indebtedness to show what he meant.⁴⁷ He produced in this way statistics highly unfavourable to the new arrangement, claiming forty per cent of all Erbhöfe would now pay more than under Hugenberg's proposals.⁴⁸ But his figures were distorted by being based upon a holding with a value as high as 50,000 RM, which at 1% annually entailed a payment to the State of 500 RM in all cases, apart from interest on the debts. In reality it seems very unlikely that many Erbhöfe were really worth that much;⁴⁹ von Rohr's arguments do not really convince therefore; there seems no reason to suppose that the new legislation was disadvantageous to the Bauer. At least as far as short and middle-term credits

were concerned it was adjudged to have been successful in its aim of debt-relief, although the problem of long-term debts was never fully solved.⁵⁰

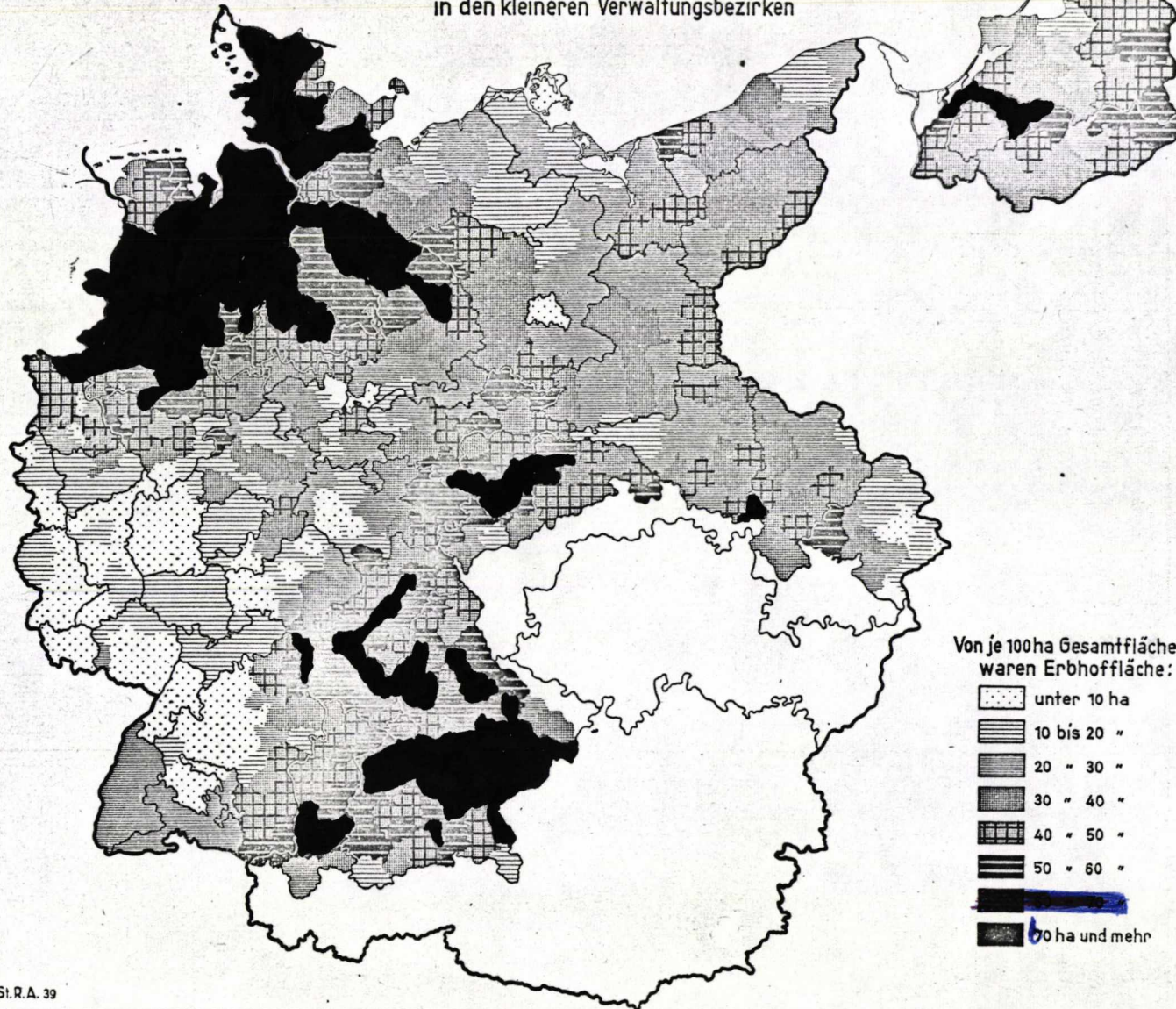
A statistical survey of farms included and the reception of the EHG.

(i) If the criteria of $7\frac{1}{2}$ and 125 Ha are taken, there were just over a million potential Erbhöfe in the country in 1934.⁵¹ But for one reason or another a very large number failed to qualify as eligible.⁵² By mid 1935 the total number rejected had reached 223,706 or virtually one quarter of all potential Erbhöfe. The proportion of holdings not accepted varied inevitably from one region to another, due to soil conditions, and also depending on whether the farm was in joint ownership or not, as shown on the attached chart.

As far as the first was concerned, many holdings declared ineligible were rejected as they simply failed to constitute a viable enough unit to supply the family concerned with all its needs, although $7\frac{1}{2}$ Ha in size or above. This stemmed either from bad soil conditions or from the fact that the holding was so fragmented that it simply could not be farmed efficiently. In the former Realteilung regions this was particularly true, as was the question of joint ownership, derived from inheritance customs: at Ailringen (Württemberg), for example, of thirty holdings disqualified as not being economically viable, only one was under $7\frac{1}{2}$ Ha in size; of the thirty-six rejected on the same grounds in nearby Eberbach, all were this size limit or over, including one as large as $14\frac{1}{2}$ Ha.⁵³ For the farms under the jurisdiction of the Erbhof court at Künzelsau (including the villages already named) four hundred holdings were declared unacceptable of which 328 failed to prove economic viability and 53 were in joint ownership at the time of the Act.⁵⁴

Joint ownership as a bar to entry on the roll of Erbhöfe now held by the local courts was a particularly thorny problem.⁵⁵ So much was this the case that the law had to be repeatedly modified in this respect, as in areas like the Rhineland so many potential Erbhöfe would have been excluded from

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the Act had it not been. The first alteration came as early as October 1933: common ownership was now accepted in respect of married couples farming property jointly.⁵⁶ Another amendment soon followed allowing the registration of holdings partly in such possession and partly owned individually by either the husband or wife.⁵⁷ Originally such farms owned jointly went to the man on the wife's death but to the next heir when the husband died first; the modification permitted the co-owners to name one another as direct heir, which strengthened the wife's legal position quite considerably, as she could now take over from her husband when she became widowed. The concept of eligibility for commonly-owned properties was extended still further in 1936 when two farms jointly managed were allowed to qualify.⁵⁸ These amendments had the effect of considerably increasing the number of Erbhöfe in certain regions; the modifications of 1933 added ninety thousand properties to the roll.⁵⁹ In the Düsseldorf and Cologne districts forty and sixty-eight per cent respectively of all registered holdings were only allowable under these amendments.⁶⁰

As well as soil conditions affecting economic viability and the question of how the farms were owned, the lack of efficiency on the part of the farmer seems to have been the chief grounds for non-eligibility: in one parish five holdings out of sixteen eligible in other respects failed to qualify for this reason.⁶¹

Apart from those holdings not accepted by the authorities there were many cases of the owners themselves objecting to enrolment, for either the whole farm or at least part of it. A summary of the number of cases relating to disputes over entry or non-entry on the roll is given in Appendix J, but the source from which these statistics were extracted did not show exactly how many Bauern were objecting to entry and how many RNS officials to non-entry since both types of objection have been added together as one figure. But it seems clear from an examination of the files of individual Bauern

from various parts of the Reich that no small number attempted to find some way of avoiding enrolment. In a sample study of 273 Erbhöfe, 32 objections had been made to registration.⁶² As can be seen in Table XXXIII in Appendix J the number of objections was particularly high in those areas formerly enjoying Realteilung, such as Cologne and Düsseldorf, and regions in the South West, e.g. Karlsruhe and Zweibrücken. So marked was this tendency that the Civil Servant in the Ministry of Justice responsible for the administration of the law pointed it out in an article; he estimated that whereas objections in areas with Anerbenrecht as custom equalled approximately ten per cent of all enrolled Erbhöfe for the same district, in the former Realteilung regions the proportion was three times as great.⁶³

If the fact that only three quarters of all nominally eligible holdings were eventually registered seems surprising, it has to be borne in mind that there were two factors working against a higher figure. Firstly, there was the desire on the part of the authorities not to include holdings not considered viable, or those in the hands of peasants not considered efficient. Secondly, in some districts more than others, there were strong objections by the local peasantry to enrolment, as well as a higher degree of non-eligibility, due to soil and ownership conditions. This comes out strongly in Table XXXII of Appendix I which shows that the regions of North and East Germany and Bavaria had a much higher proportion of enrolled farms, especially Schleswig-Holstein, Hanover and Oldenburg in the North West, (where the NSDAP had been well-favoured electorally prior to 1933). Assessment of the EHG's reception and eventual impact must be interpreted in the light of these factors, which illustrate considerable regional variations.

(ii) It is, of course, difficult to estimate public opinion with great accuracy in the Third Reich for obvious reasons. Nonetheless some evidence can be offered as to how the new legislation was received, partly from genuine protests made and the official reactions to them, partly from the

often defensive tone of NS speeches on the subject; there were also reports on the subject made by local government officials, which often contained quite frank criticism, since the documents were not intended for publication. In the final analysis, apart from regional variations already mentioned, how the peasant saw the Act was personal and therefore generalizations are perilous. The EHG offered security in return for restrictions on testamentary freedom, etc., but the vigorous peasant needed protection and debt-relief far less than the less-efficient and therefore received less for what he gave up: not all farmers were heavily in debt. As Darré once said in a defensive speech on the subject "It is endlessly said that we created conditions of compulsion with the EHG" but he went on to point out that in a nation of sixty millions one could scarcely legislate to suit every individual.⁶⁴ The point is well-taken: had the government not done something to protect the peasantry it would doubtless have been criticized by the agrarian sector for its omission.

The section on Abfindung caused most concern, and seems never to have been wholly accepted by the peasantry, as it was so contrary to custom to prevent them taking on debts to compensate their children for not receiving land: in 1937 the president of an Erbhof Court at Munich wrote to the Ministry of Justice requesting that the Courts be allowed to take a more lenient view of the matter, since otherwise the disinherited just left the land for building work or industry.⁶⁵ When the LBF for Hesse described local peasant attitude towards the EHG in 1938 as "dissatisfied" and "critical" he cited Abfindung as the main grounds for discontent.⁶⁶ Unfavourable reaction from both Westphalia and Württemberg has already been cited here, so that dissatisfaction over the issue can fairly be called widespread. It was in fact a very delicate matter, in view of strong traditional feeling about monetary compensation for family members.⁶⁷ The preservation of the family farm to which the new Abfindung restrictions contributed can have given little

consolation to those children now deprived both of land and of a lump sum in lieu, since the maintenance of the farm was now of academic interest to them as they were now unable to share in its future anyway.

Obviously Abfindung prohibitions must be seen in conjunction with the regulations regarding the nomination of a sole heir, since it was their joint effect which was so considerable. The latter provision also came under heavy fire, in particular from Max Sering, the agrarian historian, and von Rohr. The former wrote a pamphlet in 1934 criticising compulsory closed inheritance:⁶⁸ the point was taken up by von Rohr, who described this clause as the worst part of the Act.⁶⁹ He even went so far as to say that it would threaten the whole future of the Erbhof as a family concern. Von Rohr believed that the farmer's wife would henceforth keep any land she brought to the marriage as a dowry to herself, rather than amalgamate it with her husband's to farm as one unit; this would be to ensure that something was left to those children not nominated as heir. This would clearly have the effect of keeping the holding smaller than it need be. He also drew attention to another point, namely that indebtedness was normally incurred whilst the children were growing up and subsequently redeemed by their cheap labour as adults. The EHG would militate against this arrangement by driving them away when they did grow up; if they did remain, denied both Abfindung and land, they would demand high wages.

It must be made clear here that although criticism of testamentary restrictions was also forthcoming among the peasants themselves,⁷⁰ there are two points to be made in mitigation. Firstly, the degree of hardship was undoubtedly greater at first, since the now-disinherited had already taken on obligations in expectation of favours to come which now would not be forthcoming; the Gestapo chief in Aachen drew attention to this in August 1934.⁷¹ Secondly, as far as driving children from the farm is concerned, it was never the intention of the NSDAP to try and keep them there anyway,

as is abundantly clear from the provision called "Heimatzuflucht" granting succour on the family holding to the departed sons and daughters when in financial need. The insertion of this clause illustrates that the Party expected many people to leave the land, and by doing so, replenish the population of urban areas. The peasantry was the life-source of the whole nation, as the EHG's preamble makes quite plain. Criticism of the law that stressed its tendency to oblige non-inheritors to migrate is therefore ill-founded.

It soon became suggested as another line of attack that the Bauer would find it hard to get credit in future, based on the logical inference that if the creditor cannot foreclose he is not very likely to risk his capital in the first place.⁷² This would have implications for the efficiency of German farming and the Erzeugungsschlacht. In February 1934 one farmers' representative in Schleswig-Holstein wrote to Hitler stating that credit had already been cut off from the Erbhof;⁷³ the Regpräsident of Brandenburg confirmed in the following July that borrowing was now much harder than before for the peasants.⁷⁴ The official answer to this was that this was a transitory problem only; in the long run increased revenue from higher prices and bigger output would make the Bauer independent of outside credit.⁷⁵ Since prices did not rise appreciably after 1936 the Bauer never did become able to invest from his own resources only, but in defence of the official viewpoint of the matter, it has to be accepted that the EHG was based upon the supposition that the agrarian price-index would be kept at a high level; had the RBF and his advisers had their way, the lack of outside credit facilities experienced in 1934 would have made no difference in the long run.

Lively concern was also caused by the provisions relating to women, who were disparaged under the EHG, even when due allowance is made for the transitory concession regarding the daughters' claim to inheritance made in Article XXI. As late as 1937 one writer admitted that doubts and misunder-

standings still existed on the land about the discrimination of the Act; these were apparently being fed by the "evil-minded," who sought to convince the farmer's wife that she had no rights under the EHG's terms. This included the allegation that she also lost any dowry land which she brought with her.⁷⁶ It seems to have been the position of the wife, rather than that of the daughter, that was the issue here. Nonetheless the latter were inevitably affected by Abfindung difficulties, as the absence of both land and money influenced their chances of finding a husband. In 1938 complaints were raised in official circles regarding unmarried daughters; it was alleged that it had been overlooked that without land they had no marital prospects, and the variable handling of this point by the Erbhof Courts was said to have caused "considerable unrest" according to lawyers reports.⁷⁷

Perhaps the sorest point of all for the peasants was that affecting their status as owners of the farm; the EHG by allowing for dispossession of the inefficient in effect reduced the Bauer to the role of manager on his own holding. One Erbhof Court judge wrote to his Landesbauernschaft in 1938 saying that he knew of cases where the parents were being told by their children that the Bauer was not legally owner of the soil any more, which they had apparently been taught at school.⁷⁸ The same year saw a lively controversy provoked by the publication of a guide to citizenship for the young, written by an official of the National Youth Leadership. He referred to the EHG and wrote that "It (the Erbhof) is a form of life which the State gives to a Bauer and his kin. The Bauer has to carry out the work allotted to him by the State." This description, smacking of feudal tenure rather than of ownership rights, aroused the ire of Haidn, the leader of Department I of the RNS, who wrote to the editor to protest.⁷⁹ He did admit that the passage had a kernel of truth, but continued by suggesting that the peasant concept of ownership was not "liberalistic," that is, the Bauer did not regard his farm solely as an object of material value. Haidn had had a

choice between admitting that the NSDAP had changed property rights, or denying this suggestion. He elected to go for the first but provided an alibi by equating the change as corresponding to peasant feelings on the subject, but without providing any real evidence that this was so. His defence was in line with the normal NS procedure of ascribing to the peasant a kind of attitude towards the land which transcended materialism;⁸⁰ the whole NS view of the peasantry seems in retrospect to have been naïve in this respect. The strength of Haidn's reaction is nonetheless interesting, and suggests that the RNS were rather sensitive on the subject, to the point where a virtually indisputable passage in a book was made the object of violent argument; the Department I leader demanded in fact that the publication should be suitably revised.

There is in fact contemporary correspondence which concedes how much resistance there was to the Act in general in agrarian quarters, the reluctance of the peasants to register their farms as Erbhöfe being of decisive value here. A doctor, writing to the Ministry of the Interior in Württemberg on rural health problems, mentioned this point in passing, by saying that the peasants on the whole had not voluntarily proposed the recognition of their holdings except in cases of indebtedness.⁸¹ This rather confirms the view that the least-efficient became the most protected. Even an official history of the chief Erbhof Court in Prussia spoke of resistance to the law and its hardness in the period of transition.⁸² A defensive article by an RNS official described "bitter resistance," especially in respect of Abfindung and testamentary restrictions; as mitigation for the new measure he could find only the statement that it was better to have the law than to go on paying 80-90% of one's income to the Jews.⁸³ (An examination of the relevant statistics shows that this had never been the case in reality.⁸⁴) Even as late as 1938 Haidn had to admit that in all parts of the Reich there were obstacles to the inner acceptance of the new law by the Bauern, which the

RNS must overcome.⁸⁵ This is a generalization, however, and it must be conceded that the ability of the local OBFs/KBFs in explaining the law played a part in its acceptance or otherwise; the Gestapo chief in Aachen reported in August 1934 that the effects had not been so bad as feared, due to the efforts of the local Bauernführer.⁸⁶

As early as 1933 Darré found himself under pressure on the subject from von Papen, who told him that great unrest had been caused by the EHG. The RBF promptly replied asking for details and saying that reports of this nature when queried turned out usually to emanate from either estate-owners or lawyers.⁸⁷ This defence he repeated in a speech to peasants in Bavaria later in the same month.⁸⁸ Set against evidence of peasant reluctance to enrol, this line does not sound convincing. What caused Darré even more trouble than either the criticism of von Rohr or von Papen was the Sering pamphlet, which became an object of discussion even outside Germany; articles appeared in the press in Switzerland, Austria and Holland in September and October 1934.⁸⁹ The result was the confiscation of the pamphlet by the Minister of the Interior, for which Darré subsequently thanked him.⁹⁰ He was later to claim that a Gauleiter's meeting in December had shown that the public was not really concerned over the EHG.⁹¹ If that had really been true, it is difficult to imagine exactly why Darré should have found it necessary to ban all discussion of the legislation, at this time, even within the ranks of the RNS itself.⁹² His whole attitude was defensive in the extreme and his attack on Sering's views as "economically orientated" merely echo the Lohse/Haidn arguments about the non-materialist Bauer.⁹³

Altogether the EHG was clearly not well-received on the land. Abfindung, testamentary restrictions, and also the element of compulsion in itself, all played a part in this. The Bauer's status as owner was also concerned in that the suspicion of neo-feudalism was attached to the law. The peasant, rather than monarch of all he surveyed on the farm, became a kind of manager,

tilling the soil in the interests of family and community, and liable to be removed by the latter if he failed. It is important to remember, however, that criticism of the law tended to centre around its nature as an instrument of compulsion: as a measure producing unity of treatment for the whole Reich it was actually welcomed in principle.⁹⁴ A delegation from the Land Owners' Association visited the Chancellery in April 1933 and expressed the opinion, among other things, that a single law for Germany was urgently needed.⁹⁵ It would seem in retrospect that a national measure with voluntary registration under it might have been better received.⁹⁶ The NSDAP reply to this would no doubt have been to reiterate that the peasantry had to be preserved at all costs and therefore there was too much at stake to allow an individual choice. Final judgement of the law would ultimately seem to depend upon the political philosophy of the person judging it; for those in favour of a pluralistic society the measure appears restrictive, but those inclining towards a more holistic form of government, where the needs of the individual give way to those of the community, might find it justified by the needs of society as a whole.

1. Backe to Darré 15th April 1933: this letter describes the meeting between Backe, Willikens and Kerrl five days previously, and is the basis for the information given here: ADC Reichsnährstand Backe
2. See WB 5th December 1928 for the statement that Abfindung was coming increasingly from capital and not income
3. Thyssen "Bauer und Standesvertretung" p.278
4. See Backe to Darré 15th April 1933 for Kerrl's viewpoint: ADC Reichsnährstand Backe
5. Backe himself considered it to be the most important issue: Backe to Darré above cit.
6. Ibid
7. For Wagemann's part, see Kerrl's oration at his funeral 11th December 1933: GSA p.133/473
8. Report 8th February 1934: Ibid
9. Report 15th December 1934: Ibid
10. For an account of the old Hanoverian Höferecht see K. Waltenmath "Die historischen Quellen des Erbhofgesetzes und seine Probleme" in "Schmollers Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung, Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft im Deutschen Reiche" 1939
11. The official title was the "Bäuerliches Anerbenrecht"
12. In Westphalia, for example, Anerbenrecht had been in force since 1898: WB 17th May 1933
13. V.B. 9th January 1932 in an agricultural supplement
14. See WB 17th May 1933 and 24th May 1933
15. Ibid 31st May 1933
16. Ibid 26th July 1933
17. Conference minutes 20th September 1933: HSA(S) Bundle 343/E 130/IV
18. WB 24th May 1933
19. Ibid 31st May 1933

20. Cabinet minutes 26th September 1933: BA-R43 I/1465
21. "Erbhofgesetz" RGB (I) pp.685ff
22. As the Supreme Court for Erbhöfe laid down in 1935 "The question of what quantity of land suffices to make a family independent of the market . . . has not been decided by the law": Decision 12th February 1937: BA-R22/2248
23. "Similar blood" was taken to mean any race settled in Europe since the start of recorded history: E. Molitor "Deutsches Bauern und Agrarrecht" p.51: as far as the exclusion of Jews was concerned it should be pointed out firstly that very few owned land anyway, and secondly, there was nothing to stop them possessing holdings not designated as Erbhöfe. As late as 1936 there were eighteen Jewish-owned farms in the Rhineland Lbsch, plus twenty-seven parcels owned by Jewish cattle-dealers for grazing: Lbsch Rhineland to RNS administrative office Berlin 6th May 1936: HSA(D) 1043. Even the Nuremberg Race Laws of 1935 did not actually preclude Jewish land-ownership since they did not regulate economic activity: Dr. Gürtner, Minister of Justice to Oberlandesgerichtspräsident Cologne 14th March 1936: LA 4116
24. The ghettos were dissolved in Germany between 1797 and 1811, which was probably the reason for this particular date, since from then on Jews began to mix more freely and intermarry with Germans
25. "Vierte Durchführungsordnung" Article V 21st December 1936
26. Cabinet Minutes 26th September 1933: BA-R43 I/1465
27. Cf. Willikens article "Bodenrecht im Dritten Reich" in "NS Jahrbuch 1930"
28. Domarus p.304
29. The section dealing with the Bauer and his qualifications is based on Articles I, XI, XII, XV, XVI and XVIII of the "Erbhofgesetz":
30. According to Professor Haushofer: personal interview; in April

the Party members discussing this issue had been all in favour of the total exclusion of females, (which perhaps was too harsh to be accepted by the peasantry, hence its abandonment in favour of more limited restrictions): Backe to Darré 15th April 1933:

ADC Reichsnährstand Backe

31. According to Darré himself in an essay "Geburtminderung durch das Erbhofgesetz?" in "Die Dorfkirche" May 1934 Heft 5 p.147
32. This custom, the contract being known as "Übergabevertrag" was in no way affected by the new law: contemporary administrative files are full of such cases after 1933
33. The Court decision is recorded in HSA(D) 51
34. Künzelsau Erbhof Court to brother 10th October 1937: LUD Bundle 210/F.277
35. Section 3 Point 4 "The offering of land as collateral to private moneylenders is forbidden": V.B. 7th March 1930
36. K. Blomeyer "Neuerungen im Erbhofrecht" in "Jahrbücher für National-ökonomie und Statistik 1937" p.451
37. "Diener des Volkes": V.B. 1st January 1935
38. This statistical information is in all cases from "Vierteljahrsheft zur Statistik des Deutschen Reiches 1939" Sec II pp.37/8
39. Of the three million holdings in 1933, 1,609,150 were under 5 Ha "Wirtschaft und Statistik 1934" p.554: in August 1934 the REM estimated that there were 1,071,300 potential Erbhöfe: Dr. Kummer REM to Darré 8th August 1934: BA-NS 26/951; just over a million represented some five sevenths therefore of all holdings over 5 Ha
40. Darré to LGFs 19th November 1931: ND 142
41. "Bauer und Landwirt" in "Deutsche Agrarpolitik" June 1932: literally translated the title means "peasant and farmer": until the arrival of the NSDAP the word "Landwirt" had no pejorative meaning in German

42. WB 26th July 1933
43. See WTB 25th November 1933: if the estate was a model in terms of efficiency it could also be enrolled even if bigger than 125 Ha
44. 1086 to be exact: "Vierteljahrsheft zur Statistik" 1939 Sec. II p.36: as in 1933 there were 28,046 farms of 100 Ha or over this was clearly a very small proportion
45. Drs. Schlacht and Dreyser to Dr. Lammers 29th September 1933:
BA-R43 I/1301
46. The discussion was summarized in a minute 11th December 1933: Ibid
47. For example, a farm of 50,000 RM value owing 30,000 RM would pay under Hugenberg 4% of debts, or 1,200 RM, and under the EHG 500 RM as 1% of farm value plus 600 RM in interest at 2% on debts, or 1100 RM; but a holding with 10,000 RM debts would have paid 300 RM more under the EHG than according to Hugenberg's legislation
48. Von Rohr's comments are contained in "Beitrag zur deutschen Agrarpolitik" BA-Kl. Erw 404 p.32
49. The average German holding from 5 to 100 Ha in size had a value in 1930 of almost exactly 1500 RM per Ha; from Borsig "Reagrarisierung Deutschlands?" p.11: as the average Erbhof was approximately 23 Ha in size, this yielded an average value of around 35,000 RM, on which the 1% yearly payment would have been 350 RM only, and not 500 RM as shown by von Rohr: VJH zur Statistike etc. p.36
50. Vide "50 Jahre" p.32
51. Although by the middle of 1935 rather less than one million had actually been considered for entry under the EHG by the relevant courts: See Table XXXII Appendix J for the exact statistics.
52. By mid 1938 the total accepted reached 684,997 with an area of over 15 million Ha, equal to fifty-five per cent of German agricultural land: "Vierteljahrsheft zur Statistik des deutschen Reiches" Sec.

- II p.36: for a full statistical summary see Appendix I
53. From "Liste der Höfe, die aus dem Gemeindeverzeichnis nicht in das gerichtliche Verzeichnis übernommen sind" 1934: LUD Bundle 211/F. 277. At Königshofen (Bavaria) the Anerbengericht laid down that no farm under 10 Ha in the district constituted an Erbhof: Decision 18th September 1935 recorded in BA-R22/2248
54. Ibid
55. This point had been raised by one farm journal in respect of the "Bäuerliches Anerbenrecht": WB 24th May 1933
56. "Erste Durchführungsordnung" RGB (I) p.749
57. "Zweite Durchführung" 19th December 1933 RGB (I) p.1096
58. "Erbhofrechtsverordnung" 21st December 1936: RGB (I) p.1069
59. Dr. Hopp in "Deutsche Justiz" No. 1324: BA-R22/2183
60. Ibid
61. AEG Künzelsau to KBF Hohenlohen (Württemberg) 6th November 1935, who had apparently asked for such information: LUD Bundle 210/F.277
62. See Appendix J for the full list of sources for this information
63. Dr. Hopp in "Deutsche Justiz" No. 1324: BA-R22/2183
64. Speech at Bad Kreuznach: "Berliner Tageblatt" 17th September 1934
65. Court President to Ministry of Justice 30th October 1937: BA-R22/2129: the Regierungsrat of Hildesheim reported migration of Bauern sons was being increased by the EHG as they had no chance of an independent existence on the land: Regierungsrat Hildesheim to Regpräsident Hanover 2nd March 1936: NSA 122a -13
66. LBF Hesse to RNS Staff Office 24th January 1938: ADC Reichsnährstand Wagner
67. The strength of feeling over Abfindung as an issue can be gauged from a police report in Schleswig-Holstein in 1929 describing peasant bitterness over the fact that economic recession was preventing them from giving their children a decent sum in this respect: Police

Flensburg to Regpräsident 24th January 1929: LA 309/22696

68. "Hereditary Law and Debt-relief" referred to in von Rohr "Beitrag zur deutschen Agrarpolitik" July 1934: BA-Kl. Erw 404
69. Von Rohr above cit: Ibid
70. See Regpräsident Lüneburg to Minister President Prussia report July 1934 announcing local dissatisfaction over restrictions: BA-R43 II/193
71. Quoted in B. Vollmer "Volksopposition im Polizeistaat" p.63
72. Vide von Rohr "Beitrag zur deutschen Agrarpolitik": BA-Kl. Erw 404
73. Quoted in Beyer "Die Agrarkrise und das Ende der Weimarer Republik" p.64
74. Regpräsident to Minister President Prussia July 1934: BA-R43 II/193
75. Vide Meinberg "Diener des Volkes" V.B. 1st January 1935
76. A.M. Koeppens "Das deutsche Landfrauenbuch" pp.92/3
77. Ministry of Justice to REM 2nd December 1938: BA-R22/2129
78. Judge to Lbsch Bavaria 7th May 1938: HSA(D) 1012
79. Haidn to editor 1st September 1938: HSA(D) 1012
80. For example, the article by Hinrich Lohse in the "NS Jahrbuch 1927" pp.140/5 where it was alleged that to the peasant in Germany land meant more than material goods or monetary income
81. Health official to Ministry of Interior Württemberg 20th July 1934: HSA(S) 321/E 130/IV: in this connection it is significant that the Prussian Erbhof Court at Celle had six panels of judges, four for different regions and two for objections to enrolment alone, which seems to indicate a considerable body of litigation of that nature "Vermerke zur Geschichte des Landeserbhofgerichtes" unsigned and undated but apparently composed in 1934/5: GSA p.133/473
82. Ibid

83. Dr. Petersen in "Deutsche Zeitung" 17th June 1934
84. Interest payments in 1931/2 amounted to approximately ten per cent of total production in agriculture: H. Bente "Landwirtschaft und Bauerntum" pp.177 and 192: not all of these payments were to Jews anyway.
85. Haidn to editor 1st September 1938: HSA(D) 1012
86. Quoted in Vollmer "Volksopposition im Polizeistaat" p.63
87. Von Papen to Darré 5th November 1933 and reply 20th November 1933:
BA R43I/1301
88. "Münchener Neueste Nachrichten" 6th November 1933
89. Beyer "Die Agrarkrise und das Ende der Weimarer Republik" p.64
90. Darré to Frick 20th November 1934: BA R43 I/1301
91. Darré to Frick 12th December 1934: Ibid
92. According to Professor Haushofer who was in Department II of the RNS:
personal interview
93. Darré wrote to Sering in February 1934: Beyer "Die Agrarkrise" etc.
p.64
94. For example, by the WB, in respect of Prussia 31st May 1933
95. Visit recorded on minute 27th April 1933: BA R43 II/193
96. An attempt to introduce a compulsory entailment for peasants had been defeated in the Reichstag in the First War: K. Waltenmath "Die historischen Quellen des Erbhofgesetzes und seine Probleme" in "Schmollers Jahrbuch für Gesetzgebung Verwaltung und Volkswirtschaft im Deutschen Reiche" 1939 p.38

Chapter XII: An examination of actual litigation under the EHG system

After an examination of the legislation in theory it is necessary to see how the courts interpreted it in practice, since there is often a wide gap between the mere passing of an Act and its application, as has been seen in the case of regulations concerning the land-flight. A study of the EHG courts decisions will not reveal so wide a divergence between theory and practice, but nonetheless it will be suggested here that the law was interpreted impartially by the judges and in some cases leniently, with an eye for existing customs and a desire not to be too rigid during a period of transition.

The legal channels and their work

(1) Since a new law had been created for the Bauer it was decided to create a new chain of legal channels to administer it.¹ The first was the local court (Anerbengericht) at the corresponding level to the lowest normal court, whose building was used: by 1935 there were no fewer than 1626 of these in the Reich.² The presiding judge was a professional jurist, named for a calendar year, and assisted by two local Bauern. These latter were designated by the KBF and called up on a rota system, so that the professional judge always had two advisers from agriculture but not always the same two. The authorities were very proud of this "trial by peers" element in the system and claimed it as a new concept for Germany.³

The second link in the chain was the Regional Court (Landeserbhofgericht) Prussia was so large that in addition to this level it possessed a third at Celle, under which were fifteen Regional courts.⁴ There were three professional judges on the level of each of these, and at Celle, assisted again by two Bauern, named by the LBF on a rota basis.⁵ The highest court was the "Reichserbhofgericht" which acted as the ultimate court of appeal for the whole country. The president was the Minister of Agriculture, although on his suggestion a Vice-President could be nominated

to represent him, the latter being a professional judge. The whole panel consisted of three professional jurists and two Bauern, the latter named by the Minister of Agriculture for a period of three years in office: the RBF was to propose suitable persons for the job to the Minister (who was of course the same person, Darre).

As far as procedure was concerned, all cases were heard in camera but the Bauer appearing was allowed to bring someone to help him, who could be a lawyer.⁶ The KBF was always the representative for the authorities in the local court, except in cases dealing with Abfindung which was held to be a private family affair, and his presence was not then required.⁷ At the Regional Court, the LBF was always heard. If the Bauer lost in the Auerbengericht he had a month to protest formally and demand a hearing in a higher court, the instrument being a written plea signed by a lawyer.⁸ Similarly of course the RNS could protest against an unfavourable decision on their side within the same period. Whichever party failed to win at Regional Court level followed a similar procedure to go to the Reichserbhofgericht if he desired.

(ii) The professional judges were alleged to have been quite impartial in their attitude to the cases concerned, and not necessarily Party members. At Celle one assistant judge was said to have been a Freemason and another was not a member of the Party.⁹ On the other hand, whether National Socialists or not, all court personnel were obliged to attend courses of instruction run by the NSDAP, which were ideologically-orientated, apart from containing legal matters.¹⁰ One such programme in May 1939 included subjects like property concepts in the Civil Code and in the EHG, lectures on the question of children not able to inherit land, and upon race, foreign policy and Point 19 of the original NS programme of 1920.¹¹ So frequent did this kind of indoctrination become that in February 1938 the Ministry of Justice had to complain to the Party authorities about it, as the judges were overworked anyway without the

constant necessity of undergoing further political and legal education.¹²
In sum, it would appear that the policy adopted by the NSDAP was not so much the appointment of Party members only as judges for the EHG as the repeated attempts to convert the existing jurists to its own viewpoint.

This does not mean, of course, that interventions by the Party were ever made in the actual courts. When a difference of opinion arose between the RNS and the political leadership it seems to have been the RNS which won as far as the actual course of legal administration was concerned. In one case in Bad Segeberg (Schleswig-Holstein) a Bauer failed to pay either his debts or his taxes and the KBF applied for him to be removed from management of the farm, which he was; it was later felt by the KBF that he had mended his ways and it was proposed to reinstate him, to which the local Party leadership objected, as the man was politically suspect: the KBF promptly told the Party official concerned that removing someone from farm management was not a political weapon.¹³ The official then gave way in view of the labour shortage.¹⁴ Here was a clear instance of the RNS refusing to use the EHG as a means of bringing recalcitrant Bauern to heel politically. Equally, when an Anerbengericht declared a peasant unfit to farm, whereas the local political leadership felt that the holding could be financially reconstructed under his management, the Party left the last word in the matter to the legal authorities concerned: indeed, its officials' actual words were "I restrict myself to producing the Kreisleiter's opinion; it goes without saying that I neither can nor wish to intervene in the unfinished legal procedure."¹⁵ It would seem that the Party tried to indoctrinate the judges, but then left them free to decide afterwards. All professional jurists were appointed incidentally by the Minister of Justice, not by Darre: the former politician, Dr. Görtner was not a member of the NSDAP and had been in von Papen's Cabinet prior to Hitler's accession to power. He appears also to have believed in the impartiality

of the law in principle; the ill-treatment of prisoners at Hohnstein in Saxony led to the trial of the S.A. camp guards involved, which the Gauleiter tried to stop but Görtner refused. The Party locally apparently tried to revenge itself upon the judiciary afterwards, whereupon the Minister of Justice wrote to Hess demanding redress since otherwise "the independence of the judiciary, which is the basis of an orderly administration, (will) disappear."¹⁶ In the compilation of this work no evidence of any kind has been discovered which would induce the supposition that in the case of the Erbhof channels this sentiment was deviated from by Dr. Görtner in any way whatever.

It needs to be emphasized, however, that nothing in the regulations prevented Bauernführer themselves from being assistant judges, and they were often Party members. The LBF could quite easily have named a KBF to sit in judgement at Celle but in order to ensure some degree of impartiality it was stipulated that no KBF could participate in this way in a case which he himself had initiated.¹⁷ At the Reichserbhofgericht level it was noticeable that when one Bauer was nominated to serve a three-year term by Darre he turned out to be something less than a simple peasant sitting in judgement on his peers. The man appointed, Jacques Groeneveld, was deputy LBF in Hanover:¹⁸ not only was he therefore an RNS official, but it appeared that he held high office in the S.S. and had a long Party record.¹⁹ It seems very unlikely that any one politically suspect would have been called up on the Bauer rota at any level.

(iii) Despite the apparent tendency towards partiality however it must be accepted that genuine efforts were made to arrive at a fair judgement; had the authorities not been so concerned, they would presumably not have erected appeal courts in the first place, since their existence made the course of justice very long-drawn out indeed. An analysis of thirteen judgements given by the Supreme Court in respect of

Bavarian Erbhöfe from February to June 1937 shows that eight had been initiated at local level in March 1935 and one in June 1936, the dates for the remainder not being available. The average delay in nine cases out of thirteen was 23 months.²⁰ The inordinately lengthy process was in general determined by three factors, of which legal overwork was the most important. Celle, for example, did not hold its first sitting until 8th February 1934²¹ but by the following December it had dealt with 8293 cases, only two thirds of which had been settled. New appeals were arriving at a rate of two hundred weekly.²²

This latter number was far greater than could be comfortably dealt with, for apart from the sheer quantity of work there was also a second factor involved, its peculiar nature. By definition, the technicalities of farming were bound to be considered in cases of bad management, or in those instances where enrolment was concerned, since objecting peasants always tried to prove that their holding was not sufficiently rich to make them independent of outside revenue. To decide whether or not they were right involved listening to technical evidence about soil etc. and possibly visiting the holding, all time-consuming.²³ For this reason the Vice-President of the Supreme Court held that no Senate could deal with more than 750 cases annually.²⁴ As pointed out above, the six at Celle were being asked to handle far more, and delay was inevitable. As an example, the evidence of a lawyer in Münster can be cited: he referred to one process which he had commenced in June 1934 and in October 1937 he was still awaiting a definitive judgement: in an appendix he listed twelve other outstanding cases, eight of which had been prior to January 1st 1937.²⁵

Apart from the quantity and type of work concerned, the third element in delay was often deliberate, in that the unscrupulous could exploit all possible legal channels to their own advantage. One farmer in Hindorf (Saxony) had a 75Ha holding which was heavily indebted, so he claimed

Osthilfe in July 1935 but his application was unsuccessful.²⁶ After some delays, occasioned by the LBF changing his mind about granting aid and then ultimately refusing it, the former attempted to get registered under the EHG in 1936.²⁷ The KBF promptly judged him incapable, on the grounds that the debts totalled more than 70% of the farm's value.²⁸ Baulked here, the farmer turned to a third possibility, the ordinary courts, in order to stave off foreclosure by the creditors. By July 1938 the RNS had begun to fear that if he lost his appeal there he would sue them for having given reports about him prejudicial to his interests.²⁹ By December however, the farmer came to an arrangement with his creditors, which had taken him since July 1935. As the LBF sadly wrote he well knew how to use every available channel;³⁰ the farmer had involved the Gauleiter, the LBF and his deputy, the KBF, the Auerbengericht, the normal legal channels at two stages, and an organization called the National Peasant Council, to whom the farmer had complained about the LBF, in a campaign lasting three and a half years, during which his creditors had been unable to obtain satisfaction as the case was sub judice practically all the time. By adding to the existing channels with the EHG and the Peasant Council, the Third Reich had given additional weapons to the unscrupulous.

Bureaucracy and time-wasting were also conspicuous in another Erbhof matter, the registration of farms. There was an actual roll, maintained locally at the court, on which the Bauern now living under Erbhof law were entered. The Land Registry Book already contained a list of property-owners with details of the holdings, so that all that was really needed was the addition of the word "Bauer" to existing entries where appropriate. It was now demanded that a separate register be maintained, however, to contain the roll of all those now living under the EHG as distinct from those people ruled by normal law.³¹ The amount of work involved in drawing up and maintaining the new register can be

judged from Münster's Regional Court which had 1800 Erbhöfe under its jurisdiction, the average entries per holding being one hundred, as all strips had to be recorded separately.³² The change in ownership of one parcel of land resulted in Hamm in seven different alterations being made.³³ Small wonder that the Ministry of Justice received many requests from courts to change the procedure, and use the old Land Registry Book instead, in which all changes had to be made as well. The final absurdity was that no one ever bothered to look at the Erbhof Roll to inform themselves of property alterations, they just used the old records anyway.³⁴ As an example of bureaucracy at its worst, the whole business of the Erbhof Roll could hardly have been surpassed.

The actual litigation in practice

(i) Before dealing with some examples of actual cases attention must be drawn to the fact that not all processes were necessarily concerned with Erbhöfe, since in 1934 the courts were most busily engaged in deciding precisely whether or not certain holdings were so qualified and in weeding-out the unsuitable.³⁵ By early 1935 decisions had been taken in borderline cases and the number of holdings registered hardly changed from then until the union with Austria in March 1938.³⁶ As already stated, the grounds for exclusion or acceptance revolved normally around whether the holding could support a family on its own, whether it had a sole owner and, if so, whether he was efficient enough to be called a Bauer.³⁷ Once these first hurdles had been cleared, and all Erbhöfe registered, then the courts settled down to the business of administering the law to those who could not now choose any other and this produced a rather different pattern of litigation, as revealed in a study based on 273 Erbhöfe in various parts of the Reich.³⁸ Altogether their owners were involved in 153 processes from 1934 to 1939. When analysed in respect of causes, it turns out that attempts to sell or exchange parcels of land, objections to registering all or part of the holding under the

EHG, the desire to take up a mortgage for some reason or another and difficulties over the contract handing the farm over to the heir were the chief grounds for dispute, in more or less equal proportion, although the sales question alone accounted for one third of all litigation. But the four causes listed accounted for 131 cases out of 153 in the period under review.

There is the point to be made here that an ostensible cause may conceal a true one, and it seems very likely that the real reason for attempting to sell strips of land in some cases or not to register them in others had to do with Abfindung;³⁹ by reserving a portion of land outside the EHG's provisions the Bauer wanted to sell it later, or bequeath it directly, in both cases to compensate children not allowed to be nominated as heir. Further evidence on this will be offered when Abfindung is dealt with. Before individual causes of litigation are more fully investigated three points should be noted; firstly, there was a high degree of involvement with the law in all the regions investigated, the usual proportion of Bauern who had to go to the Auerbengericht for one reason or another being somewhere around fifty per cent of all those with Erbhöfe in that neighbourhood: in itself, this illustrates how closely farm management was supervised. Whatever the owner wanted to do, sell some land, take up a mortgage, hand over to his heir, he had to go to the local court for permission to act. Secondly, there is the uniformity of this tendency in all areas, with no exceptions to the rule. Thirdly, it is clear that the overwhelming majority of cases were settled at Auerbengericht level; in respect of 104 cases examined, only 9 went to a higher court.⁴⁰ The final impressions gained therefore are of the Bauer being very closely watched over, and of the apparent acceptance by him of the local decisions. Knowledge of how long it would take if he appealed may have played a certain part in this.

(ii) In theory it was impossible to burden the farm with a debt based on the wish to give the disinherited a lump sum, but in practice the courts sometimes showed considerable understanding on this and accepted mortgages as long as the farm seemed capable of bearing it. In Brockensen (Lower Saxony) a mortgage was allowed on a farm to give the eldest daughter Abfindung when the youngest inherited.⁴¹ In Hamlin/Bad-Pyrmont in general the court was very lenient in this respect, and almost always accepted mortgages when the farm was only lightly saddled with debts.

As mentioned, many attempts at land sales, or at non-registry of newly acquired parcels dealt fundamentally with Abfindung, although, ostensibly the dispute was on other grounds.⁴² When a Bauer in Unna wanted to sell one strip of land the Anerbengericht approved as he had acquired it for his four sons prior to the EHG and was held not to be part of the main farm.⁴³ In Bavaria a peasant's bequest of nearly 2 Ha to his daughter was permitted by the Reichserbhofgericht as the arrangement had been made in 1920, prior to the EHG.⁴⁴ This was not always so however; in the Rhineland one Bauer tried to register only part of his farm, in order to give his daughter some provision in land, which both the Anerbengericht and the Regional Court allowed; the LBF objected on the grounds that the daughter's piece should be sold to her husband to build a new Erbhof by combining the husband's holding and the piece in dispute. The Reichserbhofgericht upheld him, so that the daughter's right was in effect over ridden in order to create a new holding.⁴⁵ Finally a case in Schleswig-Holstein may be mentioned where a Bauer tried to sell land to give money to his seven sons, which the Anerbengericht surprisingly permitted, which led to objections by the KBF on the grounds that a precedent was being created: eventually the Reichserbhofgericht held that to have sanctioned this would have been against the spirit of the Act; it stated that "if liquid resources are not available to make

the other sons independent their training can be paid for gradually through the current surplus of the holding."⁴⁶ What happened if that was not sufficient was not discussed. As can be seen, the courts' decisions were variable where Abfindung was concerned and although the Bauer's attempts to circumvent the actual letter of the law were sometimes successful this was not always so. The whole problem remained one of the strongest Bauer reasons for regarding the EHG with disfavour. Litigation sometimes took place over the question of the vocational training to be given to those children not inheriting land, which was at the heir's expense (Ausstattung). This, unlike Abfindung, was a legal obligation upon him, but nonetheless court permission still had to be obtained if too much money was allowed for in this respect than the holding could reasonably stand. In one case in Norddinker (Westphalia) the Anerbengericht accepted a sum of 3000 RM for this.⁴⁷ So great was the potential burden of Ausstattung that it could even serve as an excuse for non-enrolment of the farm; one farmer in Ailringen (Württemberg) was successful in his objections in this connection, as his thirteen children would have entailed Ausstattung for twelve persons, which he could never have been able to find.⁴⁸ As far as Realteilung districts were concerned, a special state subsidy was eventually provided to cushion the difficulties of finding ready cash in places where land had formerly been bequeathed: the government made 5 Million RM available, with individual sums limited to 5000 RM.⁴⁹

(iii) The Erbhof once enrolled was supposed to remain inviolate, although sales of pieces were sometimes allowed where this appeared to be in the community interest as a whole or in that of good farming. The Anerbengericht at Hamm allowed a Bauer to sell a strip of land to a post-office official keeping pigs on the grounds that this encouraged what was called "small settlement," that is, the furthering of some small-scale agrarian activity by the urban population.⁵⁰

The sale by various Bauern of strips to another was accepted as he could now farm them as a block and therefore more efficiently, which was in the people's interests.⁵¹ Where community needs were involved, such as land for road-building, then this was always allowed, a fact from which many Bauern profited. In Borgeteheide fifteen cases out of thirty-two over the period studied were concerned with sales mostly for roads, where the price was not particularly high but where building sites were required, then the sale could be highly lucrative.⁵² When one Bauer offered land in Lower Saxony to a settlement company in respect of a new housing estate the OBF quoted the firm a price of 2500 RM per margin ($\frac{1}{4}$ Ha).⁵³ The usual price for building land in this region was said to be 1.60 RM per square metre: as the average worth of farm land in 1930 was reckoned to be 1500 RM per Ha, it would seem that selling to builders was more profitable than agriculture.⁵⁴ This is perhaps an ironic comment on the position of the peasantry in the Third Reich, where so many promises had been made to restore the profitability of agriculture as such. Where a Bauer was indebted the sale of some land was also allowed provided it did not endanger the long term viability of the Erbhof, but merely gave relief from present obligations.⁵⁵

As far as sales of the whole farm were concerned, this was banned in principle but it did sometimes occur through exceptional circumstances. One Bauer in Ailringen lost the farm buildings as the consequence of a government road scheme and then asked to be allowed to sell the actual lands in parcels, which the OBF advocated as with his compensation from the government and the cash realized by the sales he could acquire a new Erbhof, and the proposed sales to other peasants would create one or two new Erbhöfe in the district.⁵⁶ The disposal of the farm was also permitted when there were no heirs available.⁵⁷ On one occasion a peasant who wished to sell his farm claimed that he had never run it personally:⁵⁸ his sister then apparently complained to the KBF on the grounds that she

had relatives capable of farming the land, which should not be disposed of outside the family circle. The OBF did not object to the sale, however, and the Anerbengericht accepted it, as the owner had never been a true Bauer and it would therefore be better if the land came into the possession of a competent farmer.⁵⁹ The present owner's daughters then took the case to Celle on the grounds that if their father was not a Bauer then the farm was not an Erbhof and therefore could be sold by strips to fetch a higher price. The Regional Court turned this down as only the heirs had the right to complain to a sale, which apparently the daughters were not, and as the farm was viable enough to qualify as an Erbhof it should now be allowed to "bloom again" under a capable farmer and so contribute to the Erzeugungsschlacht.⁶⁰ The considerations of the latter were clearly given precedence over family wishes in this case, so that it would appear that the need for production induced the judges to be flexible in interpreting the law. Twelve Erbhöfe were sold in Bavaria between January and July 1936,⁶¹ so it would seem that in some cases at least the farm did not leave the original family's possession, although clearly these instances were relatively few in proportion to total numbers.

Attempts at divisibility of the farm by testament also caused some litigation: one Bauer tried to divide his 35 Ha among his three sons on a ration of 15:10:10, which the Anerbengericht permitted. The KBF took the case to Celle and the judges there disallowed the arrangement on the grounds that two of the holdings thus created would have no farm buildings and would therefore be incomplete as Erbhöfe: the Reichserbhofgericht upheld this when the Bauer appealed.⁶² The interest in this decision lies in the fact that had the father been able to afford the necessary facilities the proposed division would have been accepted, so that a considerable degree of latitude in the interpretation of the EHG's provisions against division can be seen in actual practice; this impression is

heightened by a case in Oldenburg where a Bauer was permitted to bequeath a farm of 35 Ha in the form of two roughly equal holdings to his sons, provided that he enlarged the smaller by additional purchases and provided the necessary buildings.⁶³ This was not, however, always so. In Brunswick a husband and wife inherited two holdings separately which they wished to combine into one to which the Anerbengericht agreed, but the KBF lodged a protest as the farm where they did not live had no occupier although with one it could have been an Erbhof in its own right. In 1934 the husband died intestate and the widow applied for amalgamation to be legally recognized as the two farms had been run as one unit in fact since 1916. The Regional Court refused permission and when the widow went to the highest level this decision was upheld.⁶⁴

From these judgements taken as a whole it would seem that the courts frequently took cognizance of accepted fact, such as the size of the holdings bequeathed, as in the first two cases in this section, and were flexible in their decisions. But the last instance shows that they could also stick very much to the letter of the law. The EHG demanded that buildings be supplied, and without them the practice of twenty years could not be accepted. This variability of interpretation makes generalizations difficult, but when discussing restrictions on testamentary freedom it should be borne in mind that the courts would accept division in those cases where the new holdings were all of Erbhof size, although they did apparently always make the provision of buildings a condition of acceptance.

(iv) One of the sorest points in the new legislation as far as the Bauer was concerned was the question of his removal from management of the Erbhof either because of inefficiency or dishonourable conduct, a process known as "Abmeierung". This had two degrees called "simple" and "strict"; under the first the Anerbengericht could designate an heir to whom the property should go as a kind of trustee until the present owner's

death; a wife could be so entrusted in default of a normal heir. Under the stricter version the holding went over immediately to a new owner suggested by the RBF and the Anerbengericht was bound by his decision. The designated person was not bound to purchase, in which case the farm went up for sale.⁶⁵

Although efficiency and honour were the two criteria applied, in practice it was often hard to separate one from another. One Bauer in Schleswig-Holstein drank heavily and ill-treated his wife and ran his farm badly which led to her complaining to the KBF Eckernförde. The Anerbengericht agreed to a trustee being installed for ten years after a formal proposal for one had been laid by the RNS.⁶⁶ On other occasions a lack of honour alone was sufficient to deprive the Bauer both of his title and of farm management; one contemporary writer on the subject produced evidence from legal decisions from various parts of Germany that conviction in the civil courts of such offences as swindling, theft, attempted seduction, rape etc had deprived Bauern of their honorific; he concluded that "a prison sentence always has as a consequence the loss of honour."⁶⁷ Indeed in one case suspected arson was sufficient; one Bauer in Saxony was tried for this and acquitted in the ordinary legal way but he was still later shorn of his title.⁶⁸ One Celle judge recalls a case where one Bauer lost his rights because he had married a Jewess, even a subsequent divorce not saving him from deprivation.⁶⁹ The non-payment of outstanding debts was also taken as grounds for dismissal, as in one instance where a Bauer in Leizen (Schleswig-Holstein) did not settle up, his KBF proposed Abmeierung which the Anerbengericht granted;⁷⁰ the Bauer went to Celle which turned down his protest some five months later, as he had not even paid taxes.⁷¹ The Anerbengericht eventually accepted the KBF's proposal that the wife be installed as trustee for five years as the designated heir was only seventeen years old.⁷²

Sheer bad management rather than personality failings was frequently

cited as reason for removing a Bauer from any further say in the administration of his own property. Darre had been concerned on this point long before the NS accession. As early as 1930 he wrote to his LGFs suggesting that the matter be on the agenda for the assembly at Weimar in February 1931. He recommended a certain pamphlet written by a member of the Agrarian office after a visit to Italy, and quoted a case of an owner there having been removed from management of his estate which he had not visited for six years. Darre cited with approval the Courts grounding for its decision that "The rights of the individual must be brought into accord with the claims of the community."⁷³ The whole question seems therefore to have been well-aired before 1933; indeed it had been foreshadowed in the March 1930 programme, for which Darre had later only provided the details in the form of the actual EHG.⁷⁴ To remove someone from the running of his own property is a major step along the road to intervention on private ownership rights and certainly removes any impression that the NSDAP was just another Right-Wing Party or the last stage of monopoly capitalism: but it has to be remembered that prior to 1933 many Bauern were dispossessed by due process of law through inability to pay their debts, and it is extremely unlikely that from that time on as many peasants lost their holdings as before.⁷⁵ Moreover, under the new arrangements at least the Erbhof normally stayed in the family, instead of being lost for good as formerly.

As an example of the new situation a case in Schleswig-Holstein may be cited where a local savings bank applied for Abmeierung against a Bauer who did not pay his debts which the Anerbengericht accepted.⁷⁶ But then the owner signed a treaty with the heir and the Abmeierung was withdrawn, and the farm brought into the debt-relief scheme.⁷⁷ The idea of signing a contract with the heir to provide new management was sometimes used by the RNS as a weapon to get rid of the incompetent; the deputy LBF in Lower Saxony told one 88 year-old Bauer that if he did not sign a treaty

in four weeks he would apply for Abmeierung.⁷⁸

The Four Year Plan of course produced increased pressure on the Bauern for more output but it did not bring a really large-scale drive against bad farming; it is true that some bad managers were evicted by Celle in 1937 but the proportion was small, bearing in mind that there were nearly four hundred thousand Erbhöfe in Prussia.⁷⁹ In one typical case reported in 1937 one of the dispossessed, when charged by the Bürgermeister with having failed to produce more simply replied "The harvest is big enough for me:" his lack of responsibility led to his dismissal.⁸⁰ The relatively few cases in the court records inspected for this thesis suggest that Abmeierung was used as a last resort. Erich Koch went on record as saying that in every village in East Prussia there were one or two really bad Erbhöfe, which not only did not contribute to the Erzeugungsschlacht but were counter-productive through being such bad examples: Abmeierung could not be applied as there was no one with the capital to take them on. He estimated that there were 30000 Ha being managed at this level in the region, which would have needed over fourteen Million RM new capital to give any trustee a chance.⁸¹ It seems clear that considerations of this nature played a part in restricting the drive against the inefficient, who would have been foreclosed on before 1933.

(v) One of the most frequent causes of litigation was the contract drawn up by a lawyer under the terms of which the heir took over. In the four regions examined for this thesis, this contract (Übergabevertrag) either formed the object of dispute, or simply was presented for Court approval, in 25 cases out of 153. There were various reasons why the KBF might object and ask the court not to accept the contract as devised. The contract might come into dispute if the retiring Bauer nominated someone other than the expected heir; although this was allowed under certain circumstances it was up to the Bauer to prove that grounds for

the deviation existed. A court ruling in Westphalia showed that the judges were willing to comply with a desire of this nature when there were good reasons; one Bauer in Hemmerde was allowed to designate his grandson as his only son was not a capable farmer.⁸²

Contracts could sometimes become very complicated in their effect when the judges applied strictly the condition which was the very basis of the EHG, that all Erbhöfe should remain wherever possible in the same family line. One such treaty was turned down by an Anerbengericht as under its terms a holding had been bequeathed to a married daughter, but the court pointed out that if her husband, also a Bauer, were to remarry after his wife predeceased him, his family could eventually possess more land than that of his first wife, as his own land and his first wife's was being farmed as one unit.⁸³ The Bauer took the case to Celle where the Regional Court reversed the original decision and allowed that situation to stand under which the holding might be lost to its original family, on the grounds that the present husband was farming the land very efficiently and this should be allowed to over-rule the provision about retention in the family line.⁸⁴ Here again it would seem that economic considerations were given priority.

What caused the greatest amount of work for the courts in respect of contracts was the need to establish local inheritance customs, to which the EHG obliged them to keep in reaching decisions, since these contracts were the instrument for designating heirs as well as stipulating other conditions for the takeover from the father. This meant that for every contract or testament inquiries had to be made locally to determine the district's tradition since custom varied sometimes from one parish to another.⁸⁵ In Schleswig-Holstein this question caused immense trouble for Celle and took up an inordinate amount of time, since the apparent procedure was for the OBF to be asked via the KBF what the local situation was, following which he would ask the local worthies their opinion. Just

how varied custom could be seen from a report on Elpersbüttel; of fifty four Erbhöfe there, twenty three had been bought by their present owners and the remainder inherited. Of these thirty one, eighteen had been passed on intact to one heir, eleven divided, and two were inherited under terms of joint ownership.⁸⁶ Judging from the chairman of an Anerbengericht reporting to Celle, this was not untypical of that area of Schleswig-Holstein, since he stated that individual cases varied enormously.⁸⁷ On the other hand, in Lauenberg and Stormarm the overwhelming majority of parishes had primogeniture.⁸⁸ The tradition in the province seems indeed to have rested mainly on soil conditions, according to one local authority, with Anerbenrecht generally predominant in parishes with poor quality land.⁸⁹

In Nassau yet another custom was in vogue whereby when the peasant died intestate his wife enjoyed the use of the property during her lifetime. In those cases where arrangements of this nature had been made prior to the EHG they were allowed to stand. When the wife died then the holding automatically came under normal Erbhof law.⁹⁰ From the foregoing it can easily be estimated how much time and effort was devoted to establishing customs: as a result in 1939 the REM and the Ministry of Justice published a joint decree to the effect that they were authorized to establish what the tradition had been in each district when the EHG had come in and publish it: this then became binding for that area.⁹¹ In this way it was obviously hoped to remove some of the burden on the courts.

There are three main points of interest in this whole matter; firstly, the judges clearly did take pains to determine local practice, which meant that the application of the inheritance law varied accordingly; it would therefore be untrue to say that every Bauer now had to conform to standard requirements. In this respect the EHG was less arbitrary than might at first be suspected. Secondly, there is the point

of the bewildering variety of custom from one locality to another. This inevitably casts some doubt upon the preamble to the EHG, which spoke of reviving old Germanic traditions. It seems evident that Anerbenrecht was less common than the NS supposed, even in North Germany, if Schleswig-Holstein is taken as an instance: to reply to this that in Westphalia custom was more uniform is not really to answer the point, since this merely illustrates how varied conditions really were. The NSDAP had practical reasons for the introduction of compulsory Anerbenrecht but the historical justification given in the Act was weak, at least insofar as some districts were concerned.

Finally, there is the question of Bauernführer influence behind the scenes; as already pointed out they were quick to protest against contracts they did not care for, and in 1935 it was alleged that they were actually going even further and persuading the peasants to agree to conditions not even called for in the EHG. This brought an angry denial from an RNS official, pointing out that many contracts had to be turned down by the courts precisely because they did not go far enough to satisfy the EHG's conditions; this is a valid point but it is unlikely that a lawyer would have made such a charge unless he had some information or experience to substantiate it.⁹² Unfortunately no documentary evidence exists regarding this allegation, so that it can only be left undecided here.

It has also to be remembered that inheritance was regulated for parcels of land or property as well as for the whole farm and the Bauernführer had some influence here as well. One Bauer in Nahe (Schleswig-Holstein) wished to leave a small house adjoining his land to his daughter, to which the KBF objected as he said it could eventually be sold by her to the detriment of the farm. The peasant then appealed to the provincial Oberpräsident to assist him in the affair, but the Anerbengericht ordered the house to be enrolled as part of the farm.⁹³ This led to an

objection by the father and the court reversed its decision;⁹⁴ whereupon the KBF took the case to Celle. The Regional Court upheld him and ordered the house to be registered as part of the farm.⁹⁵ As the property concerned had been acquired as long before as 1922 this seems a particularly severe restriction upon ownership rights especially as no farm land was involved. It was the appeal of the KBF which led to the court decision, as in so many cases. In general, the impression gained is one of a close supervision of the peasantry by their local leaders.

(vi) In no respect was testamentary freedom so limited as in the provisions regarding female inheritance. The open discrimination against women in the original Act was actually reinforced in 1936 by an amendment allowing the Bauer to declare by deed that his property was closed in the male line in perpetuity.⁹⁶ But the courts were quite flexible in practice on the subject of female succession; in Dresden a Bauer who was childless adopted his brother's daughter and named her as heiress; his three brothers fought this to the Reichserbhofgericht and lost, the judges upholding the girls's claim upon the length of her domicile with her uncle.⁹⁷ In Ingelfingen (Wurttemberg) a Bauer was permitted to name his daughter to succeed, as he did not see eye to eye with his son, and although the latter was a farmer, he did not want to take over.⁹⁸ It seems clear that the Bauern had always regarded daughters as capable of inheritance, even in cases of small pieces of land, which may have been intended as dowries. A peasant in Bavaria left his daughter a strip of under 2 Ha in extent, leaving only $7\frac{1}{2}$ Ha for the rest of the Erbhof, which the local court allowed, following which the KBF went to the Regional Court and won, as no new Erbhof was being created by this bequest. The Reichserbhofgericht however accepted the Bauer's plea that the arrangement had been made in 1920 and that the rest of the farm ($7\frac{1}{2}$ Ha) still constituted an Erbhof.⁹⁹ This again was a very reasonable decision, and shows court willingness to respect existing arrangements during the

transitional period after the EHG's introduction. The depth of feeling on the whole subject can perhaps be gauged from the decree of April 1939, which extended the initial concession regarding the promotion of the daughter's claims over those of the testator's father or brothers; this had only been originally envisaged as valid for the first succession after the beginning of the Act, but now it was extended to the second as well.¹⁰⁰ Clearly the NSDAP desire to discriminate against women was being mitigated in actual practice.

(vii) Finally there was the question of credit facilities, which was very closely supervised by the KBFs to ensure that no undue burdening of the farm took place unless absolutely necessary. A Bauer with an Erbhof of just under 20 Ha tried to obtain a mortgage to buy some woodland, but the KBF objected as he already had some debts and the acquisition of the new property was not essential to good farming: the Anerbengericht refused the applicant permission to purchase.¹⁰¹ On the other hand when a peasant needed money to carry out repairs to his dwelling-house this was accepted as being necessary, and permission for a mortgage was granted.¹⁰² The KBFs were apparently concerned with the distinction between long- and short-term credit facilities, since the official in Tremsbüttel (Schleswig-Holstein) complained when the Anerbengericht sanctioned an instance of the latter; at Celle the decision was reversed, with the grounding that an Erbhof should pay short-term capital requirements from its own resources and if that was impossible, the owner should take up personal credit.¹⁰³ Even in such aspects of farm management, apart from testamentary restrictions, the peasant was very closely supervised indeed.

Apart from the question of the sanctioning or otherwise of new debts, the existing commitments were important, especially in determining whether a property could be registered under the Act or not. There was for the heavily-indebted an obvious advantage in getting enrolled as their creditors could not then foreclose; indeed, this class of farmer

may well have the one which most welcomed the legislation, and there are many instances of attempted registration by peasants in great financial difficulty. One particularly blatant example centred around the owner of 20 Ha which were under a considerable burden of debt, but who was lucky enough to find a KBF who approved of his management; the official changed his mind when he discovered that the peasant was drinking heavily: eventually the case went all the way to the Reichserbhofgericht which refused him the title.¹⁰⁴ During the course of the proceedings no one could collect any monies due, of course. As a consequence, a good deal of litigation was instigated by creditors seeking to deprive Bauern of their title so that they could foreclose.¹⁰⁵ One exasperated lawyer was moved to write on behalf of a client to the EHG authorities, pointing out that permission to foreclose on an indebted farm was being sought, on the mortgage payments of which his client was trying to exist, although she had received nothing for two years: the solicitor added that on the day of his present letter he had received the usual advice, that no decision could be expected in the immediate future, i.e. as to whether the farm was an Erbhof or not.¹⁰⁶

There were some quite shocking instances of farmers delaying payments in this fashion; one peasant in Ailringen had managed to accumulate debts of 25000 RM on a holding of less than $7\frac{1}{2}$ Ha: every EHG court refused him permission to enrol the farm but he went right to the top. the Reichserbhofgericht giving its decision in June 1936. This was in respect of a farm on which foreclosure had been ordered in November 1932.¹⁰⁷ In a similar case at Sommerach (Bavaria) a would-be Bauer had debts equalling six times the farm's value, which led to the Munich bank which was the creditor opposing his application for registration: here again the farmer took advantage of all possible appeal courts: in February 1937 the Reichserbhofgericht referred the matter back to the Anerbengericht on the grounds that the KBF had not given evidence at the original hearing.¹⁰⁸

The bank still awaited its money. Even when peasants were accepted as Bauern they were not always keen to meet their obligations, although Abmeierung was an instrument for making them do so: but it appears that not all KBFs were equally vigorous in following up bad payers. A creditor in Holstein petitioned the Chancellery in 1935 regarding a local Bauer who failed to meet his commitments although he apparently had enough money to enable him to drink heavily.¹⁰⁹ A comment in the Chancellery files recorded this as one of the "repeated cases" where the KBF was not energetic enough.¹¹⁰ The relative security of the Bauer after 1933 was bought at the creditor's expense: the lifting of the peasant from "capitalist debt-servitude" could hardly have been achieved otherwise; from the evidence given here it seems quite clear that the vague generalisation "capitalist debt-servitude" could mean a well-off but unscrupulous farmer enjoying comparative immunity from the law whilst a creditor, poorer than himself, could find no satisfaction. The comments of a creditor's association on the EHG would probably make interesting reading.

(viii) When the whole impact of the EHG on German farming is taken into account a balance sheet of both debit and credit items appear. On the former side would naturally come the restrictions on freedom of the individual and his right to dispose of his own property as he saw fit: these were considerable, as in both testamentary and management questions a close supervision was maintained extending as far as the sanctioning or otherwise of credit facilities. It was hard to get permission to divide farms among heirs or sell part of them: there was open discrimination against women. Even if an owner wished to lease his farm he had to seek court permission, provided that the lease was to last three years or more.¹¹¹ In Hemmerde four of the thirty-eight cases in which Bauern were involved between 1934 and 1939 dealt with this issue; in all cases the court approved the lease, but the point still remains that its

permission had to be sought by the property-owner.¹¹² The hardships imposed upon creditors must also be mentioned, as well as the tendency to protect the inefficient from competition, which may in the *Erzeugungsschlacht* have exercised some influence. In so far as *Abfindung* was concerned, its almost complete banning except from current farm receipts must have been hard to bear, as the custom was well-established: finally, the possibility that a man could be taken away in peacetime from all say in the management of his own holding affected the status of the *Bauer* in the eyes of the community, as witness the evidence quoted regarding the impression given to Youth that he no longer owned his farm.

As against the foregoing points, some entries could be made upon the credit side. Complete security of tenure was now offered to the family at least, if not to the individual, important at a time when holdings were increasingly put up for sale at compulsory auctions, due to inability to meet obligations.¹¹³ Debt-relief was introduced and the supervision regarding credit, if irksome, provided some hope that future burdens would not be too crushing. It must however be remembered that to the efficient farmer these facts were less significant than to the others, so that ultimately what effect the EHG had on the individual farmer depended largely on the latter's ability. That the inefficient were highly protected by the measure was not lost upon some members of the public at least; in 1935 a lawyer in *Künzelsau* (*Württemberg*) gave it as his opinion that the tendency to enrol as many farms as possible had shown itself to be false; what was envisaged by the EHG was not the registration of properties scarcely able to hold their heads above water but a proud, strong peasantry.¹¹⁴ It is difficult to see how any scheme of comprehensive protection could really do that in the long run, however.

The fact is that the NSDAP gave preference to other than economic considerations anyway in framing the legislation. Darre had written in 1929 that "If one does not protect the peasantry by special measures a

a state founded on the idea of profit alone . . . leads sooner or later to the destruction of the Bauer."¹¹⁵ If that is the starting point then it is no longer a question of worrying about sheltering the economically incompetent so much as a question of preserving the peasantry as such from eventual destruction: in this case, the protection of some incompetents is less important. In any case it must be admitted that a great many of the apparently less viable holdings were not enrolled anyway, despite the lawyer's letter above. But, in any event, saving the "life-source" of the nation and the "backbone of national defence" had priority. Seen in this light, the EHG was a very conservative measure indeed, since it clearly envisaged a permanently large stock of peasants in Germany, whose sturdy qualities were automatically believed to be desirable as a bulwark of society.¹¹⁶ If this kind of value-judgement is accepted then the Act probably seemed quite sound.¹¹⁷

Finally there is the question of how the courts interpreted the legislation which must be taken into account when assessing the degree of hardship involved. From evidence offered in this thesis it is suggested that the judges were impartial and that they made every effort to conform their decisions to locally-accepted custom. One historian has even gone so far as to maintain that through the "understanding judgements" of the courts the EHG was never really carried out in actual practice.¹¹⁸ This is perhaps a little too strong as a summing-up but certainly an impression of flexibility and a readiness to accept arrangements already made prior to the Act cannot be denied: this particularly applied to land sales of which 54,591 had been sanctioned by the courts by 1936:¹¹⁹ this seems to suggest that the facts of economic life, as described for individual cases in this work, were frequently allowed to prevail over theory. Of course, decisions were inevitably aimed at implementing the EHG in principle, within a context of political indoctrination of the judges as described here. No evidence of any direct Party intervention

has been found for this thesis however, and the insistence of a former official that he and his colleagues were independent appears to be accurate.¹²⁰

In conclusion, the possible long-term effects of the EHG on the birthrate are a factor in assessing how valuable or harmful the legislation may have been. Since other aspects of this question are dealt with in the next chapter a discussion of this point will be postponed until then.

1. The information on the organization of the courts given here is from "Erbhofgesetz" Articles 40-47 RGB (I) p.685, and a later directive RGB (I) p.749 unless otherwise stated.
2. "Verzeichnis der Anerbengerichte des Deutschen Reiches geordnet nach Bezirken" in BA-R22/2249
3. See "Bauerngerichte" W. Harmening "Odal": Harmening was a Senior Civil Servant in the Ministry of Justice and his essay is reproduced in BA-R22/2248
4. The full list is given in BA-R22/2248
5. Celle had six so-called Senates or panels of judges, each of which had four/five professionals as the nucleus: four dealt with different regions of Prussia and the other two were for objections to enrolment under the EHG lodged by Bauern: "Vermerke zur Geschichte des Landeserbhofgerichts" GSA p.133/473
6. Darré "Geburtminderung durch das Erbhofgesetz?" p.150
7. In the case of Abfindung no appeal to a higher court was possible, all cases being settled at Anerbengericht level: Molitor "Deutsches Bauern und Agrarrecht" p.112
8. Darré above cit. p.150
9. According to Herr Kahlke, an assistant judge at Celle, who was a Party member himself, although he did not join until 1933 having formerly been in the DNVP: personal interview
10. See Gauleitung East Hanover to Landeserbhofgericht Celle 28th October 1928 affirming the need for ideological training for law guardians and announcing that a four day course had been arranged: GSA p.133/426
11. This course, from 4th to 9th May 1929, is detailed in Ibid
12. Secretary of State Dr. Freisler to Court President Celle 16th February 1938; as a result of his complaint East Hanover Gauleitung had promised not to call more than two judges simultaneously in

- future: Ibid
13. KBF to LBF 15th August 1939 with the details given: LA 691/430
 14. Ortsgruppenleiter to Lbsch Schleswig-Holstein 6th September 1939:
Ibid
 15. East Hanover Gau legal branch to Court President Celle 5th February 1938: GSA p.133/426
 16. Quoted in Brozsat pp.422/3
 17. "Zweite Durchführungsordnung" Article 21 19th December 1933: RGB (I) p.1096
 18. "Das Führer Lexikon" p.18
 19. For the full details of his appointment, and summary of his career, see "Niedersächsische Tageszeitung" 20th December 1936
 20. Case histories in BA-R22/2248
 21. DNB 8th February 1934
 22. "Vermerke zur Geschichte des Landeserbhofgerichtes": GSA p.133/473
 23. Vide minute VIa 10268/38: BA-R22/2248: it was because the local court had failed to gain the proper evidence in this respect that eleven of the thirteen Supreme Court cases referred to above were simply sent back to the Anerbengericht for further investigation locally.
 24. Harmening "Tagebuch 277" 20th December 1934: Ibid
 25. Private lawyer to Regional Court President Münster 10th October 1937: Ibid
 26. Lawyer to Lbsch Saxony 31st August 1936: BA-R16/1271
 27. LBF Saxony to Gauleiter 29th September 1936: Ibid
 28. Local Anerbengericht decision 14th February 1937: Ibid
 29. RNS Admin office Goslar to Gauleitung Saxony 19th July 1938: Ibid
 30. LBF Saxony to Gauleiter above cit: Ibid
 31. That this was the point of the Roll was explained by the Ministry of Justice: Ministry to Regional Court President Hamm 14th December 1937:

BA-R22/2183

32. Court President Münster to Ministry of Justice 9th April 1937:
Ibid
33. Court President Hamm to Ministry of Justice 8th October 1937:
Ibid
34. In Stendal (Magdeburg) not a single outside person had looked at the Roll by November 1939: Court President Stendal to Ministry of Justice 3rd June 1940: Ibid
35. Which means that 1934 may well have been the busiest year for the courts: by October of that year Munich Regional Court had dealt with 1600 cases and was asking for more judges: Bavarian Ministry of Justice to Reichsministry 7th October 1934 BA-R22/2248: by 1938 one third of all litigation had been concerned with the sole question of whether the holding was viable or not: Minute IIa8 298/38: BA-R22/2248
36. Whereas at 1st January 1935 there were 665,644 Erbhöfe by middle 1938 there were 684,997 (excluding Austria): "Deutsche Justiz" No. 1324 1935 in BA-R22/2183 and "Vierteljahrsheft zur Statistik des deutschen Reiches 1939" Sec. II p.36
37. By 1st January 1935, 2,594 peasants had been rejected as unsuitable for this last reason for Germany as a whole: "Deutsche Justiz" No. 1324 1935: Ibid
38. The districts examined are listed in Table XXXIII Appendix I.
39. Herr Kahlke of Celle gave Abfindung as a frequent cause of dispute together with the Bauer's capability, land sales and the question of the farm's capacity to supply the family as the other chief grounds for litigation: personal interview
40. In the case of Hamlin/Bad Pyrmont, one of the areas examined, appeals to a higher court were not recorded
41. NSA 331 B.12

42. When a Bauer bought a new piece of land it was automatically entered as part of the existing Erbhof but both he and the KBF had a month in which to lodge an objection: Anerbengericht Borgteheide to Bauer 3rd December 1936: LA 355/400
43. Anerbengericht Unna decision November 1934, to which the local OBF agreed in February 1935: Unna Hemmerde
44. "Entscheidungen des Reichserbhofgerichtes" 1936/7 p.302
45. Ibid p.292
46. Ibid p.382
47. Anerbengericht Hamm decision 30th September 1937: Unna Norddinker: but in another case a new contract had to be drawn up when the KBF objected to the first: KBF Unna to Anerbengericht 9th August 1937
48. LUD Bundle 211/F. 277
49. Reichsamt für Agrarpolitik to Minister President Württemberg January 1938: HSA (S) 646/E 130/IV
50. Anerbengericht Hamm decision 29th October 1936: Unna Norddinker
51. Anerbengericht Borgteheide decision 10th October 1939: LA 355/399
52. A Bauer who sold a part of his paddock for building, which the KBF and the court sanctioned, obtained the equivalent of 5000RM per Ha: Anerbengericht Borgteheide decision 20th May 1935: LA 355/83
53. OBF Brockensen (Lower Saxony) to Niedersächsische Heimstätte 15th October 1938
54. For the 1930 price see Borsig "Reagrarisierung Deutschlands?" p.11
55. For example, Anerbengericht Unna decision 25th September 1936: Unna Hemmerde
56. Ailringen: LUD Bundle 211/F. 277
57. Anerbengericht Unna decision 2nd December 1938: Unna Afferde
58. No holding could in theory be registered as an Erbhof unless personally run by its legal owner, so that there had evidently been some slackness over enrolment in this case

59. Anerbengericht Unna decision 13th November 1936: Unna Hemmerde
60. Celle decision 8th April 1937: Ibid
61. Lbsch Bavaria to REM 15th August 1936: BA-R22/2131
62. "Entscheidungen des Reichserbhofgerichtes" 1935/6 p.683
63. "Entscheidungen des Reichserbhofgerichtes" 1936/7 pp.44ff
64. Ibid 1936/7 p.264
65. L. Weiss "Die Abmeierung" p.42
66. Anerbengericht Gettorf decision 14th October 1938: LA 691/413
67. Weiss above cit. p.30
68. "Entscheidungen des Reichserbhofgerichtes" 1936/7 p.219
69. Evidence from Herr Kahlke: personal interview
70. Anerbengericht Borgteheide decision 29th April 1936: LA 691/430
71. Regional Court Celle decision 3rd September 1936: Ibid
72. Anerbengericht Borgteheide decision 6th March 1937: Ibid
73. Darre to LGFs 20th December 1930: BA-NS 26/951
74. See Section 3 Point 3 "The right of property is bound together with the duty of utilizing the soil for the good of the whole people": V.B. 7th March 1930
75. In 1932 there were 7,060 foreclosures, from 1933-7 the total never exceeded 2,270 in any one year: "Landwirtschaftliche Statistik 1938" p.21
76. Anerbengericht Borgteheide decision 20th November 1931: LA 691/406
77. Anerbengericht Borgteheide decision 26th January 1937: LA 691/406
78. Groeneveld to Bauer 9th August 1935: NSA 331 B.35
79. "Vierteljahrsheft zur Statistik des Deutschen Reiches 1939" Sec. II p.37. Herr Kahlke says that there was no especial drive against inefficiency from 1937 onwards: personal interview
80. "West Deutscher Beobachter" 2nd October 1937
81. Koch to Minister of Finance 21st April 1937: BA-R2/18019

82. Anerbengericht Unna decision 23rd June 1939: Unna Hemmerde
83. Anerbengericht Unna decision 28th June 1934: Unna Afferde
84. Celle decision 18th January 1935: Unna Afferde
85. This depended on the region however; Westphalia had primogeniture almost everywhere: WB 11th October 1933
86. KBF to Regional Court Celle 17th November 1936: GSA p.133/457
87. Chairman Anerbengericht Husum to Celle 9th July 1936: Ibid
88. See replies of OBF's to KBF Lauenberg in June 1934 and KBF Stormarn to Celle 15th October 1936: Ibid
89. Justizrat Flensburg to Celle 11th November 1936: Ibid
90. "Erbhofrecht und Leibzuchtrecht" in "Wiesbadener Tagesblatt" 23rd November 1934: Copy in GSA p.133/456
91. RGB (I) p.843
92. The official reply to the allegations made in "Deutsche Notarzeitschrift" was an untitled article by Dr. Saure in "NS Landpost" 1st March 1935 on which this information is based
93. Anerbengericht Borgteheide 14th December 1936: LA 355/307
94. Anerbengericht Borgteheide decision 25th March 1937: Ibid
95. Celle decision 20th July 1937: Ibid
96. "Erbhofrechts Verordnung" 21st December 1936 Art. X
97. "Entscheidungen des Reichserbhofgerichtes 1937/8" p.203
98. Anerbengericht Künzelsau: LUD 210/F.277
99. "Entscheidungen des Reichserbhofgerichtes 1936/7" p.306
100. Quoted in Wunderlich "Farm Labour in Germany 1810-1945" p.168
101. Anerbengericht Unna decision 17th October 1935: Unna Hemmerde
102. Anerbengericht Künzelsau decision 6th March 1934: LUD 211/F.277
103. Celle decision 20th June 1935: LA 355/379: by 1936 the Courts had in fact sanctioned only 13091 mortgages for Germany as a whole: Wunderlich "Farm Labour in Germany 1810-1945" p.172

104. "Entscheidungen des Reichserbhofgerichtes 1935/6" p.9
105. See Minute no. IIa8 298/38 Ministry of Justice stating that creditors often had to act in this way to try and get their money: BA-R22/2248
106. Lawyer to Regional Court President Münster 10th October 1937: Ibid
107. Reichserbhofgericht decision 26th June 1936: LUD 211/F.277
108. Reichserbhofgericht decision 12th February 1937: BA-R22/2248
109. Creditors' petition to Chancellery 24th January 1935: BA-R43 I/1301
110. Minute 1st February 1935: Ibid
111. See Celle decision 689/36: GSA p.133/456
112. Unna Hemmerde
113. In respect of foreclosure exclusion, this has to be weighed off against Abmeierung as one contemporary expert accepted: Weiss "Die Abmeierung" p.72
114. Lawyer to Anerbengericht 14th January 1935: LUD 211/F.277
115. "Neuadel aus Blut und Boden" p.76
116. For Hitler's later views on this see "Hitler's Table Talk" p.619 where he enthused over the backbone of the nation and stated that agricultural work teaches self-confidence because of its chancy nature: the Führer believed France to be fundamentally sound due to its peasantry
117. Dr. Schacht describes the EHG concept as "sensible and successful": "My First Seventy-six Years" p.328
118. C. von Dietze "Deutsche Agrarpolitik seit Bismarck" in "Zeitschrift für Agrargeschichte und Agrarsoziologie" 1964 p.209
119. Wunderlich "Farm Labour in Germany 1810-1945" p.172
120. Herr Kahlke of Celle: personal interview

Chapter XIII: National Socialism and the Peasant: race and romanticism
and the efforts to convert the peasant politically

Apart from practical measures such as guaranteed prices etc. the NSDAP made great efforts to lift the peasantry as such in a cultural sense, and improve its standing in the community; this was partly determined by logic, since if it is decided to preserve one particular social group, it is also clearly desirable that it should enjoy the esteem of other sections of the same community. It was also partly the product of a special kind of romantic thinking about the peasant, and of his whole way of life as opposed to that of the towns.¹ This chapter examines peasant glorification and also the practical questions of blood and race behind it (by "practical" is meant what the NSDAP considered describable by that word). Attempts to convert the peasant to National Socialism, and opposition on the land, especially religious, will also be discussed and the ideological slant in the education of rural youth.

The NSDAP and peasant culture

(i) Quite soon after his appointment as Minister Darré took steps to improve the state of peasant culture by nominating Erwin Metzner as a special official concerned with rural customs. A reception was held to celebrate the appointment, at which Metzner attacked liberalism for having pushed peasant culture into the background for economic reasons, e.g. cheap ready-made suits had come to replace traditional costumes. It was the task of the NSDAP to bring a fresh blooming on the land in cultural terms. He was followed by Motz of the "Blood and Soil" Section of the REM, who gave his duty to be that of freeing the peasant from his inferiority complex and making him conscious of his own worth.² Meinberg rammed the approach home at a mass demonstration in Hamm; under liberalism the word "Bauer" had become an insult: he was the object of fun in Jewish comic papers. Now the peasantry could become the foundation of the state: "under Adolf Hitler we

want to build up the new Germany as his peasant militia."³ To emphasize the importance now given to the peasant Darré called for the widespread use of the term "Peasant Chancellor" for the Führer.⁴

Every effort was made in the Third Reich to present the rural population in a favourable light to the rest of the community: plays or books that made the peasants seem ridiculous were violently attacked by the RNS. In Trier for example, the aid of the president of the National Chamber of Authors was invoked to call in a book deemed to be offensive in this respect; the RNS official responsible asked subordinates to be on the lookout for similar cases.⁵ A Cologne revue "We've got a bird" was bitterly attacked by one KBF for the way in which it portrayed the Bauern.⁶ The peasants image was watched over very closely.

(ii) Hand in hand with the desire to give the Bauer a new selfconsciousness went the elaborate ceremonial designed to make him feel important: the two most noteworthy were the Harvest Festival (Erntedankfest) and the annual Peasants' Assembly (Reichsbauerntag). The first was instituted by a new law in 1933 naming the first Sunday after Michaelmas as Harvest Festival, a special ceremony that had nothing to do with church practices and was organized by the Propaganda Ministry, not the RNS.⁷ At the first such event in 1933, 700,000 peasants were said to have attended to hear Hitler, Darré and Goebbels at the Bückeberg, near Hamlin: as a preliminary a delegation of Bauern had visited the Chancellery to present the Führer with samples of local food specialities and of peasant art.⁸ The whole nation was brought into the ceremony by means of the radio, and there were processions in various cities: in Koblenz, for example, Rosenberg spoke at the "Deutsches Eck." Harvest Festival was repeated annually as a propaganda exercise.

NS romanticism was also illustrated by their choice of headquarters; at the 1933 national festival Darré took the chance to announce that the RNS headquarters would be partly stationed at Goslar "in the heart of the

original German peasant land." This transfer to the "core of the old German Reich of the Saxon Emperors ... in the vicinity of the cradle of the peasant duke, Henry the Lion" would symbolize that the fate of the peasant was no longer to be decided in the "asphalt desert" (Berlin).⁹ Goslar came to be known as the Reichsbauern city: its absolute majority for the NSDAP at the July 1932 elections was an additional reason no doubt for its choice in this respect, quite apart from Darré's romanticism.¹⁰ The city, where new facilities for the annual Peasants Assembly were constructed at no little cost, repaid the RNS gesture by making both Hitler and Darré freemen.¹¹ It was at its first Peasant Assembly that Metzner confirmed Darré's opinion that a new German society could be built only on the basis of the peasantry;¹² the annual ceremony, like its Bückeberg counterpart was thus chiefly designed for propaganda, but had another side to it: in 1934 three days were devoted to talks on purely professional and technical aspects of the RNS organization.¹³ Goslar was also linked with the Harvest Festival, in that delegations of Bauern who received special honours in view of their productivity in the Erzeugungsschlacht were presented there to the Führer at the former Imperial Palace in connection with the Festival: deserving landworkers were also introduced.¹⁴

To complete the NS concentration upon Lower Saxony for their official agrarian headquarters was the Prussian Regional EHG Court at Celle on the Lüneburger Heath. It was a small town of less than thirty thousand inhabitants but picturesque in a traditional fashion and set in the centre of the Anerbenrecht area of Northern Germany; an official history of the Court makes it quite clear that it was chosen for this very reason.¹⁵ Thus in some respects Lower Saxony came to be regarded as the heartland of "Blood and Soil" ideology, local support for the Party doubtless being a factor in the situation.¹⁶

(iii) The organization for the encouragement of peasant lore and custom

was built into the RNS at all levels and was nation-wide, with no particular emphasis upon one region. The duties were defined as the awakening of appreciation for the peasant's culture in general: the Kreisbauernschaft was to concentrate upon the collection of lore, of sayings, of documents etc. and to stimulate interest in peasant literature: geneological research was its responsibility as well. At Landesbauernschaft level exhibitions were to be organized and publicity given to special cases.¹⁷ The officials went to work with a will; every aspect of traditional village life and custom were investigated as potentially worth reviving. For example an annual ceremony called "Eierlage" was apparently held in some Rhineland areas, which led to an enquiry as to whether this constituted a genuine living tradition:¹⁸ it turned out to be quite recent in most places, which had simply imitated a genuine ceremony seen in one particular village in the neighbourhood: as the occasion in the other places was apparently mainly commercial, it was suggested by the Folklore section that it should be banned.¹⁹ In many cases, of course, the customs of the village had died out almost completely, which led sometimes to an air of spuriousness in the revivals, hence a Press article alleging that so-called peasant lore was being newly-taught on the land by townees, which led to an indignant denial by the Party's agrarian journal.²⁰ But there was some element of truth in the charge nonetheless, as can be seen from the leader of Department I in Goslar's (Haidn) circular in 1935 emphasizing that the RNS alone must be responsible for the matter and that artificially produced "peasant" culture stemming from the cities must not be taken on to the land.²¹ It depends here of course on what is called artificial: to revive traditions no longer alive may be seen as just as spurious perhaps as the complete fabrication of new ones. Certainly the RNS did its share of the first, as witness the essay "On the old Germanic dances" in its own news service:²² equally revealing was the ordinance regarding peasant weaving, which spoke frankly

of revival and enjoined KBFs to take samples rated as typical for their districts, to an RNS exhibition.²³

Similarly, there is no doubt that the organization did invent new ceremonies and customs; a particular instance of this was the procedure at the handover of the family holding to the heir: the KBFs had made it clear that there was no general custom in this case, so the LBF (Rhineland) then preceeded to give out guide-lines for such an occasion.²⁴ This was to be on quite a large scale, with the whole village participating, as well as the entire Bauer clan. The KBF was to make a speech on the history of the family and its farm and then hand the heir an appropriate symbol: the new young housewife was then to relight the hearth fire, using that flame brought to her from another nearby Erbhof. The KBF then solemnly reminded the new owner of his duty to clan and people: after this the legal conveyance followed; only peasant costume or uniform was to be worn. Although this was a guide-line there is no doubt that similar procedures were carried out, for example, at Rodenbach (Thuringia) where a young farmer handed the heir a decorated spade as a symbol of the working German with a speech to the effect that the companion of his youth now became Bauer on the holding of his ancestors "May it (the spade) never rust and you never rest until you give the farm to your heir." The father gave soil and water, and the house key to his son to symbolize what he had now acquired, i.e. fields, woods, house and brook. The KBF thanked the retiring owner for his services and reminded the newcomer of his responsibilities: here again a torch from a nearby holding was used to light the hearth-fire by the new housewife.²⁵ The whole affair was in sum a quasi-religious ceremony in which the clan and race replaced a deity: the solemnity may have been quite impressive but the chief point here is surely that this was a new procedure, not old tradition revived: (the possible religious objections to this kind of cult are dealt with in a later section).

(iv) Yet another ceremonial was drawn up for the honouring of those peasant families who had occupied the same holdings for over 200 years.²⁶ A general decree ordaining such a procedure was laid down in 1933.²⁷ The object was not only to render homage to them in farming circles but also direct the attention of the public at large to the services given by such peasants or farmers to the community.²⁸ Procedure was unified for the whole Reich; appreciation was to be equally applied to both sexes and the recipients were to get a certificate signed by the RBF and from the Landesbauernschaft an appropriate commemorative plaque in wood or enamel:²⁹ such families were also honoured nationally at the Harvest Festival.³⁰ For the actual local event in their own region a day-long programme was instigated; 328 families were honoured in this way at Ingelfingen in 1936, these being the old-established peasants and farmers for all Württemberg: there was a special play "Der Erbhof," a procession through the streets and sports and a dance to finish. There was simultaneously an exhibition of old deeds, genealogical trees etc. in the town hall.³¹ To give full publicity to the occasion there was a radio report from Stuttgart the following day. The whole clan was honoured, incidentally, not merely the farm occupants;³² for them there was a "Clan Day" in the presence of the village, with the HJ, BDM and S.A. in attendance, the ceremony lasting thirty minutes, ending with a presentation by the KBF. Folk songs and dances formed a general background to the occasion.³³

Large numbers of families were dignified in this way, as many as fifteen hundred applications having been received by 1939 for Württemberg alone.³⁴ By that time the realization had dawned at Goslar that the whole thing was getting out of hand, especially as it was estimated that there could easily be 150,000 families so qualified in Germany as a whole: it was suggested that either some less expensive way of honouring them should be found, or that part of the costs should be borne by the peasants

concerned.³⁵ Costly or not it seems quite likely that the scheme was well-received on the land since it did pay tribute to a class not accustomed to being well-regarded in modern Germany: on the other hand it may have seemed to be in rather stark contrast to economic reality for the peasants. The assessment of public opinion is hard to make as means of expressing what one really thought were so limited in the Third Reich, but the peasantry were probably quite pleased to find anyone ready to make a fuss of them. Some evidence exists for this supposition; one ceremony in Neeustetten (Württemberg) so impressed a local peasant that he wrote to the Landbauernschaft to record his gratitude for the event.³⁶

(v) In some respects, however, the attention paid to folklore really went to extremes, as in the case of traditional costume. For example a lady in Thuringia was commissioned in 1935 to produce suitable costumes for the local peasants, traditional garb being taken as the model: the products were advertised in the national "Bauernzeitung."³⁷ Here again it would appear that the accent was very much on revival, since it is hard to imagine that medieval costume meant much to the peasant in 1935. Some RNS officials were themselves quite aware of this: as one put it, in describing attempts to "dig out" (sic) old dress in districts where this was no longer a living tradition, the step from the sublime to the ridiculous was very small.³⁸ Of course, in some regions custom had been more faithfully maintained than in others even before the NS accession; this led to a tendency to use such areas as models by those where old traditions had died: Kurhessen was apparently in the former category which led another Landesbauernschaft to ask for information about traditional workday clothes, still being worn in 1934, a custom which it was desired to reintroduce in the Rhineland.³⁹ In the latter region visits were arranged between villages by costumed groups to stimulate local interest.⁴⁰ But on the whole it seems unlikely that this kind of activity was really popular on the land in the 'thirties; peasants who wore

the local costume to the Bückeberg festival always looked rather self-conscious when photographed in the streets of Hamlin before the ceremony, as can be judged from contemporary newspapers.

(vi) One of the most interesting aspects of Darré's endeavour to create a new aristocracy from "Blood and Soil" was the attempt made to foster an interest in heraldry on the land for individual families. These were encouraged to submit their coats-of-arms to the RNS to see if their claim to them was valid, in order to afford a higher status to such peasant families in the community in general. Some commercial firms apparently realized that an opportunity existed here for exploitation, and began to give out "traditional" emblems, complete with certificates, on demand.⁴¹ By 1937 three quarters of all those samples submitted by individual peasants in the Rhineland had turned out to be false.⁴² There was apparently some quite genuine peasant heraldry, however, linked with crests on the family homestead.⁴³ Any antiques or family heirlooms also served to build up the peasant cult and their presence at the homestead was eagerly catalogued.⁴⁴ Similarly, Bauern were encouraged to give the holding a name if it lacked one, and the official farm title was solemnly entered in the Land Register.⁴⁵

This type of activity seems romantic at first sight but it did contain a practical core, the creation of self-confidence on the land among those who had perhaps begun to feel that the tide of modern socio-economic development was running against them. The peasant was now made to feel important again by being made conscious of his traditions and the need for him by society as a whole: the aim of the RNS was summed up best by its weekly sheet in Württemberg, which described one ceremony honouring old-established families by saying "The Bauer again takes up his fitting place in the nation."⁴⁶ The whole country was to understand his new significance; one local Folklore commissioner sent a circular to all teachers in his area to orientate them in their task of teaching their children the meaning of

rural culture and the Bauer's pride in his occupation and honour; this was not, he claimed, merely to praise the past but to create a genuine contemporary peasant way of life.⁴⁷

The validity of this claim must be seen in the framework of costume revival etc: what the RNS perhaps did not entirely face up to was the possibility that c. 1933 a "contemporary" peasant culture simply was a contradiction in terms: the country had been industrialized too long. By 1895 there were already more people employed in industry than on the land:⁴⁸ to introduce into such a society forty years later such concepts as the use of old Germanic names for the months in official correspondence of the RNS was merely ludicrous: how little the old nomenclature meant to contemporary Germans was signalized by the use of the normal word in brackets after the new title.⁴⁹ This kind of pretence that the twentieth century did not exist must surely have been counter-productive in terms of a new Bauer image, since it is difficult to give a new self-consciousness or standing to any social group whose administrators are so out of touch with the realities of their own society. All that the Romantic enthusiasm over old costumes and dances probably achieved was to make the peasant look even more out of date than ever.

NS indoctrination of the peasantry, and the opposition encountered to it

(i) Quite early in his reign as head of the Agrarian Office, Darré had seen that the rural voters choosing the NSDAP were not doing so as a result of their belief in National Socialism as such but rather because they were hoping for economic recovery under the Party.⁵⁰ A report from the LGF in Saxony two years later affirmed this as being true of his region;⁵¹ the average peasant was no National Socialist by conviction, he just hoped for better times, apart from being anti-Republican in sentiment. The NSDAP profited from this electorally, but had to consider how to bring the peasants over to their side ideologically, in order to make them permanent

adherents to the movement.

Darré consequently initiated political indoctrination courses even before the accession to power: one such in Hessen-Nassau from 5th-12th July 1931 was attended by over one hundred, the curriculum including racial policy, autarky and the revision of land laws, the latter instruction in the shape of a lecture from Willikens; the usual attacks upon Marxism and Liberalism were also added.⁵² On reviewing the course Darré suggested that social and technical matters should also be discussed; for the first, the peasants undergoing indoctrination in future should be afforded the chance to visit a mine or a foundry, and also a lunatic asylum or home for epileptics in order to bring home to them the need for a correct racial policy.⁵³ Initiation into NS ideology was thus well under way even before the Third Reich began; by January 1932 training courses in general had become so successful that they were ordered for all Gauern.⁵⁴

The arrival in office not unnaturally intensified the drive to convert the peasants to National Socialism and its ethos that the individual must cede pride of place to the needs of the community. "A mighty educational programme was necessary" to bring home to the Bauer that "the individual is transitory, the nation remains."⁵⁵ This line was pushed home constantly; out of the earlier devotee of private enterprise must come "the office-bearer of people and state, the soldier of Adolf Hitler":⁵⁶ such was the ideological goal allotted to the peasant. At the Weimar meeting of the Agrarian Office in 1935 Darré was at pains to remind all LGFs that the political indoctrination of the rural population was their task; in particular the Bauer must not be allowed to forget his völkisch duty and sink back into demanding "interest politics" that is, those which suited agriculture alone⁵⁷ (as he had done under Weimar). The general approach to peasant education has been described by one subsequent writer as resting upon the premiss that unless the Bauer was a National Socialist then he was no true Bauer.⁵⁸

As Darré's speech indicated the indoctrination was in the hands of the Agrarian Office, but it was also partly carried out by the local Bauernführer, as the men most in touch with farmers in general: so accepted was this aspect of their work that the relatively large staff of the RNS was justified exactly upon the grounds that its members were required partly in order to deal with the political education of the peasants.⁵⁹ As evidence already produced shows, the latter phrase meant conversion of the rural population to NS views upon race, and upon duty to the community: as a typical example of the kind of propaganda activity which was entailed, the so-called "work evenings" for rural women are informative, attendance being compulsory. A sample gathering began with a song, which was followed by some form of indoctrination, e.g. a lecture entitled "Responsible choice of a marriage-partner," which was racial-biological in content. Two quotations from Hitler followed and then another song closed the evening.⁶⁰ Lectures given on these occasions were always based upon the NS view of life, and the "Work Evening" is typical of the kind of incessant propaganda to which the agrarian population was subjected.

(ii) At least as important for the NSDAP was the education of the younger generation, in order to bring it up with the correct outlook as far as the Third Reich was concerned. There is some evidence to suggest that the movement had always possessed some attraction for youth, if the pattern of membership when classified by age is a criterion.⁶¹ Even in those districts where the percentage of adherence to the Party was below national average there was a high proportion of members under thirty years of age.⁶² The NSDAP decided to strike this particular iron while it was hot, and guide-lines for co-operation in political indoctrination of youth between agricultural high schools and teacher-training colleges were given out in July 1933 by Bernard Rust, then Minister of Culture in Prussia.⁶³ According to these the especial goal of the agrarian vocational schools, was to bring

up the rural population to be conscious, responsible carriers of German society renewing its strength from blood and soil. Courses were therefore to include genealogy and eugenics, and instruction in the importance of heredity so that both physical and mental health could be maintained on the land: the frontier schools had a particular task in this respect: the will to settlement was to be encouraged in general in order to combat rural migration.

The policy statement for Prussia was soon followed by one for the Reich;⁶⁴ this gave a rather more detailed study plan, based on a series of subject grouping. The first "People and Race" was more or less the same as that already described for Prussia. This was followed by "People and State" which explained how National Socialism had changed the administration of Germany, including details of the organization of the RNS. "People and Society" dealt with the overcoming of class-consciousness and hence of the class-struggle in the Third Reich, and included details of the Labour Service. Then came "People and Custom" which comprised folklore and associated themes, whilst "People, Soil and Home" (Heimat) was a study-group based on the right of a nation to living-space, the history of German agriculture and of the country's colonization of the east in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The foregoing constituted a strong ideological slant in what was after all a vocational training school; education for the NSDAP clearly contained the concept of fitting the trainee for society as a whole, and by the very nature of the instruction given, ensuring that he would find such a society as the Third Reich congenial. The NS Germany of the future was to be populated by people conditioned to accept its ethos by the whole of their education.

So far was the emphasis upon indoctrination carried that in 1939 a textbook issued for agricultural trainees contained 39 pages of political content compared to 53 devoted to professional training.⁶⁵ One enthusiast even went so far as to declare that the signpost in the agricultural schools no longer

carried the sign "This way to rationalisation and profitability" but rather "This way to the peasantry and national culture"⁶⁶ (Volkstum). There is no doubt that this was an exaggeration as the above text-books shows, since it did after all still have more than half its pages still devoted to technical matters, but there was nonetheless a solid core of truth to the assertion, as the attached list of recommended literature shows; the books on it are for agrarian vocational schools and show all in all a distinct tendency towards the völkisch, in particular the NS, point of view.⁶⁷

This type of indoctrination was not reserved for rural youth alone, since in 1938 it became obligatory for all boys and girls to visit this kind of school for a short period, with the object of furthering their interest in the land.⁶⁸ The degree of political knowledge expected from those in full-time attendance can be judged from the fact that the passing-out examinations contained a test based on this particular subject-matter: girl apprentices had to display their capacity in such areas as cooking, housework, stall-work (animal husbandry), etc. following which "each one of the apprentices had to give a talk on a political theme." In these terms an examination in an agricultural training school was described in 1936.⁶⁹

Equally the NS interpretation of politics penetrated into the village school attended by all children. The kind of future education envisaged is clear from the results of a conference on the question held jointly by the RNS and the NS Teachers Association in 1939:⁷⁰ it was suggested that there should be three broad courses based on the themes of blood, living-space, and what was in effect the history of the German peasantry. The first course included racial hygiene and genealogical research, plus the standing of the Bauer in the community: the second centred around the Erzeugungsschlacht, the Four Year Plan and the topic "People without space" (the Germans). The last course was very much history as seen by the NSDAP, centring around the supposed link between the Erbhof and the old Germanic farming, the coloniz-

296. Bekanntmachung einer Aufstellung von Lehrbüchern für den Unterricht an Bäuerlichen Werkshulen. — II E 3665/34. —

Nachfolgend gebe ich für die Hand des Lehrers eine vom Stabsamt des Reichsbauernführers herausgegebene Zusammenstellung von Büchern, die zur unterrichtlichen Ausgestaltung des Faches „Deutsches Bauerntum“ verwandt werden können.

Berlin, den 15. 12. 1934.

Im Auftrage: Otto.

| Verfasser | Titel | Verlag |
|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| Adolf Hitler | „Mein Kampf“ | Eher, München |
| Alfred Rosenberg | Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts | Eher, München |
| R. W. Darré | Das Bauerntum als Lebensquell der nordischen Rasse | Lehmann, München |
| R. W. Darré | Neuadel aus Blut und Boden | Lehmann, München |
| R. W. Darré | Das Schwein als Kriterium der nordischen Rasse | Lehmann, München |
| R. W. Darré | Walter Rathenau und das Problem der nordischen Menschen | Lehmann, München |
| R. W. Darré | Unser Weg | Zeitgeschichte, Berlin |
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| Walter zur Ungnad | Deutsche Freibauern, Römer und Kolonisten | Hanseatische Verlagsanstalt, Hamburg |
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| Bernhard Kummer | Midgards Untergang | Klein, Leipzig |
| Günther Franz | Der Bauernkrieg | Oldenburg, München |
| Siegfried Kadner | Deutsche Vorzeit | F. Hirth, Breslau |
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| Dr. Wilhelm Erbt | Weltgeschichte auf rassistischer Grundlage | Armanen-Blg., Leipzig |
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| Andreas Häusler | Germanentum | Winter, Heidelberg |
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| Dr. Hans F. R. Günther | Verstädterung ¹ | Lehmann, München |
| Klaus Thiede | Deutsche Bauernhäuser | R. R. Langewiese, Lpz. |
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| Albert Kropp und H. Hillen-Ziegfeld | Vom Werden des deutschen Volkes | Edwin Runge, Berlin-Tempelhof |
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ation of eastern Europe in early German history, the rise of Communism, "the Jew in our village," and the thousand year struggle for the Rhine.

It is clear from the foregoing that the education of children was to have as its foundation the National Socialist viewpoint, and that youth training, even vocational, was to be similarly slanted. In this respect the Third Reich has to be judged not by what it was so much as by what it might have been had Germany won the war, especially in regard to race and culture. Since it is usually held that human progress is best furthered by a kind of cultural cross-fertilization, it appears probable that an NS victory would have led to an almost complete ossification of German life and society on the land, so inward-looking is the type of education described here. The concentration upon national culture is perhaps as complete a dead-end intellectually as autarky in an economic context; the Third Reich was a cul-de-sac both culturally and economically.

(iii) Apart from training youth the NSDAP had to look towards the existing dwellers on the land, not all of whom were convinced National Socialists; since the more adult were too old to indoctrinate fully, the Party could in the last resort only use pressure to achieve its goals in agrarian matters. This has to be seen as the reverse side of the ideological propaganda described in an earlier section; the NSDAP never ceased trying to convert the peasants, but simultaneously had to recognize that despite these efforts not everyone shared its viewpoint. This was quite obvious to its agencies as a result of the obstruction and non co-operation often encountered; one Landesbauernschaft described the leaders of the existing settlement companies in the following terms "They (the officials) call themselves National Socialists, but they are not really."⁷¹ When peasants were dissatisfied with Party policies they soon found a way of communicating this, for example, by contributing to "Winter Help" only on a very meagre scale, as open criticism was not permitted.⁷² In Westphalia the response to

the scheme in 1933 was so poor that the Gauleiter announced his dissatisfaction, some districts not having organized any collection at all. Kreisleiter were ordered to undertake an immediate investigation to ensure that the targets were reached on the land.⁷³ Mass abstention from NS ceremonies could also be used to signalize disapproval of government measures in general; in 1934 the peasantry in the Aachen area stayed away in large numbers from the local Harvest Festival celebrations in order to demonstrate their dissatisfaction with government measures according to the local Gestapo chief.⁷⁴

When the rural population acted in concert there was nothing much anyone could do about it at political level; for the individual, however, pressure could be used as a weapon to bring about conformity. One Bauer on the committee of a local co-operative in Coppenbrügge (Lower Saxony) failed to attend Party functions and was hauled before the Kreisleitung to explain himself, whereupon he indicated his discontent with agrarian prices very forcibly indeed; the co-operative called on him to surrender his post,⁷⁵ but the KBF eventually granted a year's probation:⁷⁶ despite this last action, the drive towards conformity is obvious in the whole process. Attempts by individual farmers to leave agrarian bodies were similarly treated; when one tried to back out of a cattle co-operative he was promptly told not to play the outsider, otherwise measures would be taken against him.⁷⁷

Proof of political reliability was made a prerequisite of almost any post or assistance in the Third Reich. When the position of controller in a Verband fell vacant proof of an applicant's outlook politically was demanded before the job could be given to him.⁷⁸ The same test was applied to schoolmasters in agricultural institutions, who had to produce a certificate showing their impeccable descent and complete a questionnaire on political affiliations.⁷⁹ Their charges were subjected to the same treatment; an apprentice was expelled from an agricultural school because he took no interest in Winter Help

or in the NSDAP in general.⁸⁰ Even the granting of a loan to landworkers to enable them to buy their own houses was dependent on proof of the right attitude; the form to be completed included the inevitable section on Aryan descent and details of the labourer's political background, including information on any services rendered in the fight for "national recovery," i.e. the NS struggle before 1933.⁸¹

Apart from the universal touchstone of contributions to Winter Help, the individual's attitude towards Jews was also made a criterion of political outlook, which for the peasants meant that they were expected to shun them totally in commercial transactions. In Lower Saxony this was made an official ruling by the LBF in 1935; he laid it down that any peasant who dealt with Jews could not be given a prize for any RNS agricultural show; the money should be donated to Winter Help instead if he should win with his entry.⁸² This form of deterrent seems not to have been completely effective, however, since at Greiben (Rhineland) a Jewish ex-serviceman who had lost an arm in the First War continued to enjoy Bauer patronage at his butcher's shop; nonetheless, the names of seven such customers were noted and sent in to the Kreisbauernschaft, presumably for future action.⁸³

On at least one occasion a Bauer refused to be browbeaten by any pressure; in January 1935 the LBF in Lower Saxony had given the peasants' attitude to Winter Help as the criterion for assessing whether he could be given State funds in any shape or form, either as prize-money or as a subsidy for technical improvements.⁸⁴ Three years later an actual case came up in the Weser-Ems region where a farmer had won 300 RM for a prize exhibit at an RNS show, but the corporation refused to pay him the money as he was held to be unreliable politically.⁸⁵ The man was made of stern stuff and sued the RNS in the civil courts; the judge ruled that as Winter Help was voluntary, non-compliance with it could not be interpreted as dereliction of duty. The legal section of Department I wrote to the Landesbauernschaft concerned

informing it that the decision would have to be accepted, (which involved paying the costs of the court action).⁸⁶ It is interesting to see that when anyone did stand up to pressure which had no legal backing the courts were still prepared to find for him; but there do not seem to have been many cases where anyone was prepared to take on such a challenge.

It should be pointed out before this issue is left, that although political conformity was imposed wherever possible, it does not follow that it was always so; at least one Kreisbauernschaft declined to take political allegiance into account when honouring old-established families on the land. This was done precisely on the grounds that such discrimination would contravene the spirit of the whole operation, which should be to foster peasant interest in the history of the family and holding, with no other factors involved.⁸⁷

(iv) Opposition to the NS ideology was by no means of equal force in all parts of Germany; on the whole the Party met with a cooler reception in those regions where Catholicism was strongest; this may well have been because where any one faith is already rooted it is correspondingly harder to inculcate another. Even prior to 1933 the NSDAP was experiencing some difficulty in this connection; indeed, a neutral observer was moved to remark that "In South Germany where the Zentrum and the Catholic Church hold the dominating position this has been everywhere up to now the strongest dam against Hitler."⁸⁸ Darré himself was very conscious of this religious influence in general; in a report commenting on the appointment of Eltz-Rübenach as LBF in the Rhineland, he said that he knew from personal experience the hold which the Zentrum had on the land, which made this particular Bauernführer very useful as he was a member of the Catholic nobility himself.⁸⁹ Of course, the fact that Eltz-Rübenach was in the NSDAP at all shows that generalizations on this theme are dangerous;⁹⁰ the point being made here is not that all Catholics were anti-National Socialist, but rather that in

general those areas where they predominated tended to be less enthusiastic about some aspects of Party thinking.

The RNS was consequently at pains to use as concealed an approach as possible on those issues where the new faith of race might clash with the old; as Darré pointed out, if the priesthood shook peasant belief in his leadership through what he referred to as the religious angle this could be highly dangerous.⁹¹ The importance of blood and clan had to be stressed in such a way as to make it comprehensible to the peasant and his wife, and "the foundations of the Christian doctrine should be pulled away without actually naming Christianity."⁹² Similarly Willikens suggested to the RBF after reading the Staff Office report on the rural birthrate that a new ethos to replace the older church concepts needed to be created on the land.⁹³

Hopes of avoiding a clash were never fulfilled, however, for which there seemed two reasons. Firstly, many leading figures in the Party were over-zealous in their attacks upon Christianity. The views of Rosenberg, for example, were used to make difficulties between Church and Party even before 1933; one Left-Wing journal quoted a Rosenberg definition of Catholic dogma as "The outlook of the medicine man," refined for Western taste by successive Popes.⁹⁴ Persecution of the clergy did not exactly smooth the path to understanding after the accession to power, the process reaching such a height in Bavaria that the diocesan authorities protested and Himmler decreed in July 1933 that in future all such arrests needed his approval.⁹⁵

But quite apart from overt attacks, the whole ethos of blood and race, and the un-Christian tone of some NS ceremonials were bound to evoke some protest among the religiously-minded in rural areas, however tactful the approach. A special calendar for the Bauern aroused such a storm of protest in the Aachen region in 1935 that it had to be withdrawn, as its foundation of old Germanic lore clashed apparently with religious feelings: Darré attempted to deny responsibility, which merely led to an indignant enquiry

as to why in that case it had been published by the RNS in the first place.⁹⁶ Another event which caused trouble in the Rhineland was a barrel-burning ceremony which had always been carried out by a local Catholic club at Easter, but which Darré attempted to assimilate to the RNS Easter fire ceremony, so that the Bürgermeister at Buderich forbade the separate religious event. The Catholic Club members then abstained from the RNS occasion, the local Sexton's son allegedly remarking "We're not taking part in the "Easter fire" of the new heathens:" reporting the matter, the Bürgermeister referred to the locals as still very much attached to the Zentrum.⁹⁷

The National Socialist view of history could also seem quite offensive to followers of the Christian persuasion; as an example, the fuss made over Widukind, the leader of the eighth century Saxon resistance to Charlemagne can be cited, as one of many such instances. In 1934 a memorial was erected in front of his tomb over which an S.S. guard of honour solemnly held watch. The article in the "NS Landpost" describing this spoke not of Charlemagne (Karl der Grosse) but of "Charles, the butcher of the Saxons" ("Karl, der Sachsen Schlachter"): other countries might have a memorial to him, ran the commentary, but for us Germans he was the ruiner of freedom and the patron saint of land speculation:⁹⁸ in the Third Reich, ran the account, the rosy veil which a religious-orientated view of history had drawn over an outrage committed in the name of Christianity, was torn away. On Midsummer Day Rosenberg visited the tomb of Widukind and delivered an oration based on his own view of history; the foundation-stone of this was the concept of three eras symbolized by Hermann (Arminius)⁹⁹ Widukind and Adolf Hitler, all of whom fought Roman materialist influence. The second had been unsuccessful, and the subsequent period of German servitude had been terminated only by the accession of the third. A torch-light procession of 4,500 Hitler Youth followed Rosenberg's speech, symbolizing that number of heathen Saxons

allegedly slain by Charlemagne.¹⁰⁰ It is suggested here that this ceremony could scarcely have endeared the NSDAP to any Christian denomination, particularly as the advent of Christianity and the destruction of peasant freedom were made to appear not merely coincidental, but virtually cause and effect.

In sum, the NSDAP made considerable efforts to convert the peasantry to its own ideological viewpoint, especially where the younger generation was concerned, as well as bringing great pressure upon the politically suspect to conform. Its propaganda frequently misfired in areas of strong religious feeling. But had the Third Reich lasted longer, the influence of the Party upon rural youth in terms of race in particular might well have been considerable. The propaganda on this latter concept was so insistent and so central to any understanding of National Socialism at all that a special section has been given to it.

Racial propaganda on the land

(i) "Blood is the mysterious carrier of all qualities and characteristics of a race, of a species" ran the gist of one article in the Third Reich.¹⁰¹ If Darré had anything which really stamped his policy as unique, that was it: he himself cited race as the distinction between the Fascist outlook and the NS one;¹⁰² the Agrarian Office task was to awake the Party to this on one side and the peasantry on the other. The Third Reich was not in his view a State seeking national production as its only goal, like Fascism or Communism, it was a racial State first and foremost. With approval Darré quoted Hess's dictum from the 1933 Nuremberg Party Meeting that National Socialism was "applied racial knowledge;" because of this Germany needed the peasantry; not economic motives but blood had led the NSDAP uniting it.¹⁰³

This belief led to the setting-up of a special section in the RNS called "Blood Questions" ("Blutsfragen") as part of Department I: the head was

Dr. Rechenbach, and the importance attached to his office may be gauged from the nominal roll of its section leaders, which included Meinberg, Willikens, Backe, Reischle, Metzner and Motz.¹⁰⁴ This department set to work to realize the injunction of the EHG that every Erbhof should possess a kind of ancestral table for the family now owning it. To simplify the necessary research parish documents were to be brought into some form of indexing and the work was to be executed by the RNS in conjunction with the NS League of Schoolteachers and a Party organization, the Office of Racial Politics.¹⁰⁵ Apart from the family tree, the Erbhof was to possess its own history book with the records of the whole clan contained therein, who should participate in drawing it up to bring home to every Bauer the importance of blood: all such books had to be submitted to the Landesbauernschaft by 31st March 1938.¹⁰⁶ Aryan descent was normally expected from all others apart from the actual peasants in agriculture: the Youth Office in Hanover was required to prove this for a parish child now employed by a market-gardener which entailed nine certificates:¹⁰⁷ a pupil in an agricultural training-school was called on for evidence of his ancestry before being accepted for a course.¹⁰⁸

The outcome of this approach was a vigorous supervision of the peasants' health in all respects, since for a healthy peasantry strict racial breeding was necessary, the latter being apparently in Darré's view the object of matrimony, as he wrote quite simply that "When one unites man and wife in the goal of child production ... that's nothing more than breeding"¹⁰⁹ (Zucht). If the peasants were to produce healthy offspring for the country, then they must under all circumstances be fit. As one RNS organ put it, men could only remain healthy when as strict a breeding was applied as in the case of plants and animals.¹¹⁰ Medical records were thus compiled of the whole of the Bauer's family background, including such details as the cause of death of his grandparents. The whole peasant family was physically

examined and records noted of its anthropological characteristics, to determine the race.¹¹¹ Evidence of hereditary disease was listed by the doctor, and even spiritual and mental qualities were to be noted as far as possible.¹¹² It would appear that blood samples were taken.¹¹³ This was necessary in order to determine whether or not the Bauer was racially healthy, i.e. would produce normal sound offspring. The drawing-up of a Table of Ancestors for every farm assumed ominous overtones when it was agreed in the Rhineland to place these at the disposal of the Institute of Heredity, which already had records of illnesses of over half a million people extending back over one hundred years.¹¹⁴

(ii) The sinister element in this action can be judged from a Snarland circular in 1935 with its message that the time of false equality was over: the RNS would go back to the holy stream of German blood. This would imply rooting out the unhealthy, and the letter spoke of the thousand million RM being spent on the inhabitants of asylums etc. who gave nothing in return.¹¹⁵ Even vocational courses in agricultural schools included visits to sanitariums etc. to push this point home.¹¹⁶ History was also invoked; a contemporary NS writer alleged that ancient Germanic law had included the abolition of the "less valuable" by castration, sterilization and the death-penalty.¹¹⁷ Quite early in the Third Reich compulsory sterilization for those persons carrying diseases capable of being transmitted at reproduction was officially ordained:¹¹⁸ when von Papen objected to the draft Bill in cabinet Hitler simply replied "All measures which serve the maintenance of the race are justified."¹¹⁹ To achieve this goal the unfit were therefore to be eliminated by hindering their reproduction.

This point was taken up by the authorities regarding agriculture, as the future management of an Erbhof might be affected by the present owner producing sickly offspring.¹²⁰ In this connection it was suggested that present policy was too liberal and too many cases of unhealthy peasants being

registered as Bauern were being permitted by the Courts: the local medical authority should be heard in evidence before enrolment was granted.¹²¹ In Hesse quite a large number of potential Erbhöfe were not enrolled upon grounds of hereditary weakness on the part of the owner, as inbreeding had apparently produced a good deal of congenital idiocy in the region.¹²² The picture of a widespread deterioration in the peasantry if the correct racial policy was not followed was constantly held up before the Bauern: in particular it was alleged that the "less-valuable" were reproducing themselves at twice the rate of the healthy families.¹²³ Exhibitions were arranged showing the horrific effects, in physical terms, of allowing the hereditarily diseased to reproduce at will: under the photos of some rural idiots in such an exhibition ran the legend "Wouldn't it have been better if they hadn't been born?"¹²⁴ Apart from trying to prevent future peasants physically or mentally handicapped, the RNS exercised on occasions some prejudice against the present generation; peasants to whom the sterilization laws applied were not eligible to be honoured as old-established families for example.¹²⁵

(iii) Finally, while the question of race in general is under discussion, some mention should be made of the attitude towards non-Nordics on the land.¹²⁶ As is well-known the NSDAP preferred the tall, blond type of person as being "racially superior." Photographs of new settlers attached as an appendix in one work are almost exclusively of such people.¹²⁷ A similar preference was displayed for peasants in general, even where folk dancers were concerned; one Landesbauernschaft advised a group leader, organizing an ensemble for the Peasants' Meeting at Goslar that girls should be 1.65 metres tall without heels, and the youths 1.70 metres, and that both should be blond as well.¹²⁸ The same criterion was applied in respect of all folk groups in the Rhineland, as the responsible official mentioned in 1936 that membership had been confined to those persons incorporating the same racial

qualities desired by the S.S.¹²⁹

It is not the intention to enter into any discussion of the concept of race as such here, but it can be said as a conclusion to this section that the NSDAP were at pains to further the hereditarily sound on the land in general, with particular preference for Nordics. Clearly, whatever criterion may be used in selecting who to favour and who to eliminate (by sterilization) if such a policy is carried out systematically over a period of time then only the favoured will flourish. The conceptual connection made by the NSDAP between physical endowment/characteristics and culture seems mistaken, but as one critic of völkisch propaganda pointed out in 1929, the seeds of this kind of irrationality had been germinating for a long time in the country.¹³⁰ In the Third Reich they eventually bore fruit.

The peasantry as the life-source of the nation in reality

(i) Beneath the romanticism over folk-lore and the propaganda about blood and race lay the hard, pragmatic core necessitating the furtherance of the peasantry. As Darré said the Bauer must learn that the state hadn't given him the EHG "for the sake of his bonny blue eyes," nor from economic motives, but because of his descendants (i.e. because he was the blood-source of the nation). Germany needed many peasants, and thereby peasant holdings, to guarantee the future of the whole: any Bauernführer who wasn't clear about this could do the country more harm than any liberal politician: the peasantry must never be allowed to forget that they possessed this völkisch duty.¹³¹ Since the birthrate issue was so important, indeed fundamental, in the NS approach to agrarian matters, some space must be devoted to an examination of whether their belief that Germany's future depended on rural reproduction rates was justified.

Firstly, there had been since 1921 an excess of births over deaths in Germany, although a decreasing one:¹³² this arose through a favourable age grouping in the early twenties which from 1926 onwards had ceased to be the

case. In fact, in 1934 the country had nearly five and a half million less inhabitants under the age of twenty than in 1910, although the total population was eight million greater.¹³³ To put this another way, in 1933 Germany had some 14% more people than in 1910, but for the over 65 age group the percentage increase had been virtually two thirds.¹³⁴ The population was getting steadily older and its birth rate fell correspondingly: indeed, in 1840 there were nearly one quarter more live births from 33.6 million people than in 1932 from over 64 million.¹³⁵ It was precisely this kind of statistic onto which the NSDAP fastened in formulating its agrarian policy; that basically the Party was right in assuming that the birthrate was falling is confirmed by contemporary accounts.¹³⁶ Indeed the head of the Reich Statistical Office, Friedrich Bürgdorfer, published a gloomy picture of the shape of things to come in 1929, which appeared to show that Germany was dying from the effects of urbanisation.¹³⁷

The last word's connection with the matter arose because of the marked difference in the urban as compared to the rural birthrate; in 1925 in Prussia the live births per 1,000 married men in rural areas was almost double that in the towns and cities in general, Bavaria showing a similar huge disproportion.¹³⁸ By 1934 the position had undergone no marked change, the rural areas in Germany as a whole continuing to show far greater reproduction rates.¹³⁹ Hence the NS propaganda line about the peasantry exemplified by Hitler at the Bückeberg Harvest Festival in 1933 with the words "A glance at population statistics shows us that the future of the nation ... depends exclusively on the conservation of the peasant."¹⁴⁰ That this was his genuine belief seems clear from his remarks in Cabinet when the EHG was being debated: the Führer asked for acceptance of the measure, since without it the population would fall drastically.¹⁴¹ In sum, the NSDAP believed birthrates to be falling, which was true, and that urbanisation was the culprit: it can further be said that, as one historian has put it, "Talk about the

peasantry as the life-blood of the nation ... had received a thorough justification from the science of population statistics."¹⁴² If the NSDAP viewpoint did turn out to be incorrect, it certainly had a solid initial backing.

(ii) The Party was convinced that the peasantry would repopulate Germany: this leaves the question "Did they in fact do so?" Evidence will be given to show that despite the pseudo-scientific foundation, the permanence of a high rural birthrate was empirically an illusion: the role of the EHG in affecting the issue has to be discussed also, since if the Party's own legislation had actually contributed to a fall in the number of children on the land this would have been the supreme irony.

Investigations on the link between economic circumstance and family size were undertaken early in the Third Reich in the shape of a poll amongst farmers in Württemberg, a good area to choose as it contained both Anerbenrecht and Realteilung districts. The peasants were asked if a change in their financial condition would lead to them having fewer children; the results were inconclusive, since an affirmative reply was given in almost exactly the same proportion, by just over half of those questioned, in both types of inheritance areas.¹⁴³ In his report, the investigator, however, drew attention to the relatively greater family size in both Thuringia and Hesse in districts with Anerbenrecht: this appeared to contradict the possibility that compulsory closed inheritance would induce farmers to have fewer children, as might at first sight seem likely; after all, if only one child can come into possession of the holding, then it would appear logical to limit one's family size. Darré's sensitiveness to criticism of the EHG in this respect can be inferred from the way in which he rushed into print to deny that his legislation would affect the rural birthrate.¹⁴⁴

Before any empirical evidence of what actually did happen is produced, it must be stressed that the whole question is extremely complicated, as

there are so many variable factors involved; among these are obviously religious conviction, farm size and general economic background.¹⁴⁵ One contemporary writer made the additional point that many peasants limited their family size simply in order to keep their property in the family, that is to say, to avoid seeing their land and money among in-laws.¹⁴⁶ If that were valid then the EHG should have encouraged a larger family, since it prohibited the sharing of land in the first place. The chief researcher, Josef Müller, into the rural birthrate in the thirties came eventually to the conclusion that family size was dictated largely by personal choice, i.e. that individual peasants' outlooks on life, coloured by a general tendency to be about five years behind the urban areas in birth practices in general.¹⁴⁷ If that conclusion was correct, it would have two highly important implications for the NSDAP; firstly, its general thesis on the peasantry as the life-blood of the nation was wrong, as the rural birthrate would not remain at its present level for long. True, if five years behind the cities it would always be slightly higher relatively, but for the peasantry to keep up the population of the whole country its reproduction rate needed to remain absolutely at its present figure. Secondly, if Müller's belief that external factors were of little importance in the matter, the EHG would probably have a negative effect; birthrates would fall in rural areas, but Darré's legislation would not actually make things any worse.

(iii) Empirical research by the RNS Staff Office removed even that last crumb of consolation for Darré: its report in 1937 demonstrated two things beyond all reasonable doubt; the birthrate on the land was not being maintained as before, and the EHG, especially the prohibition on Abfindung, was a contributory factor in this situation. As far as the actual facts about family size were concerned, these are made clear in a Staff Office document, circulated to Landesbauernschaften in December 1937; the replies from various LBFs confirmed the position in their own areas. In the case of the

Kurmark some interesting statistics were given: from these it was evident that although in two selected rural districts the birthrate was higher in 1936 than three years previously, the figures for Greater Berlin showed an even greater improvement, so that although the average reproduction rate on the land was still higher than in the city, the net difference was less than in 1933.¹⁴⁸ Three years after the EHG, in other words, the city was catching up, which hardly tallied with the RNS theory of the peasantry as the life-source. Moreover, the same report makes it clear that in one Kreis, Prenzlau, taken as a specific example, the workers in the rural district had larger families than the neighbouring peasants: the larger rural birthrate as compared to Berlin when taken alone was misleading. It was the workers and not the peasants who were keeping up the figures.

A similar kind of situation was described in other Landesbauernschaften, for example Hessen-Nassau and the Rhineland.¹⁴⁹ That decline was uniform is confirmed by Willikens own comments on the original Staff Office report, which he described as "shattering" and used the phrase "rapid sinking in the peasants' birthrate" to illustrate its content.¹⁵⁰ Even worse in a sense was the information from the Kurmark that the reproduction rate on medium and large farms was lower than on the small-holdings; as the latter were naturally less likely to be Erbhöfe, this implied that it was indeed the ideological apple of the National Socialist eye, the Bauer who was now most firmly limiting the size of his family. A further Staff Office report in February 1939 confirmed the Kurmark picture for another area, South Hanover-Brunswick. Here again, the owners in the range 20-50 Ha had a lower birthrate than those whose holdings were from $\frac{1}{2}$ to 2 Ha in size; the report concluded by saying that it now appeared to be a general rule, that family and farm sizes were now tending to be in inverse proportion. In general it was said that the districts with the most advanced agricultural methods had the least number of children.¹⁵¹ This boded ill for the future, as if the

only way to maintain a high birthrate on the land was to keep the peasantry conceptually backward, then the ideas of it as simultaneously the food-supplier and the life-source for the nation would turn out to be mutually exclusive.

(iv) Given that smaller families among the farming community were now becoming the rule, then the problem of what had induced this remains; contemporary observers were in no doubt that among several causes, the EHG's provision on Abfindung stood out as one of the chief ones. According to the LBF in the Kurmark, this was always cited by the Bauern themselves when questioned on the matter.¹⁵² Willikens himself accepted this point, as he felt it undeniable that the EHG must lead to a further deterioration: as backing for this belief he quoted the need to save in order to be able to pay Abfindung from current income, as opposed to the old system of taking up a loan secured against the holding. This new necessity would lead to later marriage by the Bauer and therefore a smaller family.¹⁵³ Evidence of smaller families on Erbhöfe than on the lesser holdings seems to offer empirical evidence for this inference, as the small-holdings were the ones to which Abfindung prohibitions did not apply, as they usually were not Erbhöfe. In retrospect it is interesting to note how rapidly a similar point had been made by critics of the EHG, at the time when its general introduction was discussed; a Civil Servant in Württemberg forecast in 1933 that if the Bauer had to find Abfindung from liquid resources his solution might well be to produce fewer children to demand it.¹⁵⁴

Of course, Abfindung was not the only factor in a complicated situation: by 1939 the RNS itself had gone a long way towards accepting the Müller thesis.¹⁵⁵ The Bauer had simply taken a "false example," as the Staff Office called it, from the towns: family limitation would lead to greater wealth. Indeed the February 1939 report speaks of the peasant now saying "Another child or a car?" as the vital question to be answered. In this respect it was accepted by the

RNS that a desire to help the children rise in the world also had some bearing upon the matter, as clearly it would be easier to assist two in this respect than three or four.

Yet another factor was overwork on the land; an agrarian sociologist named Münzinger found in Württemberg that the work pattern of wives with no children exercised no little influence upon the family fortunes, and he compared them with those mothers having respectively three and six children. The amount of time spent in the stalls was the same in all cases but the childless wife could spend 28% of her working day in the fields as compared to the proportions of 16% and 6% respectively devoted to this type of labour by the other two.¹⁵⁶ As more intensive cultivation meant greater production, a family of limited size not merely enjoyed larger slices of the cake individually, it could also make a bigger one in the first place.

Finally, three other possible sources of inhibition must be mentioned; firstly, and most important, the whole matter of low morale among the rural population in the Third Reich. By January 1938 this was being cited in Bavaria as a reason for the falling birthrate, as the Bauern were so pessimistic about the future.¹⁵⁷ Lack of medical care was a contributory factor in this respect; from the Rhineland it was asserted that TB on the land was frightful;¹⁵⁸ when one Bauer was sick he had no doctor in the vicinity, so that the fee for a visit would have been 40/50 RM, which no peasant could afford.¹⁵⁹ The LBF there pointed out that farm labourers still had large families, the husband being covered by compulsory insurance for cases of illness, and he suggested that an extension of the scheme to include the peasants as well might well have a beneficial effect upon the birthrate.¹⁶⁰ From Hessen-Nassau came the interesting suggestion that another factor might well be the NSDAP propaganda about the alleged virtues of the Nordic race; the LBF felt that this might have an inhibiting effect upon the family size of non-Nordic Germans, who perhaps were acquiring an inferiority complex.¹⁶¹

Finally, there was the possibility that some peasants had not understood the EHG in Realteilung areas; it was given in one report as a contributory factor because it had never been properly explained there:¹⁶² this suggestion as late as 1938 is not very flattering to the RNS itself; why had its officials failed in this respect?

All in all, the question was extremely complicated, as so many different possibilities had to be considered: it is suggested here that whatever the final judgement it can scarcely be denied that Abfindung played some part in the decline of the peasants' birthrate after 1933: that such a diminution took place is in even less doubt.

(vi) As a postscript to the matter it may be said that the talk of the peasantry as the life-source of the nation had been based on a fallacy, not just because ultimately the situation changed, but because the original statistics of the 1933 census had been misinterpreted. By February 1939 the Staff Office of the RNS subjected them to a rather more sophisticated analysis, which revealed a somewhat different picture.¹⁶³ In reality, the rural birthrate had been high largely because of those marriages contracted before 1913, every hundred of which had produced 398 children: for every hundred closed from 1914 onwards the figures were markedly, and above all, progressively lower; for the period 1914-1923 for example the average number of offspring per marriage was down to 2.95, in comparison to the average of 3.98 for the pre 1913 unions. This meant that the reproduction rate on the land had been falling before 1933, so that in this connection the EHG was out-of-date when it was passed; this point must equally absolve it from the main responsibility of having caused the decline; the Abfindung provision thus comes into perspective as a measure tending rather to reinforce an existing trend than to initiate a new one.¹⁶⁴

A final ironic comment is provided by a report on the National Peasant Council; the 87 members of the Rhineland branch had only 177 children

between them in 1939.¹⁶⁵ When analysed by age-groups the same pattern was found as on the land in general, namely, an increasing tendency towards having two children only. Incidentally the LBF in the region, aged thirty-four at the time, had no children, the Department I leader ten years older had two only. It did not appear that a particularly good example was being set at the top.

From the foregoing, it seems clear that the NSDAP had simply misunderstood the population statistics in the first place, as it eventually discovered for itself. As Müller suggested, and Staff Office research confirmed, the smaller family was simply becoming the fashion on the land as it had already done in the towns. Of course, this is not to say that the Party did not have other good reasons for the Erbhof legislation, as it favoured the peasantry as a conservative bulwark: but it does mean that in terms of population statistics the EHG was rather worse than useless.

1. As one enthusiastic writer once put it in 1937, the German future would be determined by how much rural spirit could be re-awakened:
Quoted in Drescher "Agrarökonomik und Agrarsoziologie" p.80
2. WB 2nd August 1933
3. WB 9th August 1933
4. Verhey p.43
5. Lbsch Rhineland Admin Section to Department I 16th September 1935:
HSA (D) 1023
6. KBF Euskirchen to Lbsch Rhineland 6th November 1935: HSA (D) 1028:
"We've got a bird" has the figurative meaning in German slang "We're completely dippy"
7. "Gesetze über die Feiertage" draft: BA-R43 I/1468
8. V.B. 3rd October 1933 from which the description of the Bückeberg meeting is also taken
9. V.B. 3rd October 1933
10. Verhey p.61
11. Ibid p.62
12. Ibid p.59
13. Vide the programme for this part of the Assembly proceedings from
12th - 14th November 1934: HSA (D) 1146
14. V.B. 4th October 1937
15. "Vermerk zur Geschichte des Landerbhofgerichtes" 1934: GSA p.133/473
16. In July 1932 the NS got 45.2% of all votes cast in the region: Verhey
p.14
17. "Richtlinien für die Beauftragten der Fachschaft für Brauchtum und Bauernkultur" from LBF Rhineland 7th March 1934: HSA (D) 1023
18. Lbsch Rhineland to OBF Irrel 15th December 1936: HSA (D) 1058
19. Folklore Commissioner Rhineland to Lbsch Rhineland 3rd December 1936:
Ibid
20. "NS Landpost" 29th May 1935

21. Haidn Circular 18th March 1935: HSA (D) 1023
22. "Zeitungsdienst des RNS No. 154 13th July 1937
23. "Anordnung betreffend bäuerliche Web und Stickmuster" 12th December 1934: HSA (D) 866
24. LBF Rhineland to KBFs 8th December 1936: HSA (D) 1023
25. "NS Landpost" 16th October 1936 "Erbhofübergabe wird zur Dorfffeier"
26. Or 150 years for border areas: "Richtlinien für die Ehrung alteingessener Bauerngeschlechter" 13th December 1934: HSA (D) 866 Decree No.
27. 25th August 1933: LA 301/4089
28. See "Hege des Blutes und der Sippen" "Dienstnachrichten des RNS" No. 23 24th June 1939: HSA (D) 866
29. "Richtlinien" above cit.
30. 40 families in Thuringia were so honoured: "Zeitungsdienst des RNS" No. 253 5th November 1937
31. Department I Goslar to Lbsch Rhineland describing the ceremony 16th July 1936: HSA (D) 1023
32. The word used here was "Sippe" which means "clan", although "Geschlecht" roughly equivalent to "extended family" was sometimes also employed officially: the latter expression may possibly give a more accurate impression of how widely the net was cast to honour relatives.
33. Lbsch Rhineland Section VIII to Department I leader 5th July 1937: HSA (D) 866
34. Lbsch Württemberg Department I to Admin. Office Goslar 28th June 1939: LUD 1625/K 710
35. Admin. Office Goslar to Lbsch Württemberg 3rd June 1939: Ibid
36. Bauer to Lbsch Württemberg 14th May 1935: LUD 1631/K 710
37. LBF Thüringia to Admin. Office Goslar 22nd September 1937 and 9th November 1937: BA-R16/23
38. Section leader II H Kbsch Eukirch-Mosel to Lbsch Rhineland 18th February

- 1936: HSA (D) 1051
39. Lbsch Kurhessen to Lbsch Rhineland 10th November 1934: HSA (D) 1040
40. KBF Cochan-Zell to Lbsch Rhineland 18th January 1937 asking for travelling expenses for such visits: HSA (D) 1051
41. Lbsch Rhineland to Kreisbsch Niederberg 20th March 1935: HSA (D) 1017
42. Lbsch Rhineland to Kreisbsch Niederberg 6th February 1937: HSA (D) 1017
43. Vide Lbsch Rhineland to Prussian State Archives Düsseldorf 17th April 1936: Ibid
44. KBF Gladbach-Grevenbroich-Neuss to Lbsch Rhineland 26th May 1936 with list of antique chests, clocks, coats-of-arms etc. owned by peasants in his area: HSA (D) 1058
45. RNS Dienstnachrichten No. 15, 18th April 1936: copy in HSA (D) 1010/1014
46. "Wochenblatt der Lbsch Württemberg" 18th May 1935 "Dem Bauern seine Ehr"
47. Folklore Commissioner Rees and Dinslaken circular to schools January 1935: HSA (D) 1023
48. The respective proportions being 36:42: Schoenbaum p.3
49. The names for January to December inclusive were Hartung, Hornung, Lenzing, Ostermond-Wonnemond, Brachet, Heuert, Ernting, Scheiding, Gilbhardt, Nebelung and Julmond, none of which meant anything to contemporary Germans
50. Darré to LGF's 24th September 1931: ND 142
51. Quoted in Darré to LGF's 26th January 1933: ND 140
52. Darré to LGF's 22nd August 1931: ND 142
53. Ibid
54. Darré to LGF's 30th January 1932: ND 145

55. Hitler's speech at the Harvest Festival 1933: V.B. 3rd October 1933
56. Meinberg "Diener des Volkes": V.B. 1st January 1935
57. Darré to LGFs Weimar: V.B. 9th February 1935
58. Verhey p.84
59. RNS Admin. Office Goslar to REM 12th August 1935: HSA (S) 653/E 130/IV
60. The programmes for "Work Evenings" are given in A. Koeppens "Das Deutsche Landfrauenbuch" p.233
61. In autumn 1923 the average age of all members in one sample study was 28: M. Kater "Zur Soziographie der frühen NSDAP" in VJH" April 1971, p.157
62. In Koblenz-Trier and Württemberg-Hohenzollern the Party membership was below average, but 45% of the actual adherents were under thirty years old: Schoenbaum pp.39-40
63. Reported in WB 5th July 1933
64. "Unterweisung in Volks - und Staatsbürgerskunde in den landwirtschaftlichen Lehranstalten": Ministerialblatt 25th November 1933
65. Verhey p.88
66. Huber "Bauerntum und Bauernbildung" quoted in Ibid p.85
67. It is not suggested here that all the works shown are so describable, "Der Bauernkrieg" by Professor Günther Franz is the standard book on its subject in modern Germany; but the general impression given is of a slant in one direction.
68. Verhey p.85
69. KBF Niederberg to Ibsch Rhineland 30th March 1936 describing the examination of three apprentices: HSA (D) 127
70. The conference recommendations for a course are published in "Auf dem Wege zur völkischen Schule", published by the RNS in 1939
71. Ibsch Mecklenburg to REM 27th November 1934: BA-NS26/955
72. Peasants were expected to contribute "voluntarily" potatoes, flour etc.
73. WB 25th October 1933

74. Vollmer "Volksopposition im Polizeistaat" p.115
75. Verband to Bauer 7th January 1939: NSA 331 B.61
76. KBF Hamlin/Bad Pyrmont to Kreisleitung and Verband 27th March 1939:
Ibid
77. Kbsch Hamlin-Bad Pyrmont to Bauer 26th October 1937: NSA 331 B.50
78. KBF Hamlin-Bad Pyrmont to OBF Herzen 14th April 1934: NSA 331 B.I
79. Lbsch Württemberg to RNS Admin. Office Goslar 18th October 1934:
ADC Reichsnährstand B
80. Lbsch Westphalia to RNS Admin. Office Goslar 21st August 1939 and
17th November 1939: Ibid
81. Copy of the questionnaire in BA-R22/2134
82. Deputy LBF Lower Saxony to KBFs March 1937: BA-R16/28
83. OBF Greiben to Kbsch Niederberg 8th August 1935: HSA (D) 130
84. LBF Lower Saxony to KBFs January 1935: BA-R16/28
85. As he had failed to contribute to Winter Help he was held to have
neglected his duty towards the RNS
86. Department I Goslar to Lbsch Weser-Ems April 1938: Ibid
87. Kbsch Bussen to Lbsch Württemberg 19th May 1938: LUD 13/K 710
88. "Neue Zürcher Zeitung" 21st December 1930
89. Darré "Berichte über meine Eindrücke im verschiedenen Gauen während
meiner Reise" 6th December 1931: ND 128
90. Hitler, Himmler and Goebbels were themselves all members of Catholic
families
91. Darré to Goering 1st November 1936: ND 146
92. Darré to personal friend 1st March 1937: ADC Reichsnährstand Darré
93. Willikens to Darré 31st December 1937: ADC Reichsnährstand Willikens
94. "Vorwärts" 27th December 1932: the quotation was from "The Myth
of the Twentieth Century"
95. Brozsat pp.414/5
96. Vollmer "Volksopposition im Polizeistaat" pp.177/185

97. Bürgermeister Bäderich to Lbsch Rhineland 25th April 1935:
HSA (D) 1023
98. This apparently curious designation is a reference to the introduction of feudalism and the consequent destruction of the free peasantry attributed to the Frankish kings by some NS writers
99. Hermann defeated the three legions sent to Germany by Tiberius in A. D. 9 at the Battle of the Teutoburger Forest
100. "NS Landpost" July 1934: "Das Sachsen-Mal beim Verden a. d. Aller"
101. W. Kinkel in "Bauerntum und S.S." "Odal" Heft IV 1936 p.247
102. Darré to LGFs at Weimar: V.B. 11th February 1935
103. Later speech by Darré at Weimar conference: Ibid 12th February 1935
104. From a list in ND 130
105. Report Lbsch Rhineland Blutsfragen section 14th December 1937:
HSA (D) 1044
106. Admin. Office Department I Goslar to Lbsch Rhineland 14th August 1937: HSA (D) 854
107. Youth office to KBF Hamlin/Bad-Pyrmont 24th December 1936: NSA 331 B.I
108. Lbsch Rhineland to Bürgermeister 19th March 1936: HSA (D) 1043
109. Darré "Die Frau im Reichsnährstand" Odal 1934 Heft 9 p.148
110. "Der Rheinische Bauernstand" 13th October 1934: HSA (D) 1140
111. "Race" in this context meant Nordic, Westphalian, Alpine, Slav or Mediterranean, the five races allegedly comprising the German people: K. Kummer "Der Bauer im Staat" in Clauss "Der Bauer im Umbruch der Zeit" p.54
112. The description of this examination is taken from T. Viernstein "Die biologisch-erbbiologische Untersuchung der Erbhofbauern" published by Bavarian Ministry of the Interior Health Department 1935 pp.5/6 and 21/4
113. Lbsch Bavaria Circular to Bauern July 1935: HSA (D) 1042

114. Lbsch Rhineland to Admin. Office Goslar 4th December 1937: HSA (D) 1044
115. Lbsch Saarland Circular October 1935: Ibid
116. Kbsch Bergheim to "Wochenblatt der Lbsch Rhineland" 1st March 1936 mentions that a vocational course had included inspecting a sanatorium
117. H. Gauch "Die Germanische Odal - oder Allod Verfassung" p.6
118. "Gesetz zur Verhinderung erbkranken Nachwuchses"
119. Cabinet minutes 14th July 1933: BA-R43 I/1464
120. Minister of Justice Württemberg to State Ministry of Interior 3rd October 1934 made this point regarding hereditary disease in a Bauer's family: HSA (S) 321/E 130/IV
121. Public health doctor to State Ministry of Interior Württemberg 20th June 1934 with this suggestion, prompted by his experience of farms accepted as Erbhöfe; in one case there were three idiots in the family, in another two schizophrenics: HSA (S) 321/E 130/IV
122. According to Herr Kahlke: personal interview
123. "Wochenblatt der Lbsch Württemberg" 25th November 1935: LUD 1625/K 710
124. Photos and details of the exhibition in September 1935: LUD 1666/K 710
125. Admin. Office Goslar to Lbsch Rhineland 16th July 1936 gave the programme for such an event and stated in passing "Any clan under the sterilisation law cannot be considered": HSA (D) 866
126. Most contemporary books or articles on race in Germany ascribed Nordic blood to some 55/60% of the German population e.g. "Der Bauer im Staat" p.54
127. "6 Jahre Neubauern Auslese"
128. Lbsch Rhineland to leader 19th October 1935: HSA (D) 1051
129. "Blutsfragen" Section leader to Admin. Office Goslar 9th November 1936: HSA (D) 1023. The S.S. applied very strict criteria for choosing recruits and their brides through its Race and Settlement

Office, whose leader until February 1938 was Darré himself.

130. "Begriff und Wesen des Völkischen" p. 61. "A German High-School Teacher"
131. Darré to LGFs meeting 9th February 1935: V.B. 11th February 1935
132. From 11.4 per 1000 people in 1921 to 3.5 per 1000 in 1933: "Stat. Jahrbuch 1936" pp.35/7
133. Ibid p.11
134. Ibid p.13
135. H. Rechenbach "Bauernschicksal ist Volkesschicksal" in Clauss "Der Bauer im Umbruch der Zeit" pp. 7 and 16
136. The net reproduction rate was 1.448 in the 1880s but by 1932 had declined to 0.624: C.W. Guillebaud "The Social Policy of Nazi Germany" p.101
137. "Der Geburtrückgang und seine Bekämpfung"
138. For Prussia the respective figures for rural and urban areas were 251.8 and 131.6: Borsig "Reagrarisierung Deutschlands?" p.82
139. For parishes with less than 2000 population the live birthrate was 20.9 per 1000, whereas in cities of 100,000 population or more the corresponding figure was 14.7 only: "Statistisches Jahrbuch" 1936 p.38
140. V.B. 3rd October 1933: Darré uttered similar sentiments on the same occasion
141. Cabinet minutes 26th September 1933: BA-R43 I/1465
142. "Ideengeschichte" p.126
143. 54% in the Anerbenrecht districts, 52% in the Realteilung areas: C. von Dietze "Bäuerliches Erbhofrecht und Bevölkerungspolitik" in "Odal" July 1933 pp.8/9
144. "Geburtminderung durch das Erbhofgesetz?" in "Die Dorfkirche" May 1934 Heft 5
145. One LBF pointed to the recent history of insecurity in Germany.

World War, inflation and the economic depression as factors working to produce a feeling that fewer children in such a world was better: Wagner LBF Hessen-Nassau to RNS Berlin 24th January 1938: ADC Reichsnährstand Wagner

146. K. Woltenmath "Die historischen Quellen des Erbhofgesetzes und seine Probleme" p.55
147. His work is summarized in "Ein Sterbender Bauernhof" (1935) and "Die biologische Lage des Bauerntums" (1937)
148. The exact figures were as follows:- (R = rural, U = urban)

| <u>Area</u> | <u>1933</u> | <u>1935</u> | <u>1936</u> |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Brandenburg (R) | 14.0 | 19.0 | 18.2 |
| Grenzmark/W. Posen (R) | 19.1 | 23.3 | 22.9 |
| Greater Berlin (U) | 8.7 | 13.9 | 14.7 |

As can be seen only in Berlin was the rate still rising in 1936, in the rural districts it had begun to fall back again: LBF to Darré with above statistics etc. 24th January 1938: ADC Reichsnährstand Martin Wendt

149. See LBF Hessen-Nassau to RNS Berlin 24th January 1938: ADC Reichsnährstand Wagner and LBF Rhineland to RNS Berlin 15th February 1938: HSA (D) 1154
150. Willikens to Darré 31st December 1937: ADC Reichsnährstand Willikens
151. Report 2nd February 1939: HSA (D) 854
152. LBF Kurmark to Darré 29th January 1938: ADC Reichsnährstand Martin Wendt
153. Willikens to Darré 31st December 1937: ADC Reichsnährstand Willikens
154. Württemberg government conference 20th September 1933: HSA (S) 343/E 130/IV
155. Report 2nd February 1939: HSA (D) 854
156. Quoted in Ibid

157. Kbsch Hof-Saale to Lbsch Bavaria January 1938: BA-R2/18291
158. Similarly infant mortality, which in Koblenz-Trier was 8.6%:
Eltz-Rübenach to Darré 26th February 1938: ADC Reichsnährstand
Eltz-Rübenach
159. Ibid
160. Eltz-Rübenach to RNS Berlin 15th February 1938: HSA (D) 854
161. LBF Hessen-Nassau to Darré 29th January 1938: ADC Reichsnährstand
Wagner
162. Eltz-Rübenach to RNS Berlin 15th February 1938: HSA (D) 854
163. Report 2nd February 1939: HSA (D) 854
164. Although of course the intention of the Act was to make things
better
165. Report 22nd August 1938: HSA (D) 1154

Chapter XIV: The NS Settlement programme: its principles, organization and achievements

Settlement in the east was not exactly a new idea in Germany in 1933, and as will be seen the NSDAP could quote precedents for its desire to fill up the empty spaces in that area produced by Germany's industrialization in the second part of the nineteenth century, although earlier measures had also contributed something to migration from the region. In Prussia land reform had been instituted during and immediately after the war against Bonaparte by Stein and Hardenberg: these had led to the paradoxical position that measures designed to assist the growth of a free peasantry by means of land reform actually resulted in many peasants losing their land. Under-capitalized at the time of emancipation, they often had to sell out to estate-owners. Sering estimated that all in all the peasants lost 1.6 million Ha in the nineteenth century in Prussia.¹

To this was added after 1870 the growing industrialization in the western half of the country, which acted as a lure to farmworkers and the dispossessed peasants and their sons. The net effect was a steady movement from east to west, the size of which can be gauged from the fact that in five eastern provinces nearly two and three quarter million people were registered as a net population loss between 1841 and 1910, at a time of growth for the country as a whole.² To replace migrating labourers the estate-owners came to utilize foreign workers, mainly Polish, from the 1860's onwards: this tendency became so pronounced that Bismarck banned any further importation in 1886.³ He resigned in 1890 and the movement recommenced; by 1914 one seventh of all agricultural labourers in Germany were Polish.⁴ This led to some lively reaction among conservative groups in Germany, who saw their own landed population being transformed into an urban proletariat, or emigrating to the U.S.A., while their places on the land were increasingly taken up by aliens.⁵ As a consequence legislation to assist the settlement of

Germans in the eastern regions was brought in under the aegis of a Prussian Colonization Commission: this body was provided with the necessary finance to enable it to buy up large estates in areas with high percentages of Polish nationals and divide the acquired land into plots for Germans.⁶ This simply did not catch on, partially because Polish banks also bid for the same land, which pushed up the price very sharply;⁷ the movement remained on a small scale, but the idea of breaking up non-viable estates to provide a numerous peasantry in order to protect the frontiers had been born.⁸

The war actually intensified settlement propaganda, chiefly in order to maintain morale in the trenches:⁹ the Reichstag formed a committee for the matter in 1915 and in June 1918 published a draft Bill which Hindenburg advocated in writing the same year as a means of reviving the "flagging strength" of the Army.¹⁰ The necessity of keeping the troops quiet whilst awaiting demobilisation seems to have been his main motive in issuing a statement early in 1919 to the Army containing extravagant promises about the size of post-war settlement plans, in which phrases such as "hundreds of thousands of places" were employed.¹¹ An added incentive for new schemes was the heavy loss of territory in the border areas caused by the cession of land to Poland, now created as an independent state by the Treaty of Versailles; this had the double effect of limiting Germany's capacity for self-sufficiency, and also handed over to Poland approximately two thirds of all holdings created by new settlement programmes before the War since these had been in the areas now ceded to the Poles.¹² These factors in combination conspired to produce the Settlement Act of 1919.

Settlement under Weimar

(i) The Act as produced owed much to the work of Max Sering;¹³ its intention of furthering resettlement in the east was complemented by the Homestead (Heimstätte) Act of 1920, modelled on similar legislation in the U.S.A. in 1862.¹⁴ The standard adopted was the creation of holdings of

60 Morgen (15 Ha) in size, since anything less was considered to be non-viable in view of the relatively poor soil. The chief source for land to promote the scheme was to be the big estates, particularly those in hereditary entailment; the Weimar Constitution foresaw the end of this arrangement in the laconic phrase "The entailments (Fideikomnisse) are to be dissolved."¹⁵ The Settlement Act allowed for private companies to be formed which would be able to purchase the necessary land: to ensure a ready supply it was enacted that in all districts where farms over 100 Ha in size comprised ten per cent of all agricultural land the owners of these were to surrender one third of all land, which they had possessed in 1907. Thus in theory a large-scale programme could be launched on the newly-acquired land to repopulate the areas and hold back the Poles.¹⁶

(ii) Unfortunately expectations exceeded results: the total amount of land theoretically available under the provisions of the 1919 Act was nearly one and a half million Ha but from 1919 to 1928 only 27.5% of this figure actually came onto the market for sale.¹⁷ This seems to have been due to the very slow winding-up of the hereditary entailments: a Prussian ordinance of 1919 laid down that these were to be abolished by 1st January 1924, otherwise they would be terminated by official order. By 1930 however progress had been so slow that the Prussian government decreed that all existing entailments would lapse automatically on 1st July 1938.¹⁸ Between 1929 and the NS accession a further 116,000 Ha were purchased by settlement companies from the estates:¹⁹ how little was achieved in the programme in terms of changing the pattern of land ownership in the east is obvious from the statistics dealing with the percentage of land comprehended on estates of 100 Ha or over for the seven eastern regions most concerned: between 1925 and 1933 not one of these showed a decrease of more than 8.6% in favour of smaller holdings, and the average change was less than 6%.²⁰ This seems to have been due to obstruction by officials of noble birth of execution of government

intentions, plus the friction between Prussia and the Reich at high levels.²¹

There were other factors in the situation which tended to hold back a really large-scale programme; Germany had an inflation in 1923 and severe economic difficulties later. This naturally worked against the allocation of financial resources, although between 1924 and 1930 Prussia did devote 273 Million RM to the schemes:²² although as against the lack of capital it must be admitted that land prices did drop sharply during the Depression, from 942 RM per Ha in 1929 to 643 RM in 1932.²³ In retrospect however it does not appear that a very large proportion of the national income was used for settlement purposes under the Republic. A second point working against the projects was the extreme fickleness of public interest, as evidenced by the number of holdings created in terms of yearly averages. Wartime propaganda had so worked that between 1919 and 1924 there was a ready supply of applications for holdings, but from the mid-twenties this fell off, and then with the onset of unemployment in the cities began to rise again.²⁴ Of course, the decreasing price of land may have been a factor here, but an impression is given on looking at the whole period 1919-1932 that demands for settlement rose in direct relation to a lack of security in the towns. In sum, the settlement programme had been on a relatively small scale under the Republic, but c. 1932 public demand for a greater effort was increasing:²⁵ the government of von Papen reacted accordingly.²⁶

(iii) In assessing the part which unemployment played in influencing public opinion, it has to be borne in mind that in 1932 no one knew that the unemployed would ever be taken on again in industry; as a consequence of rationalization in modern factories they might well be permanently out of work unless some other means of giving them something to do were found. Moreover, settlement, even if it did not take up the city unemployed, could at least stop an increase in their numbers by keeping the rural population in agriculture and thus preventing any further landflight. As evidence of

these two motives, the petition handed in to the government by the Trades Unions in August 1932 may be cited, since it spoke openly of settlement, which it wished to further, as a measure against rural migration.²⁷ The following month Max Sering addressed a sociological conference in Dresden, in the course of which he estimated that one half of the present unemployed would never again find work in industry:²⁸ as a remedy he was clearly convinced that internal colonization was the best, as at an agricultural meeting in February 1933 he gave it as his opinion that one million people could now be settled on the land.²⁹

To the factors of unemployment, as a reason for advocating such measures, may be added that of the world situation as a whole: the slump had increased Protectionism at an international level which seemed to suggest that the internal market should be stressed.³⁰ In one sense therefore settlement and autarky cannot be separated; the drive toward the second logically entailed the first.

Finally, nervousness over the frontiers had not subsided by any means at this period. The Oberpräsident of Upper Silesia was at pains to write about Polish nationalism in his area in June 1931, pointing out that at Oppeln the Polish People's Party had obtained as many as 1023 votes in five particular wards in which the German Zentrum had got only 917 at the same elections (September 1930).³¹ By April of the following year the old question of Polish land purchases in the east was so urgent that a general conference of Prussian government representatives concerned, plus delegates from the Reich Ministries of the Interior and of Defence, and the Osthilfe Commissioner, participated. Polish banks and co-operatives were said at this meeting to be buying up more land than ever: the banks granted loans to prospective purchasers only on condition that their children attended Polish schools. The conference considered as a possible reprisal the exclusion from Osthilfe of any such farms sold to Poles: this was not held to be very

efficacious as a measure as the Poles were warning their own nationals not to accept Osthilfe anyway. It could only be suggested finally that settlement companies used their legal rights to priority of purchase at land sales.³²

Thus to the traditional fears of Polish nationalism was added unemployment in the cities and the importance of the internal market; the whole situation c. 1932 is perhaps best summed up by the Osthilfe Commissioner Schlange Schöningen in his remarks to the President that "in the strong will to internal colonization is manifested the national desire for self-recovery ... It goes... through all parties and social classes of our nation."³³ The NS programme for settlement cannot in sum be seen as a break with tradition, an innovation, nor as being confined to that political movement. Almost everyone in the country was in favour.³⁴

The NSDAP Programme: its formulation and principles, and the question of land-supply

(i) The Party had for a long time prior to 1933 displayed some interest in settlement; in 1924, for example, its deputies in the Reichstag moved a resolution calling for a programme in the east to group settlers around small country towns in farm focal population points, demanding government credits to finance it.³⁵ The Party Programme of March 1930 had called for settlement in general, which was seen in conjunction with the adoption of some measure similar to the EHG; farmers' sons now unable to inherit the family holding would be favoured in the new settlement programme, as would farm-workers, since it would be used as a stepping-stone by the more vigorous among them to achieve Bauer status.³⁶ In order to produce a more detailed plan of action Darré set up a department "Ostland" in the Agrarian Office headed by a specialist named Jurda.³⁷

By 1st June 1933 the RBF was able to issue guide-lines for the new policy to all settlement authorities and credit institutions.³⁸ It was now

to become the duty of the Reich to strengthen the agricultural community, in particular the Bauer: the twin goals to be achieved were to be independence in food supply and the preservation of that class which formed the life-source of the nation. It followed from this that only the best racial elements were to be encouraged, so that future generations would be strong enough to cultivate the soil. In the repopulation of the east at least one quarter of the places should go to aspiring settlers from South and West Germany: there is no doubt that the main movement was to be west to east in population terms:³⁹ nonetheless certain other border areas, such as North West Germany and the Bavarian Ostmark, were also to be included according to Darré's guide-lines. That the main emphasis was to be on the eastern frontiers doubtless had a political foundation, judging from the comment of a contemporary writer, that the general concept was to build "a living boundary wall against the Slavs pressing forward."⁴⁰ New villages were to be formed upon the basis of farms of mixed sizes, although the peasant holding was normally to be preferred. On 5th December 1933 it was announced that 90,000 new holdings were to be created in four years:⁴¹ this was an ambitious target in the light of Weimar's achievements.

The necessary administrative measures forming the foundation for the new programme were speedily introduced: on 14th July Darré presented a Bill which gave the Reich alone the authority to carry it out; the NS hoped to obviate the friction which had existed between Prussia and the central government under the Republic.⁴² The existing private settlement companies, the instrument for actually placing the settlers, were to be subjected to critical scrutiny: in fact, of the more than one hundred operating in January 1933 over sixty were eliminated as not efficient and the rest came under the Reich⁴³ (REM). Unity was created in this way with the state as the executive authority. Parallel to the activities of Darré went those of the Minister of Labour: on 14th July Seldte introduced a Bill giving both

the state governments and himself the power to name whole regions specifically as settlement areas: the basic idea behind this move was to promote uniform land-procurement in these districts.⁴⁴

(ii) As stated, Darré wished the peasant holding to be preferred normally; some thought as to the best size for this had been given in the "Ostland" planning section quite early, and 60 Morgen was suggested as the optimum.⁴⁵ No firm decision had been reached, however, since in 1934 Darré was still seeking advice on the subject from Willikens.⁴⁶ The matter was delegated to an official, who advocated the foundation of a "healthy Bauern-tum" as preferable to "striving after record figures": the holding should be large enough to ensure that there was no perpetual land hunger in that family.⁴⁷ To be economically viable in the east almost certainly entailed fifteen Ha, and to provide the envisaged 90,000 places at this average would mean the acquisition of 1,350,000 Ha of land. This obviously raised the question of what source could possibly supply so much, since the Republic had only been able to obtain some six hundred thousand in thirteen years.

In his guide-lines Darré had envisaged the improvement of waste land and the winning of new land from the sea. These seem very unlikely to have been large enough as sources of supply, however, and it appears much more probable that he really intended to take what he wanted from the large estates. As will be recalled, efforts to do this under Weimar had possibly played some role in unseating Brüning: that the estates were seen as providers at the time of Darré's accession can be easily deduced from the calculations of the Settlement Planning Office. In December 1933 it circulated a report based on the assumption that the 90,000 projected new holdings would require $1\frac{1}{2}$ million Ha in the coming four years, which it linked with the amount of land in farms of over 100 Ha.⁴⁸ This logical connection was based on current thinking; the committee investigating Osthilfe expenditure had underlined that in re-turn for public money the estates should render something themselves, namely

land for settlement.⁴⁹

(iii) There is no doubt whatever that Darré was of this opinion also, and indeed went much further: he gave an interview on 27th April 1933 and spoke of the East Elbian owners throwing in their lot and 90% of their land with the New Germany, and becoming the protectors of peasant homesteads as the nobility had done in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries.⁵⁰ It can also be shown conclusively that he disliked the Junkers very much and wished to destroy them as a class. Before proceeding with the evidence for this, it has to be made clear that there was no intention on his part of abolishing large estates as such: the March 1930 programme, the preamble to the EHG, Darré's own commentary on the "Neubildung" Act of July 1933 all make quite clear that the NSDAP saw a mixture of sizes as the best solution, since it corresponded to climatic etc. conditions.⁵¹ Darré's prejudice was against the estate-owners in the east alone, since he held that unlike other parts of Germany the big farms there were the result of political and not economic developments. He chose a peasant meeting at Starkow (Pomerania) to air his views on the subject: a subsequent article in "Odal" seems to have been a reprint of this speech.⁵² Darré pointed out in his address that there was no reason why the eastern regions should not support a thriving peasantry, since history showed that they had done once, that is before the Stein/Hardenberg laws: only these and not economics had driven the smaller-scale landowners away. Now the repopulation of the area by peasants would be the first step in the decentralization of German industry: he also referred to the Osthilfe scheme and the huge public subsidies given to estate-owners as a proof of the latter's inefficiency; he dismissed eastern estates "from the standpoint of sober economic viability."

The original speech caused a minor sensation; one English newspaper declared that "War was declared upon the most powerful of the great landowning barons."⁵³ The V.B. greeted it enthusiastically with a review headed "East

Elbian Twilight:" ⁵⁴ this spoke of the "feudal economy" which would now disappear as a new aristocracy arose in the course of time from "Blood and Soil." "Odal" cited altogether $5\frac{1}{2}$ pages of reviews of the speech, including comments from abroad. It seemed as though the death-knell of the Junkers had sounded, as after all, both Darré and Rosenberg, the V.B.'s editor, were relatively important figures in the Party. Moreover, the RBF had already been at work behind the scenes, for as early as September 1933 he had sent a letter to the Chancellery enclosing statistics which proved, he felt, that the existence of the east Elbian estates could not be economically justified.⁵⁵ He received a reply to the effect that Hitler had taken cognisance of his communication with interest.⁵⁶

Darré and his allies had other grievances which they could muster against the Junkers: in the first place, they employed foreign labour whereas peasants did not.⁵⁷ They were also said to be selfish, which led in turn to political unreliability.⁵⁸ In East Prussia there was considerable unrest among the landowners in mid-1933, possibly connected with the fall of Hugenberg, who was being represented to the peasants and settlers as the only true saviour of agriculture by the Junkers.⁵⁹ Arrests followed in several localities.⁶⁰ This may have been in Darré's mind when he told the landowners that they must accept the NSDAP and its policy of furthering the peasantry if they wished to continue to hold their estates: he suggested in his speech that they recognize the fact that the Party had saved them from Marxism.⁶¹

It seems very likely that Darré would have been pleased to have seen the back of the Junkers altogether; all he ever managed in practice was to take land from them as a quid pro quo in debt-relief schemes.⁶² As a class, however, the estate-owners remained virtually untouched despite his animosity. Since Darré was, after all, the Minister responsible it seems fairly clear that he must have encountered some pretty formidable opposition to his wishes: this appears to have come from several quarters, notably Hindenburg, Goering,

Himmler and the Wehrmacht in general.

As far as the President was concerned he was a landowner himself: in 1927 he had been presented with an estate at Neudeck by the country in recognition of his services.⁶³ He did not apparently desire to see any radical transformation of society in that part of the world, as he himself recorded. In a letter to the Chancellery in 1927 Hindenburg stated that he had not won the Battle of Tannenberg in order to overthrow the existing social structure in the east.⁶⁴ In early 1934 he used his position of influence on the side of the Junkers: two landowners hostile to Darré's settlement policy had written to him: one described the policy of selling off large pieces of estates for settlement purposes as economic folly, and insisted that one hundred thousand new places could not be created by a wave of the hand. Hindenburg promptly passed these communications on to Hitler for his information.⁶⁵ This must presumably have had some effect upon the Führer, especially as Himmler had already spoken up on behalf of the large estates. In early 1933 when a delegation of the Landowners Association visited the Chancellery it was received by Hitler who in the course of his speech touched on the question of the larger estates for which, he stated, the Reichsführer SS had recently spoken up.⁶⁶ As Himmler himself was a qualified agrarian expert, this advocacy was not unimportant.

It would seem that Goering also believed in maintaining the existing pattern of land ownership in the east; in a speech to the Pomeranian Landbund in March 1933 in Stettin he stated that one should not carry out settlement on the one hand and let other things become ruined: "One should first of all take care, that that which exists should remain."⁶⁷ This may be interpreted as a propaganda speech, of course, but the fact remains that the estates were not abolished. Equally interesting as evidence in this power-struggle is the relationship between the Junkers and the Wehrmacht. This had always been close and continued during the whole of the Third Reich:

twenty noble families from the east contributed 160 members of the General Staff in the Second World War.⁶⁸ This kind of connection may have played some part in preserving the estates: in 1937 Dr. Kummer, in a letter regarding the difficulty of acquiring land for S.S. settlement wrote that "The opinion has taken a firm footing in the Wehrmacht that the big estates are the best suppliers of the market."⁶⁹ There is no doubt that for rye and potatoes, staple foods in the Third Reich, there was an element of truth in this assumption.⁷⁰ Even if "best suppliers" was somewhat exaggerated, the big estates certainly played their part in food-production, as an empirical investigation carried out over the period 1924-9 showed conclusively.⁷¹ Because of this fact, and of the relationship between estate-owners and defence, the Wehrmacht's influence in helping to retain the larger farms may well have been considerable.

(iv) In summing-up the question of farm size and available land supply it is possible to come to two quite firm conclusions. Darré and the REM officials clearly wanted holdings to be large enough to be viable but small enough to rank as peasant farms: this is clearly shown in the repeated advocacy in the EHG and the settlement programme of the peasantry as such. Secondly, to have instituted a really large scale scheme on this basis would have necessitated the total breaking-up of the large estates, since there simply were no other large sources of supply in the east. It is clear that Darré would have been glad to see this dissolution take place, and that some other elements in the Party, for example the VB, also supported him in this as did some of his own staff.⁷² Opposition from influential quarters prevented this, so that land for settlement remained restricted, which of course made it expensive;⁷³ this point will be taken up further in another section dealing with settlement finance in general.

In actual practice Darré simply followed Weimar policy in land acquisition, using that offered by large estates in respect of debt-relief

or in accordance with the conditions about land surrender contained in the 1919 Act. Debt-settlement alone provided 80,000 Ha between 1st June 1933 and the same date in 1934:⁷⁴ in 1937 roughly five sixths of all land made available came from estates of 100 Ha or over in size.⁷⁵ This was a useful source of supply but in numerical terms a poor substitute for abolition of the East Elbian estates in toto, especially in view of the competition for space which settlement companies had to face in increasing intensity from the needs of factories, autobahnen and the Wehrmacht in the Third Reich. By January 1938 an official report was bemoaning the shortage and pointing out that the sellers market meant that only poor land was left for settlement purposes;⁷⁶ another difficulty arose from the fact that the well-managed estates could not be bought out as they were needed for the Erzeugungsschlacht: this ruled out expropriation, which as the report pointed out was the only alternative to purchase in the normal way.

The document is interesting for two reasons; firstly, settlement inability to compete in bidding for land was admitted quite frankly, and provides yet another instance of exactly how little priority was afforded to agriculture in the Third Reich in peacetime. Secondly, there is the point that the efficient estates were needed for the Erzeugungsschlacht: in other words, the purely practical considerations of saving currency etc. were recognized as taking precedence over any romantic notions about "Blood and Soil" or the rebuilding of the peasantry. Apart from the negation of Darré's guide-lines of 1933 contained in this premise, there is the additional point that the larger estates were accepted, when well-run, as an economic necessity in the east by the report, which provides additional evidence perhaps as to why, despite Darré's own antipathy towards them, they were never abolished.

As a final point in the whole question of land-availability the effect of the shortage upon those people accepted as settlers should be noted; in the period 1934-6 some 20,000 certificates entitling the holder to a new

farm under the settlement programme were issued, but only a little over half that number actually found a place.⁷⁷ The situation did not improve in this respect, judging from an REM letter in 1937 stating that it was becoming steadily harder to deal with would-be settlers already accepted by the RNS and issued with a certificate.⁷⁸ The whole question of settler choice will be examined in another section but it has to be stressed here in passing that possession of a piece of paper entitling one to a new farm and actually acquiring the land were two very different things.

Financial Problems in settlement and the frontier problem

(i) As far as finance for settlement is concerned, it has been pointed out already that the cost of land rose in the Third Reich; apart from competition between public bodies two other factors were involved, the debt-relief Act from Dr. Hugenberg and the EHG. The first of these was clearly bound to have some effect on land prices, since when the large estates were up to their ears in debt they were naturally more ready to sell strips of land than when relief had been afforded.⁷⁹ In this connection it is interesting to note that the biggest single yearly increase in land prices before 1938 came between 1934 and 1935, or exactly at the time when Hugenberg's legislation started to take effect.⁸⁰ As far as the Erbhofgesetz was concerned, this removed fifty-five per cent of all agricultural land from the market: of course this land was not in itself suitable for settlement anyway, since there is no point in displacing one peasant merely to make room for another, but the limitations of land available on the market as a result of the EHG inevitably pushed up the price of what was left. By 1938 this had become so obvious that an RNS leader, Reischle, advanced it as a factor in increased prices.⁸¹ Thus although settlement and the EHG complemented one another in theory as the twin pillars on which the revived peasantry could rely, in actual practice the second was counter-productive to the first. This created grave problems in land control, which are dealt with

here in Appendix K.

Apart from land the cost of building was a factor in the settlement programme; these seem to have remained relatively high during the period 1933-8.⁸² To this must be added new machinery and tools, plus stock: the first of these items alone was calculated to require 1,700 RM for the average holding.⁸³ The summation of that to the original purchase price for land and buildings combined resulted in a formidable figure; in 1933 the average cost of a new holding was 17,664 RM but five years later it was more than double.⁸⁴ Since all prospective farmers were expected to pay a ten per cent deposit on the land before moving in, this cost created problems.⁸⁵ In order to alleviate the financial burden various concessions were made, beginning with subsidies for the building costs, which varied according to size of the holding.⁸⁶ The balance of ninety per cent on the land could be paid off on a long-term basis at four per cent: this was staggered to give a transitional period for the first few years during which time interest rates were lower.⁸⁷ State aid to purchase tools and machinery was also forthcoming in the form of special discounts;⁸⁸ other financial assistance included reduced freight charges on building materials given in 1938.⁸⁹ Families with four or more children got a special reduction in interest rates on the loan granted towards installation costs.⁹⁰

Despite these various allowances finance remained a considerable problem: as early as 1934 the Landesbauernschaft in Bavaria was suggesting that more co-operative settlement should be carried out to reduce costs:⁹¹ this possible solution does not seem to have been acted upon to any great extent, although some activity along these lines has been recorded.⁹² But there is no doubt that the difficulty of finding capital seriously inhibited the programme, as was stressed by contemporary officialdom; in 1937 Willikens wrote of the capitalistic influence in settlement, and suggested that it must become possible for all wishing to become Bauern to do so:⁹³

the obvious implication is that it still was not possible. The Rhineland LBF reported at about the same time that S.S. men wishing to settle could not afford the ten per cent deposit.⁹⁴ Darré himself expressed disappointment with the whole results to date of the programme at the Peasants Assembly in 1938, and conceded that settlement was not entirely free from the taint of capitalism: the way should be clear for every suitable young man "even if he does not bring a penny of his own from home."⁹⁵

A glance at settler selection in 1938 showed why the RBF was so concerned in this respect; more than two thirds of all those accepted had 5,000 RM or more in the way of private resources and forty per cent had at least twice that sum.⁹⁶ As that was a considerable sum of money in a country like Germany in the thirties, it seemed clear that being relatively well-off was in itself a criterion for selection as a settler: of course NSDAP insistence upon a holding large enough to be viable played some part in this. It is not suggested here that this decision was incorrect, but obviously the greater the size of the farm the more capital was required to get it, which at a time of rising land prices and building costs had especial point. The NSDAP programme thus wore a capitalistic air almost inevitably.

(ii) The high cost of acquiring a new holding had obvious implications for those landworkers who aspired to the status of Bauer: it was that type whom the Party had specifically promised to aid in March 1930. The price of land was clearly of importance in this respect as von Rohr pointed out in 1934 in his memorandum to Hitler, when he drew attention to the possible effects of the EHG on prices.⁹⁷ Under the Republic the labourer had done quite well in terms of settler selection, as the proportion of all new farmers formerly in the farmworker category multiplied four times between 1926 and 1930.⁹⁸ Indeed, special financial encouragement had been granted in the latter year.⁹⁹ Now under the NSDAP the labourer found himself quite severely disadvantaged because of finance: this meant that even when he

could get a place it was on average much smaller. This was so marked that a reader of the "NS Landpost" was moved to ask the reason: the journal replied that landworkers were limited in management capability and also lacking in capital.¹⁰⁰ The point about ability may or may not have been true, but the remark about capital is surely revealing.

Even had the average landworker in the Third Reich been a skilful manager, the amount of money he was required to possess would have inhibited his rise in most cases: the cost of buildings for a holding in the 4 - 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ Ha category, after state aid, amounted to 4,400 RM, after which he had to pay ten per cent on the land, and buy stock and tools.¹⁰¹ As an actual example, a settlement village in Hessen-Nassau is informative: the scheme at Rierode appeared to have been based on holdings of 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ Ha each, which cost 8,900 RM for the buildings and 11/12,000 RM for land. On the first item a purchaser would have been obliged to pay approximately 3,600 RM and then over 1,000 RM as deposit for the land: this would have been well nigh impossible for a landworker in the same area, whose wages in 1937 were in the region of 1,200 RM yearly.¹⁰² Darré, opening the village, declared it to be "a witness to the Führer's agrarian policy":¹⁰³ this was indeed so, but not necessarily in the sense in which he meant those words. As a commentary on the landworkers' chances of becoming Bauern the official statistics for 1938 are revealing; of 2,115 successful applicants for places in that year only 342 were farm labourers.¹⁰⁴ This is quite inadequate measured against their total numbers in the country, which was about two million at this time.¹⁰⁵ For a Party which liked to fulminate against capitalism and speculation, the NSDAP had quite spectacularly failed to keep these issues out of their settlement programme.

(iii) As already mentioned the question of guarding the frontiers against the "oppressing Poles" had always been a large factor in the determination of any eastern settlement programme. A certain nervousness over this issue was

also evident throughout the period under review: as early as 1934 the RNS officials in the border regions were calling for a greater effort there; as one report pointed out the Poles were making great strides on their own side, including dissolving all estates of 200 Ha or over for settlement for peasant holdings, an interesting commentary on the NS programme.¹⁰⁶ From the Kurmark came a call to build a bulwark against the Poles who were "pressing forward."¹⁰⁷ At the beginning of 1936 the Ministry of Finance agreed to pay 20% of the cost of acquiring land in Polish border areas as an advance payment, and in 1937 extended this to the frontier areas abutting on Denmark and Czechoslovakia.¹⁰⁸ Apparently the Party officials in Silesia and the Kurmark, as well as those of the RNS, were also occupied with the question which by July 1937 was a matter of an actual decrease in population, not just a retarded resettlement programme.¹⁰⁹ When Goering was apprised of the situation, he said it was known to him already, and that he had placed contracts of a non-military nature there to try and stimulate industry.¹¹⁰ Significantly he did not even mention agricultural settlement, which suggests that not all leading members of the NSDAP shared Darré's views about the efficacy of this in promoting population shifts. In East Pomerania the migration from the area became so pronounced that a secret decree of 1937 actually forbade all movement to other regions.¹¹¹ The repopulation of the eastern part of Germany was simply not taking place at all.

Dr. Kummer was moved to suggest in 1935 that as much as 60% of all available finance for settlement should be devoted to the border regions;¹¹² he later stated that the Polish minority in Upper Silesia was growing so fast that without more settlement the whole province would be lost to Germany.¹¹³ These kind of fears gave rise to the feeling that the S.S. should be especially favoured in such areas as settlers, to build up racial/political strongpoints.¹¹⁴ By 1939 this had reached the point where a conference was held under the auspices of the S.S. organization, the Race and Settlement

Office (of which Darré had been head until February 1938) Obergruppenführer Pancke of this section was present, together with Backe and Willikens. Discussion revolved around the idea of creating a special kind of settlement farm (Wehrhof).¹¹⁵ This would be 30/50 Ha in extent and be jointly owned by two families, the heads of which would be first-class both racially and professionally: this appears to have meant that they would be farmers in the S.S., not just any member of that body: both Secretaries of State laid emphasis on the frontier problem and the consequent necessity of using the best quality peasants' sons from Lower Saxony. To subsidize their installation under such a plan the REM was ready to subscribe half a million RM.¹¹⁶ By this means the frontiers of the Reich were to be defended. It would appear that Polish settlement activity had played some part in bringing about the new NS concept: on their side of the border they had built new villages for settlers from which all those of German ethnic origin were barred; the Wehrhof was the NSDAP answer to this.¹¹⁷ This is a considerable departure from Darré's own views of settlement mainly as a means of moving the population from west to east by first establishing agricultural holdings and using them as focal points for local industry.¹¹⁸ The Wehrhof was a defence installation, albeit based on agriculture, but the criterion in the choice of settlers showed where the main emphasis was to be.

The presence of Backe at the meeting was probably not entirely coincidental; it was apparently under his influence that a Party member named Haase had produced plans for agricultural settlement at a conference in Hanover as early as November 1925, which, according to one historian, "read like a blueprint for later S.S. policy."¹¹⁹ In this connection, it should be said that Backe himself was born in Russia and came to Germany only after the First War:¹²⁰ he was on the staff of the Race and Settlement Office in 1933, becoming staff leader in 1937.¹²¹ Because of his Russian connections,

and his qualification as an agrarian adviser, he became regarded as an expert on the affairs of that country, which conceivably played a part in his being made Minister of Agriculture when Darré was dismissed in 1942, insofar as eastern colonization may have been in Hitler's mind when he appointed him. Testimony was given at Nuremberg that Backe was given all necessary advance information about Hitler's plans for the Russian invasion which the Ministry of Agriculture needed to know, under the condition that they should be kept secret from Darré, still officially Minister at that time.¹²² From the conference of February 1939 it would seem that Backe was coming more and more into the foreground, as the settlement programme as such was simply tailing off completely and defence was now priority number one.¹²³ Indeed, judged from the number of new settlers in 1937/8 the whole scheme appeared to have been abandoned in terms of a significant, large-scale economic enterprise.

A Sociological study of the actual Settlers

(i) In view of Darré's remarks in his guide-lines that only the best racial elements were to be chosen, it is hardly surprising that the selection procedure was rigorous in the extreme to discover the most suitable candidates, where the criteria for "suitable" included physical health, breeding, professional skill and character. A special office was at first instituted to carry this out but in 1935 it was abolished and the duty went over to the RNS:¹²⁴ this was the KBF usually, in conjunction with the Kreisleitung of the Party.¹²⁵ A questionnaire was devised for every applicant, which was a very formidable document requiring personal information of almost every imaginable kind on the whole family background.¹²⁶

All prospective settlers were required to be either married or engaged: the object of this was to ensure that plenty of children would be assured to carry on the settlement holding, most of which were Erbhöfe. In one case an engaged couple were only conditionally accepted in view of the bride's

age, there being no other objection to granting their application: the final permission was withheld until either a child was born or pregnancy could be proved.¹²⁷ One S.S. man was turned down because his wife had had a miscarriage with her third child.¹²⁸ The health of the applicant and his whole family was most severely tested, even that of his forbears being brought into question.¹²⁹ In the case of an application from a married man, the medical records of forty-two people were inspected before a permit could be issued. The official claim was in fact made that between 1933 and 1939 some two and a half million people's health was queried in respect of the 62,000 applications received.¹³⁰ Any kind of hereditary defect was sufficient to nullify a request, even evidence of suicide among the candidate's forbears:¹³¹ the criteria became so sharply applied that complaints arrived from various parts of the country that capable, but still unmarried, applicants were being too often rejected upon relatively slight grounds in this respect.¹³² Any person turned down was never given the reasons, incidentally, where health was the decisive factor; this was to avoid giving him an inferiority complex over his "racial health": where a prospective bride failed to pass the test however, the information was sometimes given to her fiancé, to enable him to avoid a racially unsound marriage.¹³³ All candidates required the normal certificate attesting the absence of "coloured or Jewish" blood in the family line since January 1st 1800, which was the normal EHG rule. This required a vast amount of research at the local office of the organization built up for this, or at the relevant Landesbauernschaft which had a special branch for racial questions. A specimen Table of Ancestors is attached from a contemporary publication, which chose Hitler's ancestors as the basis for its model.¹³⁴

Once in possession of the above facts about the candidate's health and racial qualities the KBF could reply affirmatively to the point in the questionnaire "Is reproduction racially desirable?" i.e. in terms of health.



Ahnentafel

für
(Familienname, Vornamen, bei Ehefrauen auch Mädchenname)

..... in
(Beruf) (Ort, Kreis, Land)

geboren am in

| Bestimmung der vorkommenden Ortsnamen | Kreis, Bezirk | Provinz, Land |
|---|------------------------|------------------|
| Braunau am Inn, Stadt..... | | Oberösterreich |
| Dietreichs, Dorf, Pfarre Döllersheim.. | Zwettl | Niederösterreich |
| Döllersheim, Dorf und Pfarre | " | " |
| Groß-Wolfsgerz, Dorf, Pfarre Sieben- linden..... | " | " |
| Kleinmotten, Dorf, Pfarre Döllersheim | " | " |
| Leonding, Gemeinde und Pfarre | Linz a. Donau | Oberösterreich |
| Motten, siehe Klein- | | |
| Spital, Dorf und Pfarre | Gmünd | Niederösterreich |
| Stronesz, Dorf, Pfarre Döllersheim... | Zwettl | " |
| Thauresz, Dorf, Pfarre Groß-Schönau | Gmünd | " |
| Thürnthäl, Dorf, Pfarre Fels a. Wagram | Kirchberg a. Wagram | " |
| Waltersschlag, Dorf, Pfarre St. Wolfgang | Gmünd | " |
| Windhag, Dorf, Pfarre St. Wolfgang | " | " |

Fortsetzungen bestehen zu Nr.

Fortsetzung zu Nr. der Ahnentafel des in

geboren am in

Unmerkfg.

Rechenbach

This, however, by no means decided the case; for more information was needed about character before a certificate could be issued. The local police chief was required to testify as to the candidate's record, his personal finance was scrutinized, as was the number of his illegitimate children, if any. More important still was the question of his politics, the opening question for the KBF being "Are the applicant and his wife/fiancée absolutely reliable in a political sense?"¹³⁵ War service and political affiliations had to be given, together with details of any membership of branches of the NSDAP, such as the Hitler Youth. On the back of the certificate eventually granted entitling the possessor to a settlement place were a number of stipulations regarding possible later withdrawal of such a permit: one of these quite explicitly gave cessation of political reliability as grounds.¹³⁶

Just how sensitive the RNS was in this respect was demonstrated in the case of a would-be settler in Oldenburg who, having got a certificate, was given permission to acquire an Erbhof near the border of Holland, which the Anerbengericht approved; some ten months later he was summoned to a discussion with a settlement adviser and asked to surrender his settlement place in favour of another peasant and take a holding in Pomerania, which he refused; he petitioned Celle on the grounds that he had been allowed a place originally by the Anerbengericht, which the RNS was now overruling, which, as he pointed out, created uncertainty as to who had the last word in these matters.¹³⁷ The jurists at Celle took the matter up with the appropriate RNS authority: after some months the answer was given that the peasant concerned was politically unreliable, as he was a member of a certain sect which until 1936 had used Dutch for its church services. According to the RNS "This fact alone justifies the rejection": the point was further made that the certificate granted to any settler gave authority to acquire a holding in a general sense, which did not mean he could go anywhere he wished in particular; the right to decide whether he was suitable for that

place still lay with the RNS.¹³⁸ The case was referred back to the courts in November 1939 and disappeared into some wartime limbo. Its interest lies in two aspects, firstly, the extreme sensitivity over border areas, even in the West, and the determination on the part of the RNS that all settlers must be above suspicion politically. Legally the authorities were justified in withdrawing permission to settle, under the Clause 5 (c) condition of the Certificate already referred to.

Once the strictness of the examination in all respects is considered, it becomes obvious that it must have been no easy matter to acquire a permit to settle. One contemporary writer claimed that two thirds of all applicants were rejected:¹³⁹ this does not, however, square with the official statistics, which show a somewhat higher acceptance rate.¹⁴⁰ One point which must be borne in mind here is the simple deterrent effect of the rigorous examinations, which must have played some part in keeping down the number of applicants, so that even the higher acceptance rate of the official figures does not necessarily imply that certificates were lightly granted.¹⁴¹ All available evidence seems to suggest that this was not the case, and that selection was meticulous and thorough in both health and political fields.

(ii) Not all emphasis was on these considerations however; among other aspects of the applicant reviewed was his professional ability, which was to a certain extent entailed by his automatically becoming a Bauer and being obliged therefore to meet the provisions of the FHG in terms of farm management. The inevitable consequence was a heavy bias in selection towards the more purely professional applicant who already had long agricultural experience. This is obvious from a study of the settler's former occupation: in 1937 as many as 95% had previously been employed in agriculture: indeed, nearly one half were farmers already.¹⁴² If the latter category is added to that of farmers' sons, then two thirds

of all applicants would be so comprehended. This proportion in fact rose steadily in the Third Reich; whereas in 1934 only 48% of new settlers were either farmers or farmers' sons, by 1937 this had risen to 67% as stated.¹⁴³ Under the NSDAP there was an undoubted increase in sheer professionalism in general in comparison to the situation under the Republic.¹⁴⁴ This took place despite the drop in the number of places for farmworkers already described, so that sociologically the average new settler after 1933 tended to be lower-middle rather than working class, from a peasant background and not a rural labourer's.

It is clear that the factor involved here was the NSDAP determination to further a healthy and economically viable peasantry, which entailed professional expertise: it would seem therefore that the general tendency in 1932 (described on Page 446) to regard settlement as a means of taking up the unemployed played no part in NS policy, although it doubtless prepared public opinion in general to accept propaganda for a settlement programme. The Weimar policy of installing people on the land because they were out of work played no part in Darré's attitude:¹⁴⁵ there is some evidence to suggest that this Republican approach had been misguided, since those settlers put in prior to 1933 soon ran into financial difficulties, to which lack of professional knowledge no doubt contributed. By December 1932 Schleicher's cabinet had to cut interest rates to help those in distress;¹⁴⁶ the NSDAP was compelled to carry this policy further and exempted existing settlers from all rent, interest and taxes.¹⁴⁷ In 1936 the position was reviewed to see if contributions could now be levied;¹⁴⁸ eventually new loans had to be made available to those older settlers still unable to meet private commitments (public debts were excluded).¹⁴⁹ It appears that previous governments were mistaken in their settler policy, in that unsuitable persons had been given places, and the NSDAP was at pains to avoid a similar error. The insistence upon professionalism provoked some Party trouble, in fact; in 1934 the S.A.

actually complained of hostile behaviour by the RNS towards it, in that so few of its members were being accepted.¹⁵⁰ Darré certainly had no bias against this body as such, but he seems to have regarded farming ability as simply more important.¹⁵¹

(iii) As far as geographical origin was concerned, a very clear pattern emerged over the period 1933/8, in that almost all came from the same region in which they were granted holdings; in 1934 the proportion so describable was officially calculated as three quarters.¹⁵² As far as settlers in the east were concerned, this turned out eventually to be an under-estimate, since the final percentage for the period 1933-8 was as high as 82.6. Most of the remainder (5.3%) came from South and West Germany;¹⁵³ at Darré's postwar trial it was alleged that these were mainly farmers from the latter areas uprooted by Wehrmacht land procurement.¹⁵⁴ This seems, therefore, to have represented the only west to east movement, albeit involuntary: the original talk of a change in the pattern of population distribution in the Reich, so stressed in Darré's guide-lines, was never to materialize in any significant manner. It must be made clear here that the NSDAP did not change matters in this respect; in East Prussia in 1930 nearly all settlers were people stemming from that province;¹⁵⁵ the Oberpräsident of the Rhine province said in 1934 that he could find records of only 344 families from his area who had gone east over the whole seven years from 1926 to 1933, and nearly half of them (157) had taken non-agricultural employment there anyway.¹⁵⁶

Clearly most people in the west did not wish to remove themselves to less hospitable regions:¹⁵⁷ it must be accepted that this was not the fault of the NSDAP, but this point should have been taken into consideration by Darré when he wrote in 1933 in the guide-lines that one quarter of all places east of the Elbe should be given to applicants of southern and western origin: a closer acquaintance with reality would have shown him

that few were likely to want to go east. It would appear in sum that Darré's hopes of a population shift, with agrarian settlement as the first step in industrial decentralization for all Germany, was never more than a dream. But even if the original plan of ninety thousand places in four years had materialized it does not seem likely that much industry would have followed: a 1936 dissertation estimated that this number of agrarian settlers would have given jobs to 14,400 other trades in terms of peasant requirements for machinery etc. and of course building.¹⁵⁸

In fact agrarian settlement provided the building industry with a turnover of 38 Million RM in 1935, from its annual total of 7,200 Million RM.¹⁵⁹ It is this kind of statistic which surely demonstrates how small the scale of Darré's operations were, and how insignificant in terms of the economy as a whole. A genuine repopulation of the East Elbian regions by peasantry, even had land been available, would have required very little industry in the region, as agrarian purchasing-power was relatively so limited: had the NSDAP really wished to decentralize the German economy, then industrial redeployment would have been the first step, this could never merely have followed in the wake of rural settlement.

(iv) There are two other interesting sociological facts about the kind of person who settled on the land in the Third Reich, firstly their age: in 1938 only 13% of new peasants were under thirty, as compared to 70% in the range thirty to fifty, the remainder being older still.¹⁶⁰ This seems to link with the second point, namely, family size, since clearly applicants over thirty were more likely to have given tangible proof of their ability to produce large, healthy families than younger men could do, and Dr. Kummer said frankly that men with large families were preferable.¹⁶¹ That this was so in practice can be seen from the relevant statistics, in that the number of settler families with three children sharply increased during the period 1933-8.¹⁶² The final impression is that family size and farming experience were given precedence over youth.

(v) In sheer statistical terms the NSDAP settlement programme was a failure in comparison with that of Weimar.¹⁶³ Far fewer peasants were installed yearly, and furthermore it must be underlined that the NS yearly total was in itself steadily diminishing, so that by 1937 settlement had come almost to a halt. One contemporary suggested that the programme was being sapped by public interest in other duties.¹⁶⁴ It seems rather more likely that the NS were interested in different matters at this particular time, and assigned a low priority to internal colonization. During a speech at the opening of a new settlement in 1939, one speaker candidly gave defence priority (with its land requirement) as the reason for slowing down the settlement programme.¹⁶⁵ There is little point in bothering about the possibilities of settlement in Germany if one is intent upon acquiring fresh territory anyway. The contention of this thesis, based upon examination of Hitler's speeches and writings from 1924 onwards, is that he had no intention of using his own country as a settlement area.¹⁶⁶ Indeed in 1931 he is alleged to have said to Prince von Enlenberg that he had no large-scale settlement plans for German soil, as "this can only be done when the territory is available to us."¹⁶⁷ Hence, perhaps, his reluctance to break up the East Elbian estates, which would have been pointless if new land was about to be acquired elsewhere anyway: this impression is strengthened from the 1936 memorandum on the Four Year Plan in which he spoke of a widening of Germany's living-space as the only solution in the long term. The March 1930 agrarian programme of the NSDAP is also interesting, since it stated quite explicitly that "In general the supply of space for food and settlement ... is a task for German foreign policy." This does not of course imply violence necessarily: the foregoing remarks are not intended to prove war-guilt, merely to illustrate that it is in some respects understandable that the National Socialists did not make a greater effort at internal colonization.¹⁶⁸

In one respect their efforts were successful: the average holding they

created over the period 1933-8 was half again as large as that produced by Weimar, and therefore presumably more viable in the long run;¹⁶⁹ in retrospect the programme undertaken by the Republic seems to have been linked too closely with unemployment, which resulted in unsuitable persons being installed as peasants; their inability to pay their way was an embarrassment to Darré throughout the Third Reich. By insisting on a viable size, as Kummer pointed out, a sound peasantry was created, rather than record figures of new holdings:¹⁷⁰ the bias towards professionalism as a criterion in settler choice also played a part here.

Even when that is borne in mind, however, the scale of NS achievement was frankly small. It is therefore legitimate to put the question "What went wrong?" as results clearly did not equal hopes. Firstly, finance cannot really be pleaded in extenuation; the Depression lowered land prices so that the NSDAP began under very favourable circumstances in that respect. Whereas in 1928 a fifteen Ha place complete cost 40,000 RM, in 1932 the figure was just under half that amount.¹⁷¹ Of course, prices then rose in the Third Reich because of a general land shortage caused by the EHG, public authority, especially Wehrmacht requirements, and the debt-relief Act of Dr. Hugenberg. The NSDAP could scarcely advance rising costs produced by speculation in a free market as an excuse, however, since it was the movement which had sworn to put an end to this kind of activity on the agrarian front: this NS attitude makes the failure to produce an adequate system of land control seem curious.¹⁷² On the other hand, it could be argued that only by breaking up the estates could sufficient land have been created in the first place to realise Darré's wishes: in this respect he met widespread opposition in high places which proved too strong. Once this possibility went then it was conquest or a virtual end to internal colonization.

Finally, public opinion in Germany did not seem interested in repopulating the east, whose population seems actually to have decreased under the Third

Reich at least in the frontier regions; hence no doubt the growing emphasis on S.S. settlement c. 1938 as a means of protecting the borders of depopulated regions. Indeed, the public enthusiasm for settlement in general seemed to be steadily waning at this time: in 1938 there were only 2605 applications for a place.¹⁷³ The high cost of settlement and growing prosperity in the cities doubtless played some part here: ultimately it would appear that under the NSDAP as before 1933, the desire for settlement was linked with the state of the economy in general. As in the case of rural migration NS success in stimulating industrial development simply hindered the Party's efforts in agriculture. Linked with this is naturally the question of rural incomes and living-standards. As von Braun pointed out in 1932 no agrarian settlement plans could succeed unless farming was made profitable:¹⁷⁴ NS failure at internal colonization was simply another aspect of their inability to give agriculture a decent share of the national cake.

1. Quoted in Goerlitz p.345
2. The actual figures are as follows:-

| <u>Region</u> | <u>Population decrease (in 000 persons) 1841-1910</u> |
|---------------|---|
| E. Prussia | 629.5 |
| W. Prussia | 491.8 |
| Pomerania | 469.6 |
| Posen | 631.2 |
| Silesia | 490.8 |

Hellermann "Landmaschinen gegen Landflucht" p.28

3. Wunderlich "Farm Labour in Germany 1810-1945" p.24
4. Ibid p.24
5. From 1871 to 1900 2.7 million Germans, predominantly of rural origin, emigrated to the U.S.A. Ibid p.22
6. Ibid p.26
7. Ibid p.27
8. As early as 1894 the sociologist Max Weber was talking in terms of a "numerous and healthy peasantry" to protect the eastern frontiers, implying the break-up of non-viable estates: Quoted in J.P. Mayer "Max Weber and German Politics" p.40
9. According to Braun "Von Weimar zu Hitler" pp.22/3
10. J. Oldekop "Arbeitslosigkeit und falsches Bodenrecht" p.12: this is a privately-printed pamphlet, a copy of which is in LA 301/4089
11. The appeal is quoted in Topf "Die Grüne Front" pp.269/270
12. Wunderlich p.27
13. According to Professor Haushofer "50 Jahre" p.10
14. "Ideengeschichte" p.49
15. Article 153 of the Weimar Constitution
16. The political motive behind the programme can be seen from the Prussian Civil Service minute of 22nd February 1926 which spoke of the "damming-

- up of the onflowing wave of Slavs": quoted in Hertz-Eichenrode p.313
17. Gerschenkron "Bread and Democracy in Germany" p.132
 18. Wunderlich p.37
 19. Hertz-Eichenrode p.328
 20. These statistics are abstracted from Gerschenkron "Bread and Democracy in Germany" p.131. As another writer summed up the land ownership question "The King went, the Junkers remained": Topf "Die Grüne Front" p.62
 21. For a fuller description of the friction see W. Boyens "Die Geschichte der ländlichen Siedlung" Vol. I pp.378-423
 22. According to Dr. Steiger's speech in the Landtag in February 1930:
LA 301/4089
 23. "Vierteljahrsheft zur Statistik des Deutschen Reiches 1939" Sec. III
p.4
 24. From 1919-1924 the average number of places provided on average every year was almost exactly 2,500, but for 1925-7 inclusive the mean number was some 20% less: then from 1928 onwards the average lifts again sharply: "Landwirtschaftliche Statistik 1937" p.15
 25. In all 57,457 holdings were provided by the Republic with a total area of 602,110 Ha: C. Horkenbach "Das Deutsche Reich 1918-1933"
Table XXXII p.748
 26. An emergency decree of June 1932 gave a further 50 Mill. RM to the programme: "Vossische Zeitung" 15th June 1932
 27. "Arbeitslosigkeit und Siedlung": BA-R43 I/1465
 28. W. Haas "Bedeutung, Aufgaben und Durchführung der Neubildung deutschen Bauerntums östlich der Elbe im NS Staat" (henceforth "Haas") pp.51/2
 29. Ibid pp.51/2: a contemporary sociologist Peter Quante who specialized in the rural migration problems, believed 670,000 to be nearer the mark as a possible settlement target: Ibid p.52

30. See, for example, the speeches of von Papen and von Braun to the Agricultural Council in June 1932: BA-R43 I/1277
31. Oberpräsident to Prussian Ministry of State 26th June 1931: GSA 1111
32. Conference minutes 26th April 1932: GSA 1112
33. Quoted in "Ideengeschichte" p.111
34. Both the SPD and the Zentrum, for example, had formulated policies, the latter emphasizing the need to give priority to landworkers and farmers sons: for those programmes see "Handbuch für den Preussischen Landtag 1933" pp.243/4 and 255
35. W. Frick (Ed) "Die National Sozialisten im Reichstag 1924-31" p.108
36. Programme Section 9 V.B. 7th March 1930
37. See Jurda to Darré 15th February 1932 for evidence of this particular planning section: BA-NS26/952
38. "Richtlinien für die Neubildung deutschen Bauerntums" 1st June 1933
BA-R22/2128
39. This can be seen from Darré's circular giving this geographical emphasis as NSDAP policy: Darré to LGFs 18th November 1933: BA-NS26/951
40. Bente "Landwirtschaft und Bauerntum" p.74
41. Haas p.48
42. "Neubildung deutschen Bauerntums" RGB (I) p.517
43. Dr. K. Kummer "Der Weg deutscher Bauernsiedlung" in "Odal" November 1939 p.938
44. This Bill is in BA-R43 I/1464
45. Jurda to Darré 15th February 1932: BA-NS26/952
46. Darré to Willikens 27th June 1934: BA-NS26/946
47. Kummer to Willikens 8th August 1934: Ibid: Dr. K. Kummer was leader of Department III in the REM which, under Willikens as Secretary of State, was responsible for settlement: Kummer had worked in that area under Weimar as an official of a settlement company, and apart from

- this experience had the additional asset of being a Party member since 1931: "Das Führer Lexikon" p.265
48. Reichsstelle für Siedlungsplanung to Ministry of State Württemberg 22nd December 1933: HSA (S) 452 in E 130/IV
 49. "Bericht des Osthilfe untersuchungsausschuss" 6th April 1933: GSA 1112
 50. Schoenbaum p.179
 51. This acceptance was general: in February 1930 Dr. Steiger declared in the Prussian Landtag that a "sound mixture" corresponded to national conditions: LA 301/4089
 52. "Ostelbier" June 1934
 53. "The Observer" 13th May 1934
 54. This review was reprinted in "Odal" June 1934
 55. Darré to Chancellery September 1933: BA-R43 I/1301
 56. Chancellery to Darré 30th September 1933: Ibid
 57. Vide K. Mass "Der deutsche Bauer einst und jetzt" p.8
 58. Darre "Ostelbier" p.851
 59. Kreisleiter Heiligenbeil to Gauleitung Königsberg 15th July 1933: IfZ Fa 508
 60. See Kreisleiter Bartenstein to Gauleitung May 1933 for a description of the local estate-owners leader von Restorff as being "ripe for a concentration camp"; in Pill Kallen arrests were made: Kreisleiter Pill Kallen to Gauleitung 13th July 1933: Ibid
 61. However "grateful" the estate-owners ought to have felt the fact is that they kept on getting arrested by the NS: see Goerlitz p.399 for a list.
 62. For evidence that Darré insisted on land from landowners obtaining debt-relief see Kummer to Willikens 10th October 1934: BA-NS26/946
 63. Heiden "Geburt des Dritten Reiches" p.12: the occasion was his 80th birthday

64. Quoted in "Ideengeschichte" p.112 and Hertz-Eichenrode p.256
65. Hindenburg to Hitler 13th January 1934: BA-R43 II/193
66. Minutes of reception 27th April 1933: BA-R43 II/192
67. Quoted in Heiden above cit. p.185
68. Goerlitz p.404. In 1932/3 36% of all newly commissioned lieutenants were aristocrats: Schoenbaum p.254
69. Kummer to Himmler 27th November 1937: BA-NS26/944
70. Goerlitz (p.347) states that 60% of grain and 72% of potatoes came from the East Elbian estates
71. The survey showed that the supply of food to the market almost exactly corresponded to the amount of land comprised in each size range i.e. the big estates had 21% of all agricultural land and produced 21.1% of the food: quoted in W. Clauss "Bauer und Grossbetrieb im Kampf um die Nahrungsfreiheit" in "Odal" April 1935 p.741
72. On 13th September 1933 Metzner, Special Commissioner for the EMG, produced an essay highly critical of the eastern estates "Vom Niedergang deutschen Bauerntums im Osten": BA-NS26/952
73. As early as November 1934 four eastern Landesbauernschaften reported rising land prices as their chief problem in settlement in answer to an REM enquiry. This coincides with the first purchases for the Wehrmacht, which doubtless was already a factor in the situation: letters from Landesbauernschaft Pomerania, Anhalt, Kurmark and Kurhessen: BA-NS26/955
74. Undated minute: BA-NS26/946
75. "Vierteljahrsheft zur Statistik des Deutschen Reiches" 1938 Sec. III pp. 22/3
76. Reichsamt für Agrarpolitik to Minister President Württemberg January 1938: HSA (S) 646/E 130/IV
77. Verhey pp.56/7

78. REM to Ministry of Finance 11th January 1937: BA-R22/2130
79. As one contemporary writer put it "Through the protective measures decided upon for agriculture the acquisition of settlement land became increasingly difficult": "Wirtschaftsblatt der Industrie und Handelskammer Berlin" Heft 16/17 pp.804ff: BA-R22/2128
80. From 709 RM to 905 RM per Ha: "Vierteljahrsheft zur Statistik des Deutschen Reiches 1938" Sec. III pp.22/3
81. In "Soziale Praxis" Heft 4 (1938) pp.203ff
82. The increased building costs in 1938 of farm facilities was instanced as a contributory factor in making settlement expensive: Reichsamt für Agrarpolitik to Minister Präsident Württemberg January 1938: HSA (S) 646 in E 130/IV
83. "Erstmalige Ausstattung neuer Bauernsiedlungen" etc.: Ministerialblatt 28th May 1936
84. "Vierteljahrsheft zur Statistik des Deutschen Reiches" 1938 Sec. III pp.4/7
85. E. Molitor "Deutsches Bauern und Agrarrecht" p.173 for the point about the deposit
86. The average cost of buildings for a farm between $12\frac{1}{2}$ and 20 Ha in size was 15,000 RM in 1938 of which the state paid 8,800 RM: Reichsamt für Agrarpolitik to Minister President Württemberg January 1938: HSA (S) 646 in E 130/IV
87. In the first year there was no interest to pay, in the second 1%, in the third $2\frac{1}{2}\%$ and then 4% from the fourth year onwards
88. "Erstmalige Ausstattung" etc. Ministerialblatt 28th May 1936
89. "Frachtemässigung für die landwirtschaftliche Siedlung" Ministerialblatt 10th May 1938
90. "Einrichtungs Kredite für Neubauern" Ibid 26th July 1938
91. Lbsch Bavaria to REM 19th November 1934: BA-NS26/955

92. A movement called the "Artamanen" ran co-operative settlements on a small-scale, in which everyone worked for board and lodging and pocket money: A. Rosenberg "Die Artamanenbewegung" p.44: in East Prussia they carried out three projects: Lbsch East Prussia to REM 20th November 1934: BA-NS26/955
93. Willikens to Darré 31st December 1937: ADC Reichsnährstand Willikens
94. Eltz-Rübenach to Darré 26th February 1938: ADC Reichsnährstand Eltz-Rübenach
95. Quoted in "Blut und Boden" p.578
96. "Die Landesbauernschaften in Zahlen" p.187
97. "Beitrag zur deutschen Agrarpolitik" July 1934: BA-K/Erw 404
98. H.J. Seraphim "Neuschaffung deutschen Bauerntums" in "Zeitschrift für die gesamte Staatswissenschaft" 1935 p.153: the exact percentage rise was from 12.3 to 48.3
99. They were given in March 1930 for holdings up to 5 Ha in size a subsidy of up to 8,000 RM: RGB (I) p.195
100. "NS Landpost" 15th March 1935
101. The building costs here are from the January 1938 Reichsamt für Agrarpolitik report to the Minister Präsident Württemberg: HSA (S) 646 in E 130/IV
102. This figure is obtained from the "DAF Jahrbuch" 1939
103. Ceremony 10th July 1936: BA-R22/2128
104. "Die Landesbauernschaften in Zahlen" p.186
105. A more exact figure is impossible because of the landflight
106. Landesbauernschaft Silesia to REM 9th November 1934: BA-NS26/955
107. Lbsch Kummark to REM 23rd November 1934: BA-NS26/955
108. Reichsamt für Agrarpolitik to Minister Präsident Württemberg January 1938: HSA (S) 646 in E 130/IV
109. Hess to Goering 16th July 1937 with respective Gauleitung reports: GSA 1112

110. Goering to Hess 6th August 1937: Ibid
111. Goerlitz p.391
112. Kummer to Finance Ministry 23rd April 1935: BA-NS26/946
113. Undated minute: Ibid
114. Kummer to Himmler 27th November 1937: BA-NS26/944: one such S.S. group settlement "Fausthof" had already been installed, according to this.
115. Literally "Defence Farm"
116. Conference minutes 24th February 1939: ADC-RFSS 1030
117. See R. Koehl "RKFDV: German resettlement policy" p.52
118. For the hopes that agriculture would in itself stimulate eastern industry see Haas p.48 which was typical of the official line, although a university dissertation
119. J. Noakes "Conflict and Development in the NSDAP 1924-7" in "Journal of Contemporary History" 1966 Vol. I No. 4 pp.24/5
120. Backe was born at Batum in the Caucasus: ADC Backe
121. Confirmation of this promotion from S.S. Personnel Chancellery 9th July 1937: Ibid
122. Affidavit from Harmening cited in "Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegs-
verbrecher" etc. Vol. XXI p.381
123. He had of course already been made responsible for agriculture's share in the Four Year Plan in 1936, which was the first stage in his gradual rise to preeminence over Darré
124. "NS Landpost" 1st March 1935
125. This was the procedure in Schleswig-Holstein at least: Lbsch Schleswig-Holstein to REM 9th November 1934: BA-NS26/955: the importance of the KBF is stressed in a contemporary account which said that the applicant must be acceptable to the Bauernführer first; H. Franz "Der Mensch in der Siedlung" p.52

126. The questionnaire (Fragebogen) is in the British Museum
127. RNS Administrative Office to Lbsch Lower Saxony 25th July 1935:
NSA 331 B.21
128. Kummer to S.S. unit Stettin 5th November 1936: BA-NS26/944
129. Even the fact that one applicant's brother had gone lame through inflammation of the pelvis was held to be of importance in assessing his acceptability: See KBF Hamlin Bad Pymont to local pastor 27th June 1935: NSA 331 B.21
130. "6 Jahre Neubauernauslese" published by the RNS 1940 p.6 (henceforth "6 Jahre")
131. Kummer to Willikens 4th September 1934: BA-NS26/946
132. Ibid
133. "6 Jahre" pp.20/1 "racial health" here does not imply anything national, it simply means what in English is called "pedigree" with no political connotation
134. This Table is from H. Rechenbach (Ed) "Bauernschicksal ist Volkes-schicksal" pp.110/111: Rechenbach was leader of Section G "Blood Questions" (Blutsfrage) of Department I of the RNS, which is the office for racial questions already referred to.
135. The German word for "absolutely" (unbedingt) is printed in special heavy type in the original
136. Clause 5(c): a specimen of the certificate is in "6 Jahre" p.28
137. Peasant's petition to Celle 6th January 1939 on which this section is based: BA-R22/2129
138. Department I G Goslar to Celle 3rd June 1939: BA-R22/2129: the relevant Lbsch (Weser-Ems) had handed the case over to RNS HQ to decide according to this letter.
139. J. von Schultze "Deutsche Siedlung" p.46
140. Almost exactly fifty per cent for the period 1933-8 inclusive,

- 30,549 from 61,197 applications: "6 Jahre" p.5
141. Whereas in 1934 there were 15948 applications, by 1938 the figure had dropped to 2605: Clauss "Der Bauer im Umbruch der Zeit" p.81 and "Die Landesbauernschaften im Zahlen" p.187
142. The actual categories were: farmers 45%, farmers sons 22%, land or forestry workers 22%, former agricultural officials 6%. Miscellaneous non-agrarian occupations 5%: "Vierteljahrsheft zur Statistik des Deutschen Reiches" 1938 Sec. III p.25
143. Ibid p.25
144. Although the Republic had already begun to show a bias towards the selection of the professionally-experienced as settlers from 1926 onwards; whereas for the three years 1923-5 inclusive the percentage of new settlers with no previous agricultural experience never fell below 40, from 1926 onwards this figure never rose above 26.7:
"Landwirtschaftliche Statistik" 1937 p.20
145. As evidence of Republican policy in that respect see "Verordnung über arbeitlose landwirtschaftliche Siedlungsanwärter" 22nd February 1932: RGB (I) p.78
146. REM announcement 31st December 1932 fixing a reduced rate of $3\frac{1}{2}\%$ for two years: HSA (S) 452/E 130/IV
147. Seraphim "Neuschaffung Deutschen Bauerntums" p.146
148. "Nachprüfung etc. vom 1.4. 1924 bis 31.12.1933 gebildeten landwirtschaftlichen Neusiedlerstellen" Ministerialblatt 14th May 1936
149. "~~Massnahmen~~ zur wirtschaftlichen Gesundung der Altsiedler" Ibid 8th July 1939
150. S.A. Administration Office Munich to Darré 24th May 1934: BA-R43 II/207
151. Darré wrote in glowing terms of the applications he was receiving from the S.A. and the S.S. as well as from farmers, so he was clearly ready to accept the former if qualified: Darré to Hitler 22nd June

1934: Ibid

152. Kummer to Darre 8th August 1934: BA-NS26/946
153. "Vierteljahrsheft zur Statistik etc. 1938" Sec. III p.7
154. "Trial Brief" p.32
155. 94% in actual fact: Borsig "Reagrarisierung Deutschlands?" p.21
156. Oberpräsident to Lbsch Rhineland 28th December 1934: HSA (D) 1073
157. Borsig above cit. p.21 suggested that people were too "spoiled" by the west to want to try and improve the harsh conditions east of the Elbe
158. Haas p.48
159. According to "Wirtschaftsblatt der Industrie und Handelskammer Berlin" Heft 16/17: BA-R22/2128
160. This does not mean that all successful applicants were middle-aged: 43% were under 35 years of age: "Vierteljahrsheft 1938" Sec. III p.7 and "Die Landesbauernschaften in Zahlen" p.185
161. In "Der Bauer im Umbruch der Zeit" p.81
162. In 1932 43.4% of all post 1919 settlers had three or more children but by 1938 the cumulative total of all such families had risen to 55.3%: "Vierteljahrsheft zur Statistik des Deutschen Reiches" 1938 Sec. III pp.7 and 21
163. From 1919-1932 inclusive the total number of new places created was 57,457 embracing 602,000 Ha in round figures: "Landwirtschaftliche Statistik" 1937 p.15. Under the NSDAP results were as follows:-

| <u>Year</u> | <u>No. of Settlers</u> | <u>Area of Holdings (Ha)</u> |
|--------------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1933 | 4,914 | 60,297 |
| 1934 | 4,827 | 72,969 |
| 1935 | 3,905 | 68,338 |
| 1936 | 3,308 | 60,358 |
| 1937 | 1,900 | 37,000 |
| 1938 | 1,894 | 26,649 |
| <u>Total</u> | 20,748 | 325,611 |

Wunderlich "Farm Labour in Germany 1810-1945" p.179

164. Dr. Vager "Gegenwartsprobleme der ländlichen Siedlung" in "Deutsche Siedlung" 5th March 1937
165. Schoenbaum p. 168
166. See particularly "Mein Kampf" p.743 (German edition) where he wrote of the Party's task as being that of instruction for Germans that their future lay not in "Alexandrine Conquests" on the contrary "in the industrious work of the German plough, to which the sword has only to give the (necessary) soil"
167. Quoted in Bracher "Die Auflösung der Weimarer Republik" p.514
168. Land in Germany was so obviously lacking that when Willikens was challenged at a public meeting to disclose from where it could be obtained for the NS settlement plans he declined to reply "upon political grounds": "Westfälische Landeszeitung" 25th July 1932
169. The actual difference was $15\frac{3}{4}$ Ha under the NSDAP compared to $10\frac{1}{2}$ under Weimar
170. Kummer to Willikens 8th August 1934 suggested that creating holdings of viable size was more important than any chasing after records of places created: BA-NS26/946: Kummer seemed not to be so much in favour of large-scale operations as Darre himself
171. From Boyens "Die Geschichte der ländlichen Siedlung" Vol. II p.104: he was quoting Dr. Steiger

- 172. For land control in the Third Reich see Appendix K
- 173. "Die Landesbauernschaften in Zahlen" p.185
- 174. At the meeting of the Agricultural Council 11th June 1932: BA-
R43 I/1277

Conclusion

(i) In one respect it is difficult to sum up NSDAP agrarian policy very convincingly, because it is a problem to decide in the various acts which the Party carried out on the land between 1933 and 1939 how much was truly National Socialist, in that so much both advocated before 1933 and executed afterwards was borrowed plumage. That not all members of the movement saw eye-to-eye on agrarian problems merely adds to the confusion; these differences will be summed up later in more detail but in general terms it has to be remembered that the NSDAP was in effect a coalition of all those against the "System" rather than a party based upon one economic principle: so marked was this that one witness at Nuremberg who joined in 1933 said he did not obtain the impression of joining a normal political party at all, because of the huge blocks of former members of the DNVP or of the Communist Party already in the movement.¹ Under these circumstances it becomes hard to define National Socialism: whose views form the criterion? Of course, these members all had some things in common, such as extreme nationalism, faith in the Führer etc., but none of these, or any combination of them, constitutes a specific programme of action. Ultimately, therefore, all that can be taken as NS agrarian policy is what actually was done in the Third Reich, whether it was original or not.

Indeed, very little of it was; the general background to the Hitler movement, its organization and methods, even its legislation for the land after 1933 bear strong traces of earlier influences and ideas. In organizational terms, the NSDAP took over the concept of cells and blocks as its basic units from the Communists, as well as the technique of the mass meeting and the use of "Party Comrade" as a greeting. The swastika had been a symbol of the völkisch movements long before Hitler, the phrase "National Socialism" was invented by Naumann in the 1890s, even the expression "Third Reich" was

unoriginal. Anti-semitism, which Hitler used so skilfully, had a long history as an organized political concept, going back at least as far as the 1880s. Even the vaguely anti-capitalist fulminations of men like Feder and Darré had earlier models. One anti-Semitic deputy speaking in Leipzig in 1885 declared "That capital is not dangerous, whose turnover is made possible by labour." "Only the capital of the Bourse, usurious capital, that is the capital you must combat."² Forty-eight years later Feder wrote "What do banks produce? Nothing: and what do they earn? Enormous sums." He then proceeded to praise captains of industry, choosing men like Ford and Thyssen for their services to the country.³ It is suggested that these extracts show the same distinction between private enterprise in industry on the one hand and speculation on the other, with the first being accepted as roundly as the second was condemned: in this respect also the NSDAP was the legitimate heir to the völkisch past. Its programme, with its attacks on interest-slavery looked vaguely anti-capitalist, but like its predecessors it was only really aiming at Jewish capitalism. As one historian has pointed out, all the nineteenth century anti-Semitic groups in Germany had programmes calling for the nationalisation of banks and railways, not because they had certain economic principles but because these institutions often belonged to Jews.⁴ The foregoing suggests that anti-capitalism and anti-Semitism were often the same thing in Germany and that they had been long before Hitler.

Even in its details, NS agrarian policy was derivative; its settlement programme differed from that of almost no other contemporary party, since on the Left internal colonization was seen c. 1932 as an antidote to unemployment, even if not as a means of defending the frontiers. Demands for a revision of the inheritance laws on the land had similarly been circulating long before the Erbhofgesetz. The RLB had called for a new law early in its history, a "homestead legislation on the basis of the German concept of law."⁵ The very wording is reminiscent of the EHG's preamble. As far as the latter's

intervention upon the realm of private property is concerned, there seems little doubt that the NSDAP in this respect was in the mainstream of European development. The rights of the individual had had to be subordinated to those of the community in Germany as in Britain to try and win the war, and the world of 1919 regarded private property rather differently than it had been looked at five years previously.⁶ It is consequently no surprise to find even someone like Schlange-Schöningen, who was not in the NSDAP, saying that no-one had the right any longer to preach the untouchability of private property; saving the nation was more important.⁷ The same considerations apply to the marketing system of the RNS; Article 156 of the Weimar Constitution authorised State governments to form corporations to improve agrarian marketing, and the Milk Act of 1930, not the NSDAP legislation, was the first to apply this proviso in actual fact.⁸

Thus neither in terms of general concepts nor in those of precise administrative measures was the Hitler movement in any way original in its agrarian policy, save in two respects. The first was race, in which the NSDAP followed the same policy on the land as elsewhere, only with even greater intensity, since the peasantry was the life-blood of the whole nation, and therefore especially important racially. Secondly, the Party stands apart from others in that it did bring the various strands of previous thinking together into one definite programme of action: its execution was therefore more original than its concepts.⁹

Before leaving this point, two further things must be said: not all agrarian policy in the Third Reich was necessarily derived from previous general ideas, in that the Erzeugungsschlacht appeared to have arisen simply from the needs of the moment, namely, a severe currency shortage. The NSDAP had always favoured autarky in principal, but it is very noticeable that it took an actual export crisis in 1934 to produce the battle for greater domestic production: in retrospect this is curious, but as the country's

economic position would have been virtually the same whatever government was in office, the actual *Erzeugungsschlacht* itself cannot very well be looked on as specifically National Socialist. Secondly, behind the NS programme in general there was a good deal of frankly Romantic thinking about the peasantry and the land, as witness the writer who stated that the future would be determined by how much rural spirit could be awakened in the German people; "the decitifying of the German spirit will be one of our most promising tasks."¹⁰ It would be an error to suppose that this was the only kind of reason for NS legislation: behind these notions lay the purely practical desire to further the peasantry because of its supposedly higher birthrate and because of its value as a conservative bulwark. Hence the special fuss made of that class since "without the counterweight of the German peasantry the communist madness would have long ago overrun and annihilated the German economy."¹¹ The NSDAP did contain many gushing enthusiasts for the rural life, but it contained some realists as well, and it was the latter who made the real decisions. This point ties in with the considerations about the *Erzeugungsschlacht*; if Germany had to produce more food then the peasantry was necessary on that account as well as on the others.

Hence it can be said to summarize NS agrarian policy that it was in general unoriginal in concept, although of course some of the details of both the RNS and the EHG went further than previous thought on the subject: but the NSDAP did nonetheless make its own distinct contribution to German agricultural history by evolving a programme of definite action embodying previous concepts on marketing self-sufficiency, settlement and closed land inheritance all brought together into one comprehensive and internally-coherent schema. The basis of this was of course the supposition that the peasantry was vital for several reasons, could not therefore be allowed to go under, and so must be lifted from the danger of annihilation as a result of speculation in farm properties.

The idea of a racial policy, however, was as unique on the land as it was elsewhere and in this respect the NSDAP must be accepted as original, a point which Darré himself constantly laboured, as in the speech to the LGFs where he drew a clear distinction between NS agrarian practice and that of Fascist countries like Italy, precisely because whereas the latter aimed at a more rational system of production and distribution only, the NSDAP's foundation was blood and race, not economics.¹² It is therefore suggested here that if there is any criterion of National Socialism on the land, or anywhere else that was it: this movement alone applied the idea of strict biological breeding to human beings. Of course, both Fascism and National Socialism had in common the desire to combat both Communism and the liberal state, but their respective answers were somewhat different. The first produced the corporative system in Italy and Spain, the second chose to fight international Marxism and international capitalism by combining race and nationalism on the one hand with social welfare programmes on the other. The attempts to raise landworkers to the status of Heuerling is typical of this; the labourer would be distracted from the appeal of Marxism and the class-struggle by literally giving him a piece of his own country and so encouraging him to think of himself as a peasant proprietor.

(ii) Once NS policy has been determined in general terms the next logical step is to examine it in its individual aspects, of which six can be established, which will be dealt with in turn. Firstly, there is the question of land supply and speculation. In retrospect it is paradoxical that a movement sworn to abolish the play of supply and demand in land prices should have presided over so marked an increase between 1933 and 1939 occasioned exactly by the existence of a free market outside the EHG. Evidence can be produced to show that Werner Willikens at least was conscious as early as 1932 that entailing some farm land would produce difficulties in respect of the remainder.¹³ By 1938 this had come to be admitted by

Dr. Reischle as well, but Darré's efforts to obtain control of all land for his Ministry were frustrated by the interventions of Schmitt and Seldte and Keppler.¹⁴ When some degree of supervision of land sales was at last brought about in 1937 the actual price was not regulated in any case; by 1938 agricultural land was costing more than double the figure of six years previously, a fact which influenced the whole settlement programme. Ultimately NS policy concerning land supply as a whole can only really be called an unhappy compromise, originating in the desire to avoid simultaneously the Marxist Scylla of nationalization and the liberal Charybdis of free speculation. The NSDAP steered a course between these extremes by entailing about half the agricultural land, and leaving the rest uncontrolled in price terms; unfortunately the first of these measures simply drove up the price of the unentailed. This was exacerbated by the needs of the roads and defence programmes so that public authorities were bidding against each other, making it hard for farmers, landworkers and rural craftsmen to acquire additional or new land.

This also worked upon the settlement plans, which by 1939 had ground almost to a total halt; in that year less than 2,000 new holdings were created for a nation whose population inside the frontiers of February 1938 was by now some sixty seven million people. It seems unlikely that a really large-scale scheme could ever have been carried out within the borders of the existing Reich; from that part of the March 1930 programme which announced that the acquisition of new land for settlement was the task of German foreign policy, it appears evident that everyone always really knew this. Land shortage drove up the price of new holdings to such an extent that only those with considerable means could even afford to be settlers. This limited applicants numerically and reduced the grandiose vision held by Darré of using eastern settlement as a first step in decentralising the whole of industry to the more mundane realities of 1939, when Himmler and Backe

were apparently regarding settlement simply as a method of frontier defence by the SS. In any case, even if land had been cheap, there seems little reason to suppose that peasants' sons or landworkers from other parts of Germany even wanted to move east on any significant scale.

When the statistics on rural migration are examined, the inevitable conclusion would be that not all that many people in fact wanted to stay on the land anywhere. Here again is an area where NS policy simply failed. Firstly, its concentration on defence needs made the construction industry expand in such a way that this kind of work was more attractive than a farm labourer's. Secondly, the efforts at stemming landflight by legal measures simply did not have any discernible effect; employers were so short of labour that they ignored the law completely. Migration reached such a level that the whole of the *Erzeugungsschlacht* was placed in jeopardy. Here again it has to be accepted however that a different government would probably have followed a similar policy. The NSDAP was a prisoner of circumstance; to get six million back to work any régime would have had to engage on a work creation programme based on industrial expansion, which would have entailed increased raw material imports in a country where foreign currency was short. There would have almost certainly been an *Erzeugungsschlacht*, therefore, to save currency, and an industrial boom had von Papen or Schleicher remained in office:¹⁵ the only alternative was continued mass unemployment. The existence of a drive for increased supplies of domestic foodstuffs and of a large-scale rural migration at the same time was assured by the fact that the industrial expansion necessary to cure unemployment was the prime cause of both. If the work-creation programme was not to be hindered, wages and prices had to be held stable; therefore food prices had to remain without any upward fluctuations: but if they did, farmers could not earn higher incomes or pay larger wages: then farm labour had to migrate to building etc. to find the well-paid jobs which the industrial boom had created: the

Erzeugungsschlacht and the landflight were intimately connected. It is therefore to a certain extent irrelevant to say that without rural migration Germany could have reached a higher degree of self-sufficiency: without rearmament and road-building there would quite possibly have been neither, but once one was needed the other had to happen also: without industrial expansion there was no need for the Erzeugungsschlacht, which in a sense subsidized the boom by keeping prices down, and thus enabled government investment to retain its value in real terms; once the work-creation schemes got under way then rural migration was going to increase. After the Cabinet had agreed in May 1935 to follow a price-stability policy then the landflight and the relative failure of the Erzeugungsschlacht, and continuing rural poverty, were all virtually assured. Higher farm incomes could henceforth only come from greater output, which necessitated more investment, which necessitated higher prices for foodstuffs. As the latter were not forthcoming, the Erzeugungsschlacht slowed down in tempo.

Autarky, rural migration, and the problems of wage stability and farm incomes are all interconnected and must be seen as parts of a socio-economic whole: they must also be regarded as phenomena which would probably have occurred whatever government had assumed power, since it would have been faced with the same state of affairs, centring around mass unemployment and limited reserves of gold and foreign currency. As Germany had been moving towards Protectionism under Weimar there seems no reason to suppose that she would not have continued to do so irrespective of whoever was in office, or that once this process was linked with the problem of solving unemployment the ultimate effect upon agriculture would have been any different.

As far as the EHG was concerned, this fitted logically into the rest of the legislative measures undertaken in the Third Reich. Once it was decided to save the peasantry then debt-relief and land-entailment were effective methods in the circumstances of 1933, when foreclosure was an ever

more frequent occurrence. Again, the Act cannot really be seen on its own, as it complemented the guaranteed prices introduced under the RNS. The revision of the inheritance laws was to keep the soil in the clan, debt-relief would afford financial reconstruction in the present and fixed prices would render security against future indebtedness. Had the latter been generous enough it seems unlikely that the peasantry would really have objected to the EHG, since its restrictions on testamentary freedom were relatively mild for the transitional period between the old law and the full implementation of the new: moreover, the chief source of discontent, the difficulty over Abfindung, could in itself have been circumvented had farmers been able to pay this from current receipts as planned under the Act. Low, fixed prices prevented this, so that the new entailment legislation caused unrest not in itself so much as in its unrealizability as a result of another factor, yet again the need to peg prices at a low level.

In the final analysis, it would appear that the NS agrarian policy was a failure in socio-economic terms because other sectors of the economy took priority. To paraphrase Chesterton's remark about Christianity, the National Socialist programme for agriculture was not so much tried and found wanting as found impossible and never tried. The so-called "peasant policy" of which Meinberg spoke in 1933 was simply incompatible with the needs of the country in its current economic position; building up defence and getting six million people back to work took precedence, and indeed the latter at least had to, as Germany lived mainly by industry and not by agriculture anyway. The farmers played second fiddle under Hitler because they would have under anyone.

The only remaining economic issue to be discussed is that of free versus fixed prices. It has been suggested that had no rigid system existed post 1936 the peasant would have done better than he did at a time of rising demand caused by higher incomes in general.¹⁶ That people were earning

more in 1937 than they had four years before is undeniable, and therefore in a position to pay more for food.¹⁷ As against this are the remarks already made here about the need for stability in order not to endanger exports and defence: given this, it seems unlikely that any government would have permitted increases in food prices, whether under a guaranteed system or on the free market. Even if prices had been free originally in the Third Reich it appears probable that at any sign of a real upwards tendency they would have been controlled by law anyway. In fact, the whole idea of supply and demand as the basis for the agrarian index was clearly beginning to lose its validity everywhere in the 'thirties, as witness the Milk Marketing Board system in Britain. However possible in theory, it seems impractical to criticize the NSDAP on this score. The argument should surely be that its fixed prices were too low, rather than that guaranteed ones were wrong in principle.

Before this socio-economic section on NS policy is finally left, it is worth noting exactly how the kind of problems which the Party faced on the land, and the arguments provoked by them, were reminiscent of previous times, so that in this respect the NSDAP period fits smoothly into the continuity of German history. The question of the imbalance in home supplies of fats, for example, played a part in the formulation of the emergency programme in 1928, but ten years later the same problem was vexing Darré and Backe. The arguments between the RBF and Schacht as to whether priority should be given in imports to food or to raw materials for industry sound very much like those between von Braun and Dr. Warmbold. Parallels over an even longer period can be drawn in other fields; in view of Darré's opinion of the East Elbian landowners the following quotation could be said to be typical of his ideas "Large estates which can only be kept up at the expense of Germany deserve to disappear." It was in fact part of an address by Max Weber at Freiburg in 1895.¹⁸ The Royal Prussian Settlement

Company was founded in 1886 to repopulate the eastern border areas; in the 'thirties of the next century the NSDAP devoted much thought and effort to exactly the same point. At the 1901 conference organized by the Association for Social Policy, Max Sering produced his version of an agrarian programme for Germany, based on duties on grain to protect the home supplier, the elimination of foreign labour on farms, the furtherance of internal colonization and reform of the inheritance laws, as the present form was liberal/capitalistic and had taken away the "homestead" aspect of the German farm.¹⁹ Of course this kind of programme did not embrace NS views on race or anti-semitism, but it is suggested that the resemblances to NS practice are nonetheless striking. This is true in respect of earlier völkisch programmes, such as the one produced by Schönerer in Austria in 1879 calling for the maintenance of a "sturdy peasantry" based on a homestead law and low-interest agricultural credit.²⁰

The views of people like Sering on eastern settlement in particular offer an even closer resemblance to those of Darré. In September 1915 Sering was invited by the then government to tour the areas in eastern Europe occupied by the German Army since the outbreak of the war and report on them in regard to their settlement potentiality.²¹ This activity by the authorities should be considered in conjunction with the petition handed in to the government in May 1915 on behalf of six organizations, including both the CBV and the forerunner of the Landbund, calling for annexations in the east for agrarian purposes.²² A government official independently gave Bethmann-Hollweg two separate memoranda in 1915 demanding eastern settlement as an antidote to urbanization (Verstädterung).²³

This work is not primarily sociological in content, but the foregoing suggests that this remarkable continuity in German society could be used to offer some explanation of the appeal of National Socialism to the agrarian

electorate prior to 1933. There is the first obvious point that derivation from earlier history made NSDAP policy and propaganda readily understandable to voters who had heard similar arguments from other sources. Secondly, there is the fact that if the Party was faced with the same problems as earlier politicians, then the essential socio-economic pattern had not changed; in 1901 German thinkers on the subject had not been able to decide what the future of the country should be economically, that is, should it continue to place reliance upon industrial development, which was the actual contemporary trend? The logical conclusion to this process was a state like England, where agriculture had been adversely affected by the demand for Free Trade to assist industrial efforts. Or should the domestic food-supplier be artificially protected by tariff barriers to ensure that the country's foodstuffs could be produced within its own frontiers, as Adolf Wagner advocated?²⁴ This question was still debated in the twenties, and as already stated, tended to be a bone of contention between Schacht and Darre in the Third Reich.

It is therefore suggested here, that in the first half of this century there were always two schools of economic thought in Germany, based respectively on Protectionism and Free Trade, and that the NSDAP was in effect an extreme version of the first. Secondly, the decision not to adopt a thorough-going policy of furthering industry from 1900 onwards left a fatal difficulty for all governments, the existence of large-scale peasantry, politically conservative and not very efficient technically, always liable to place any system of democracy at risk during a time of economic distress, as the opening chapters of this thesis have perhaps demonstrated.²⁵ It would appear in retrospect that the continuing inability of German statesmen to decide exactly what kind of state in socio-economic terms they really did want played no small part in assisting Hitler's rise. Of course, the problem was a highly complicated one, and it must be accepted that it would be unfair to blame

Weimar politicians for not having produced a more modern and rationalised system of agriculture in the relatively short time-span of 1919-1933, especially as both inflation and depression hampered them. The truth is that the Weimar cabinets were caught in a cleft stick; if they favoured the peasantry they held back the course of current economic development, if they did not they jeopardized the peasants' economic existence and thereby their own Republic. It seems, therefore, unlikely that, given simultaneously a large-scale peasantry and acute economic distress, parliamentary democracy could have survived past 1929. Ultimately the main reason for the NS accession was simply the relatively backward nature of German society in the 'twenties,'²⁶ combined with economic recession and the bitterness evoked by a lost war. The whole time-span from 1919 onwards seems indeed to have been regarded by Germans as particularly unpleasant, as witness the results of opinion polls at regular intervals asking the public which recent period of history they regarded as the best; the Third Reich in peacetime always received more favourable replies than the Weimar Republic.²⁷ This appears to confirm non-acceptance of the "System" in the popular mind by large sections of the population, an atmosphere which enabled Hitler's oratory and political expertise, combined with the drive and energy of the NS leaders as a group, to harness all those against Weimar into one organized political movement to destroy it. Existing agrarian dissatisfaction with parliamentary government probably also goes a long way towards explaining how Darre was able to co-ordinate agricultural bodies so rapidly in the period after the NS accession, so hungry were the farmers for unity.²⁸

(iii) The apparently monolithic structure of the NSDAP concealed the fact to the external observer that very often total disunity existed below the surface, and the final section of this conclusion has to deal with the effect of this upon the theme of this work. When the RNS is considered it is clear that it represented that familiar institution of the Third Reich, the private empire. As such it came into conflict both with the Party and the state.

As far as the first was concerned, there were three main areas of conflict: with the Gauleiters there was bound to be a clash, as they had been given vice regal powers on a territorial basis, whereas the RNS in effect claimed overlordship on a professional one. To this overlapping of authority was added personality clashes between men such as Darre and Koch. Similar considerations apply to the friction with the DAF, the organization charged with supervision of labour which collided with that one dealing with agrarian matters, the object of the dispute being agrarian labour: this was exacerbated by the orientation of the RNS towards the peasant, whilst the DAF was concerned with the employee.

Over and above the rows over areas of responsibility in the Third Reich was another issue, namely, whether the RNS should exist at all: this was a point upon which opinions in the Party were divided, as Darre's organization was in effect the particular materialization of an abstract principle, the corporative state. It need not seem surprising that the NSDAP had no agreed views on this latter form of economic structure, since after all the movement was not primarily based upon these kind of considerations, but rather upon politice-racial foundations. Hitler himself attacked von Papen's programme recovery precisely upon the grounds that the lifting up of the German people could not be accomplished by economic means alone, but only by political and spiritual measures.²⁹ As the leading members of the NSDAP were drawn into the Party by this kind of thinking, that is, the primacy of politics over other areas of activity, it should not be expected that they would necessarily have any particular economic theory in common, and they did not.

The corporative aspect worn by the RNS was mainly responsible for its collision in administrative terms with the normal apparatus of state and local government. Darre's organization resembled a medieval guild, or rather series of guilds, comprising all engaged in food production and distribution: in the Middle Ages there was no local government with which such an "Estate of

Agriculture" could have clashed, but to introduce such a concept in 1933 was to create two areas of authority crossing one another. Modern society is based upon territorial administrative units, whereas the RNS was profession-orientated: when the Bauernführer dealt with issues like debt-relief or supervised land sales etc. they were cutting right across the normal channels of government, which continued to exist in theory. The same point could obviously be made about the Erbhof courts or the supervision of the price regulations and marketing in general. Its enormously wide powers made the Reichsnährstand an anachronism, and further, ensured friction with normal governmental officials. Had Hitler built a genuine corporative state for all professions the apparatus of local government could have been dismantled to a considerable extent: but to create one corporation was a curious policy and inevitably made the RNS an anomaly in respect of its relations both with Party and State.

Internally, the corporation was nominally self-governing, but clearly was never allowed to be really autonomous in its dealings with other bodies. Men like Meinberg and Habbes found themselves in trouble when they tried to make it so. The charge against Habbes by Darre was that he had tried to use the RNS just as an organ of Bauer interests, like the old RLB had been.³⁰ This is to give the game away; had the RNS really been independent this is exactly what it should have been in the first place. Darre himself never regarded it in this way, but only as an instrument of national policy. After Meinberg's dismissal the corporation became more and more subordinate to the REM, until it was taken over by it after the outbreak of war in 1939.³¹

(iv) Apart from the question of the RNS both in its internal and external aspects, Darre's place in the NS hierarchy is clearly both interesting and important. It was suggested at his trial that he had initially maintained his position by an alliance with Himmler.³² There seems to be some evidence

for this, as from their correspondence, in which the form "Du" was always used, it is clear that they were close friends originally. The S.S. leader was keenly interested in agriculture, being chief of the League of German Agronomists (Reichsbund Deutscher Diplomlandwirte).³³ In his youth he had been a member of the Artamanen, a "Back to the land" movement dedicated to obviating the need for foreign farm labour in Germany.³⁴ Himmler maintained a close connection with Darre who was head of the Race and Settlement Section of the S.S. itself until February 1938. It was this office which administered the S.S. order No. 65 according to which all members of the force had to have their fiancées vetted in terms of racial fitness before Himmler approved the marriage.³⁵ The Reichsführer however apparently began to find Darre too theoretical for his liking, and in February 1938 forced his resignation from the leadership of the Race and Settlement office.³⁶ This cooling-off in their relationship meant that the RBF had lost a valuable ally.

This was all the more significant, as Darre had steadily been losing ground with Hitler for some time: no doubt the crisis of 1934/5 had contributed to this, but it would seem that the Food Minister had never been one of the Führer's favourites in the first place. At Nuremberg it was testified that Hitler had always had a different attitude to some Ministers than to others, being close to Goebbels and Goering but relatively distant from Rust and Darre.³⁷ For his part, Darre obviously accepted the Führer's leadership, and his decisions on no further price increases for food, for example, but he may well have entertained feelings for Hitler which nonetheless stopped somewhat short of idolatry in personal terms. In one of his own early works Darre ridiculed Communist veneration of Lenin as alien to Germanic tradition, and cited in support of his thesis Barbarossa's alleged scorn of Byzantine treatment of their emperor.³⁸ It would seem that some aspects of the Führer worship in the Third Reich were uncongenial to Darre.

In terms of personal power, Darre's descent can be seen as having consisted of three stages: the first ended in 1936 with the appointment of Backe as Foodstuffs Commissioner for the Four Year Plan, a post which should surely have gone to the RBF himself. By autumn 1939 Darre seems himself to have become disillusioned with the policy which Hitler was following and attempted to resign; he received a letter from the Fuhrer which stated bluntly "Your dirty agrarian political apparatus is not worth powder and shot. What have you actually achieved?"³⁹ His resignation was rejected, presumably because Hitler wished to preserve the facade of unity. That it was the appearance of harmony only can be inferred from the testimony of Harmening, A Civil Servant in the REM, who said at Nuremberg that the commission for the war preparations against Russia was given to Backe for the foodstuffs sector, with instructions from Hitler and Goering to keep the measures secret from Darre.⁴⁰ By 1942 Goebbels was confiding to his diary that "Darre is completely discredited with the Fuhrer. He deserves it."⁴¹ A few days later came the entry "The Fuhrer has decided to boot out Darre. Backe is to be his successor . . . He (Backe) is not a pale theoretician . . . but a real first-class practical man."⁴² To preserve appearances it was announced that the RBF was on sick leave,⁴³ but in 1944 Backe was given the post as Minister in name as well as in fact. His rise to this eminence thus coincided at every stage with the corresponding decline of Darre.

There seem to have been three grounds for his gradual descent into obscurity, a fate which few could have foreseen when he became Minister in 1933.⁴⁴ Firstly, there was the question of his capacity for the job as Minister and RBF, which the events of 1934/5 and the constant friction with the Party must have made appear inadequate: the relative failure of the Erzeugungsschlacht probably also contributed to the low opinion of Darre which Hitler has apparently formed in 1939.⁴⁵ Secondly, linked with this point was the problem of Darre's personality, which seemed to all his colleagues to be unsuitable for high office.

He was seen as an impractical idealist, not just by Goebbels but by Reischle and Haushofer, both of whom were close to him in the RNS.⁴⁶ Backe on the other hand gave an impression of being a practical man, which led to Goering choosing him as head of agrarian matters for the Four Year Plan in 1936.⁴⁷ Postwar testimony by Willikens contributed to the general picture of Darre as being, in contrast to Backe, a man of limited organization capacity.⁴⁸

Over and above the question of Darre as a man was that of his policy differences with Hitler, which clearly played a part in his downfall. These centred principally around the race issue, and the task of the peasantry in acting as the blood-source of the nation, which for Darre was always the main reason for supporting agriculture, as he said to the LGFs at Weimar in February 1938.⁴⁹ Like Himmler and Rosenberg, but perhaps unlike Hitler, Goebbels and Goering, the RBF took the NSDAP's propaganda about blood and racialism very seriously, as witness his (undated) handwritten remark on the subject to the effect that unless the country's valuable blood could be preserved, all the statesmanship of the Party would be in vain.⁵⁰ That he was aware that not all of his NS colleagues shared his opinions in this respect can be seen from his own speeches and letters throughout the period of the Third Reich. To the LGFs at Weimar in 1935 he pointed out that their duty was to drive home NSDAP racial policy not only among the peasantry but also in the ranks of the Party itself.⁵¹

"The timing of this speech is very interesting, in the previous month Hess had made it clear in an official announcement that the RNS had to give precedence to the Party in respect of political leadership on the land. As Darre could not now exercise so much influence in this area he apparently decided that instead of converting the peasants directly he would convert the Party instead, and thereby turn the peasants into his version of National Socialists indirectly, via the Party political leadership. That the RBF continued to be suspicious of exactly how much some leaders were really attached to his racial doctrines,

and all their consequences, was seen from contemporary correspondence.

In October 1938 Darre wrote to Reischle to the effect that the movement must be taught to tie itself uncompromisingly to blood and its consequences.⁵² Almost simultaneously at the sixth annual Peasants' Assembly the RBF pointed out that the peasant had two duties, the provision of food and the role of life-source of the nation; he added that the first was so much in the foreground in the minds of those who did not understand the peasantry that the second task was being overlooked.⁵³ It is suggested here that the degree of emphasis on economic considerations was displeasing to the RBF, who always placed race as the first priority.

It is not of course intended to imply here that Darre was not a supporter of Hitler's foreign policy in principle; he pointed out in 1938, also at the National Peasant Assembly, that the success of the *Erzeugungsschlacht* in decreasing German dependence upon outside sources had given the Führer the chance to operate an independent foreign policy: the RBF clearly felt this to be a justification for the RNS's existence. Insofar as territorial claims were concerned Darre and his leader saw eye-to-eye; as early as September 1930 the former had written of Germany's moral right, based upon blood and soil ideology, to reclaim as much land in the East as was required to bring land area and population into accord. The same essay describes Warsaw as "a former German city."⁵⁴ From the context Darre was not necessarily laying claim to it again, but the whole tone is that of someone concerned with the extension of Germany's frontiers.⁵⁵ The RBF's quarrel with the rearmament programme was over degree, not principle.

(v) Whatever degree of priority was given to maintaining the peasantry and however much the question of the precedence of agriculture over industry or the contrary was disputed, there is no doubt that all the NSDAP leaders wished to preserve German agriculture in its current form. The existing

order of society was to be upheld, so that although there were differences of opinion about how much agriculture was to be furthered, no-one wished to see the peasantry go down in favour of larger-scale agrarian units. In the depths of the Russian campaign the Fuhrer continued to eulogize the peasant as such, citing France as a country fundamentally sound simply because it had maintained its peasantry.⁵⁶ The fact that the NSDAP was radical in its propaganda methods, as well as being vaguely anti-capitalist, should not blind anyone wishing to analyse its nature to the fact that it was basically utterly conservative in its outlook. The kind of society in which both Hitler and Darre believed was already out of date in 1933. Even had Germany won the war, it seems unlikely that the Party could have prevented rural migration in the long run, since it appears certain that a rural life held no particular charm for the vast majority of Germans in the 'thirties. The time was simply out of joint for any kind of "peasant policy": NS policy of preserving the peasantry undoubtedly did help the food-producers quite substantially in socio-economic terms in the period 1933-1936 but it seems very unlikely that German agrarian society could have been frozen into that particular mould in perpetuity. In order to maintain it the German public would simply have been called upon to pay unduly high prices for food, since foreign food-stuffs would have been cheaper than those produced on the relatively small-scale units of domestic agriculture. How difficult it would have been to have dovetailed dear food into an economy based primarily upon industry was demonstrated by the problems entailed in trying to keep prices stable in the period of peacetime in the Third Reich: success could only be achieved by keeping food prices fixed at a relatively low level. To this argument, it may be objected that had Germany won the war other nations would probably have been compelled to buy her industrial goods whether they were competitively priced or not, so that the Third Reich could have afforded a dear food

policy. There are three points to be made in reply to this consideration: firstly, it has to be accepted that NS agrarian policy needed a war in order to make it successful, which in the wider context of international relations makes it appear irresponsible. Secondly, it would have maintained existing inefficiency of production in German agriculture, simply at the expense of neighbouring countries: under those circumstances any policy can be made to pay, so that in a sense NS plans for conquest were a substitute for a genuine economic policy at home. The sword took the place of the balance sheet. The Party always liked to preach the primacy of politics over economics, but in reality its leaders adopted an aggressive foreign policy because they simply did not understand the latter subject. It is suggested here that they failed to grasp the facts of economic history which appear to demonstrate that the path to prosperity lies in wider trade associations and not in a policy of self-sufficiency, which is simply a cul-de-sac. In fairness to Darre however it must be said that he always maintained that Germany should not give up world trade entirely but practise it only within a framework of national economic independence: the collapse of Germany in 1918 as having been due partially to the Allied blockade was cited as the grounds for ensuring self-sufficiency: ~~to~~ the Party's Economic Commission in January 1939 Darre spoke of the "terrible spectre" of the 1918 famine as being always before his eyes in building up the RNS. His views on autarky may be summarized from his remarks upon the same occasion, to the effect that the world trade of a country must serve its political policy, rather than vice-versa.⁵⁷

Thirdly, even had the subjugated peoples been forced to subsidize the peasantry in Germany, after a victorious war, there seems no evidence to suppose that the Germans themselves wanted to maintain the rural population at its existing level, as rural migration before 1939 indicates. It is therefore hard to suppress a feeling that the NSDAA simply came on the scene too late: its country had trodden the road to industrialization for so long that the process could neither be halted nor reversed.

1. Fritzsche quoted in Schoenbaum p.43
2. Von Sonnenberg, quoted in Pulzer p.45
3. Feder "Das Programm der NSDAP" p.44ff
4. Pulzer p.46
5. Pulzer p.39
6. Vide Article 155 of the Weimar Constitution, that the exploitation of the land was a duty of the owner in the interests of the community
7. Speech 5th December 1931 in his capacity as Osthilfe Kommissar:
GSA 1111
8. "Ideengeschichte" p.186
9. Cf. Tracy "Agriculture in Western Europe" p.132 "It was only in Nazi Germany that the role of agriculture was clearly defined in relation to overall political and economic aims and that the resulting policy was consistently and effectively applied."
10. See Note 1, p.433
11. Hitler's speech in the Reichstag March 1933, reported in BA-R43
II/203: Cf. the essay "Bauer und Sippe" by the Lbsch Württemberg claiming that Communism could only flourish in the cities because the tight, interlocking family relationships on the land prevented it: LUD Bundle 1625/K710
12. Speech reported in "V.B." 12th February 1935
13. See Appendix K
14. A description of NS attempts at land control is in Appendix K
15. The programme of investing in public works in order to create new jobs was not of course started by the NSDAP in 1933; the existing plans of von Papen were just taken over: Mann "The History of Germany since 1789" p.427
16. Vide C. von Dietze "Deutsche Agrarpolitik seit Bismarck" p.210
17. According to a contemporary thesis, the real income of white and blue-collar workers increased 34% between the second quarter of

- 1933 and the corresponding period in 1937: Steiner "Agrarwirtschaft und Agrarpolitik" p.103.
18. Quoted in Mann "The History of Germany since 1789" p.208
 19. See Dietze "Deutsche Agrarpolitik seit Bismarck" p.203
 20. Pulzer p.151. That Hitler was aware of Schönerer can be seen from his praise of him in "Mein Kampf" on pages 93-5.
 21. F. Fischer "Griff nach der Weltmacht" p.105 and especially pp.234/5.
 22. Ibid. pp.142/3
 23. Ibid. pp.104/5 and 138/9
 24. Wagner's views are summarized in Tracy "Agriculture in Western Europe" p.93
 25. This seems confirmed by more recent events: the German farmers' union leader, Herr Rehwinkel, threatened the government during negotiations at Brussels over Common Market agrarian prices that his followers would vote for the extreme Right-Wing NPD if the outcome of the talks was not satisfactory for German agricultural interests. A. Grosser "Germany in our time" p.183
 26. It must also be emphasized that a factor in the situation was the sheer newness of the movement as an organized Party, which necessarily meant that it had never been associated with the mistakes of any post-1918 régime.
 27. The results of these polls were reported in "Die Welt" 19th May 1970.
 28. How some politicians and agrarian leaders had unconsciously paved the way for Hitler, without themselves being NSDAP members, can easily be illustrated. In 1930 the chairman of the Landbund in Pomerania told the Chancellor in a letter that "The people must get itself accustomed to being ruled not by Parliament but by men": von Flemming to Brüning 3rd December 1930: BA-R43 I/1277. When

von Papen informed the Agricultural Council's annual meeting that the current economic situation demanded getting away from party political doctrines for a solution, his remarks were greeted with "lively approval": Meeting 11th June 1932: Ibid

29. In a speech at Günzburg (Württemberg): "V.B." 11th October 1932
30. As early as 1930 Darré was attacking the "Green Front" exactly because it pursued "interest" politics, which means he held it to be a pressure-group for farmers; "Erkenntnisse und Werden" p.213. This shows clearly that the RBF already regarded the task of agrarian organizations to be that of integrating their followers into national life and economy as a whole, again a typically holistic attitude to government and society.
31. See for example Darré to Finance Minister 25th November 1939 where he speaks of the RNS as though its sole task is to further national self-sufficiency: BA-R43 II/2029. This is a curious view of an organization which ostensibly was founded as a farmers union in part.
32. "Trial Brief-Plädoyer" p.7
33. Schoenbaum p.165
34. Rosenberg "Die Artamanenbewegung" p.10. Himmler was leader for Bavaria
35. Order A.65 is described in "Ideengeschichte" p.166
36. Koehl p.27
37. F. Schlegelberger's testimony "Der Prozess gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher" etc. Vol. XX pp.289/295: this man was a defence witness for von Papen, not for Darré himself
38. "Das Bauerntum als Lebensquell der nordischen Rasse" p.36
39. Quoted in "Trial Brief" p.223
40. See Note 122 p.479

41. "The Goebbels Diaries" p.165
42. Ibid p.168
43. V.B. 26th May 1942
44. At that time he was described in one contemporary work as one of the "most gifted young men in the circle around Hitler": quoted in Gies p.349
45. The RNS itself may also have been viewed with disfavour; at the National Peasant Assembly in November 1938 Darré gave the number of full-time officials in his organization as being about half the number employed to administer Berlin alone, a statistic which he hoped would remove "much prejudice" against the Reichsnährstand: "Um Blut und Boden" p.555. This seems a curiously defensive remark five years after the RNS's foundation.
46. As communicated in personal interviews
47. Vide "Trial Brief" p.218, which makes it clear that Backe was personally selected by Goering.
48. Willikens spoke of the difficulty of getting decisions and the general delays in procedure in the REM under Darré: IfZ ZS 1622
49. V.B. 11th February 1935
50. This observation is in the front of BA-NS 26/949
51. V.B. 11th February 1935
52. Darré to Reischle 25th October 1938: ADC Reichsnährstand B
53. Quoted in Verhey p.103
54. Reprinted in "Erkenntnisse und Werden" p.165
55. In summer 1930 Darré sent a memorandum to Hitler concerning land settlement in the east in areas won from the Slavs: K.D. Bracher "The German Dictatorship" p.155
56. "Hitler's Table Talk" p.618
57. "Um Blut und Boden" pp.513-9

Appendix A: the statistical background to German agriculture in 1933

1. Agricultural employment

Table I¹

| | |
|--|-------------------|
| Full-time farmers | 2,077,101 |
| Part-time farmers | 975,742 |
| Family members over 14 years of age | 7,165,059 |
| Full-time outside labour | 2,055,885 |
| Part-time outside labour | 811,905 |
| Administrative workers/ officials | <u>95,756</u> |
| | <u>13,181,448</u> |

This represented 20.8% of the total population of the country, the proportion living in rural areas altogether being one third.²

2. Land Use: the number of holdings and their share of the total land

Table II³

| <u>Farm Size (Ha)</u> | <u>No. of holdings in that category</u> | <u>Agricultural land comprised in that category (Ha)</u> |
|-----------------------|---|--|
| 0.5 - 1 | 356,007 | 246,187 |
| 1 - 2 | 470,112 | 619,132 |
| 2 - 5 | 783,031 | 2,376,091 |
| 5 - 10 | 616,313 | 3,888,384 |
| 10 - 20 | 447,832 | 5,337,162 |
| 20 - 50 | 264,256 | 6,273,758 |
| 50 - 100 | 52,240 | 2,571,820 |
| 100 - 200 | 14,352 | 1,370,596 |
| over 200 | <u>13,694</u> | <u>3,940,386</u> |
| | <u>3,017,837</u> | <u>26,623,516</u> |

Bild 5. — Die Anbauggebiete Deutschlands⁶²⁾

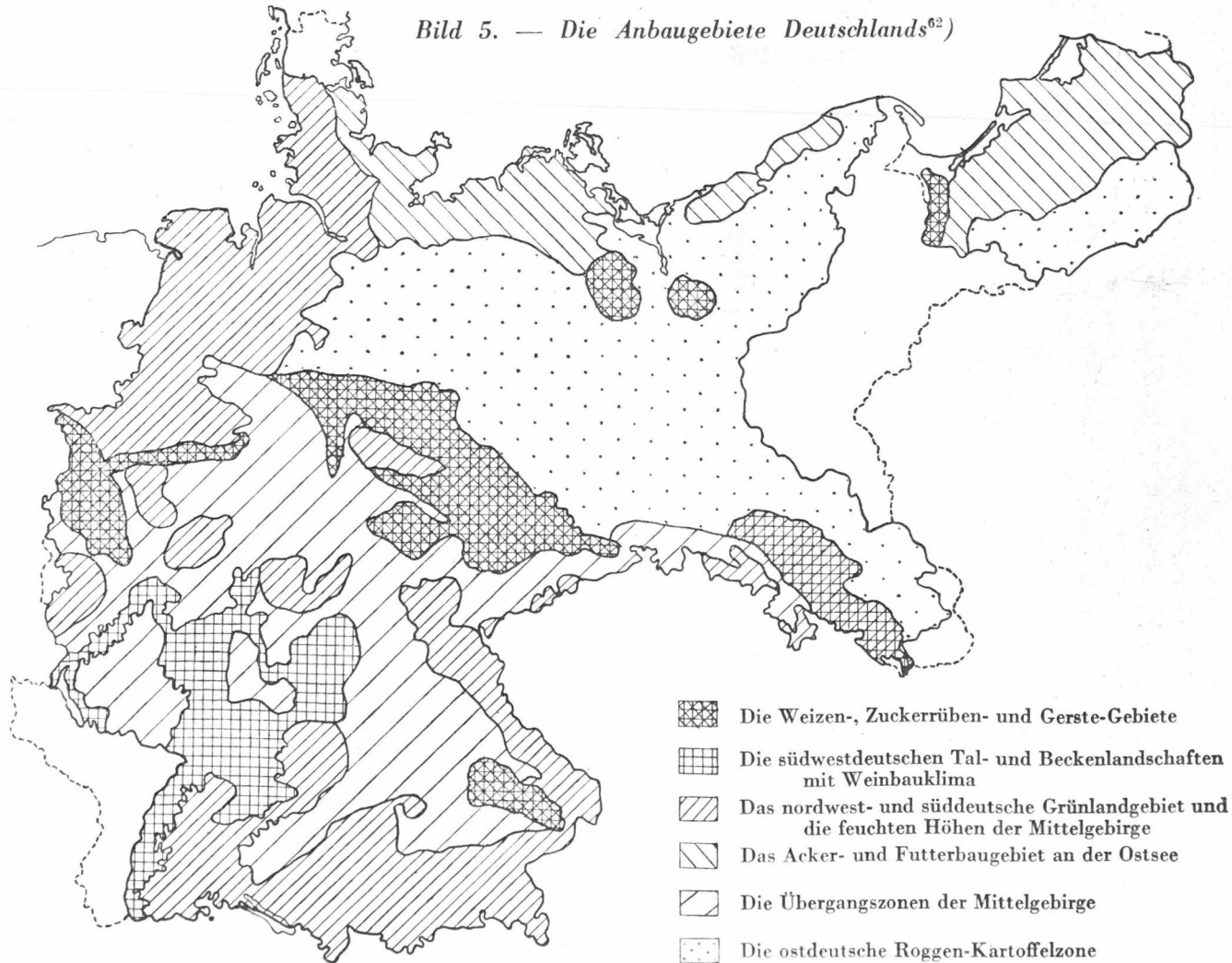
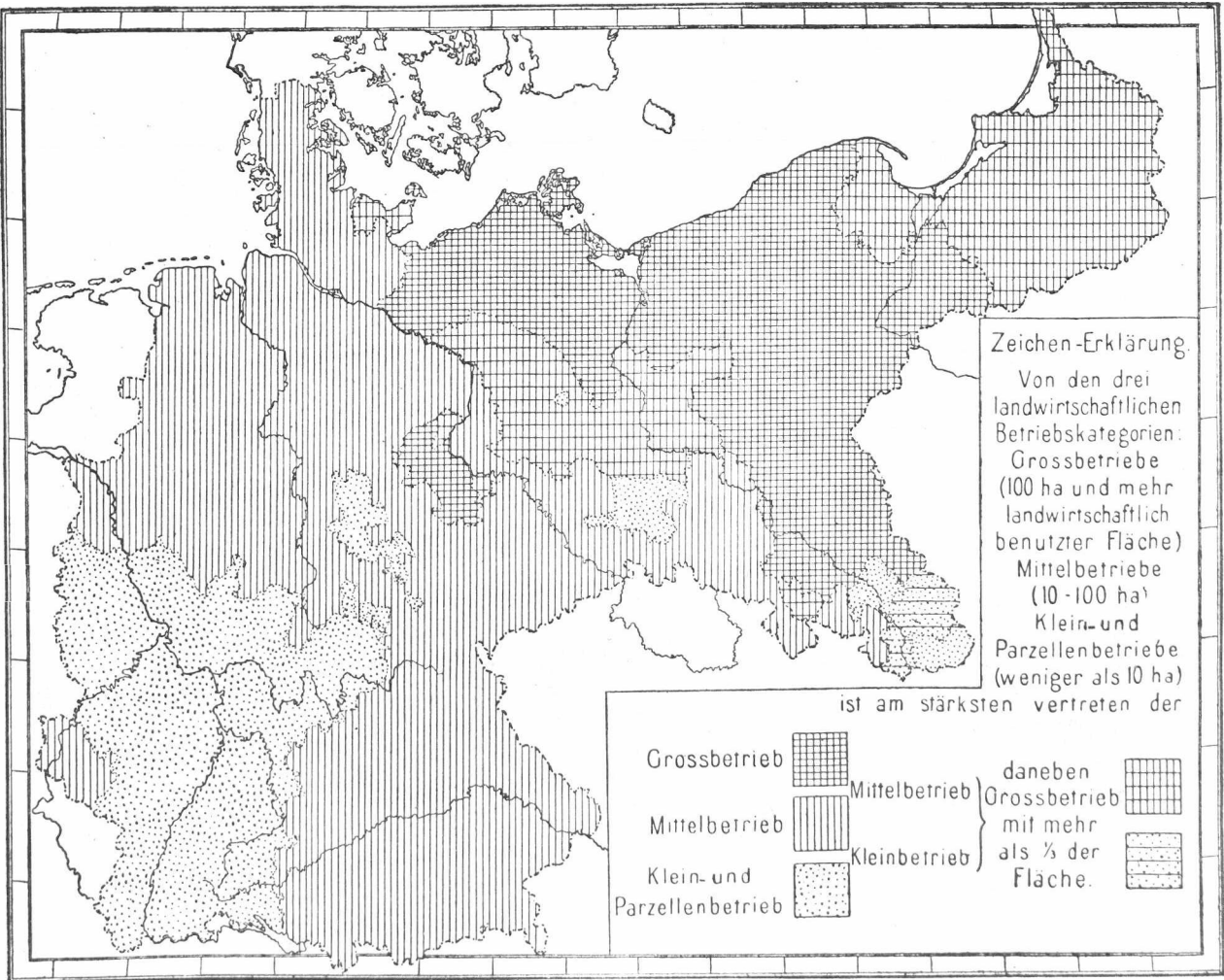


Bild 3. — Betriebsgrößenaufbau der Landwirtschaft³⁵⁾

Arable land constituted 18,315,309 Ha and animal husbandry 7,979,033 Ha: the two together comprised 61.2% of the total area of Germany.⁴ As far as farm size was concerned, the tendency was for the smaller holdings to increase in number at the expense of the larger: between 1882 and 1933 the total in the 5-20 Ha category went up by 225,154, whilst the estates over 100 Ha declined in number by 4,512.⁵ Germany was a land of peasant owners/lessees rather than one whose agriculture was based on a latifundien system, and in 1933 this tendency was actually strengthening.

3. Farm Size and Production

Farm size in Germany exercised some influence upon the type of product cultivated and also upon what share of farm output was consumed by the family and what share was sold on the market.

Table III⁶

Output on Pomeranian farms 1933/4 by type of product and farm size

| <u>Farm Size</u> | <u>East Pomerania</u> | | <u>West Pomerania</u> | | <u>Central Pomerania</u> | |
|------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------------|
| | <u>Arable</u> | <u>Stock raising</u> | <u>Arable</u> | <u>Stock raising</u> | <u>Arable</u> | <u>Stock raising</u> |
| under 25 Ha | 15 | 79 | 29 | 66 | 30 | 68 |
| 25 - 125 Ha | 28 | 69 | 53 | 45 | 47 | 52 |
| over 125 Ha | 50 | 40 | 66 | 32 | 60 | 34 |

As can be seen the smaller holdings devoted proportionately less land to crop cultivation, producing mainly stock for sale, whilst the larger farmers concentrated upon crops. The peasant family tended to consume a relatively higher percentage of the farm's output than the estate, which sold almost everything it raised on the outside market, as can be judged from the following figures.

Table IV⁷

| <u>Farm Size in Ha</u> | <u>Under 5</u> | <u>5-20</u> | <u>20-50</u> | <u>50-100</u> | <u>over 100</u> |
|------------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|
| Percentage output sold | 49 | 80 | 88 | 91 | 94 |
| Self supply | 51 | 20 | 12 | 9 | 6 |

1. "Statistisches Jahrbuch 1936" p.78
2. Bente "Landwirtschaft und Bauerntum" pp.13 and 19
3. "Wirtschaft und Statistik 1934" p.554
4. "Statistisches Jahrbuch 1936" pp.85 and 78
5. Goerlitz p.343
6. H. Wendorff "Das Festpreissystem als Mittel der Erzeugungslenkung in der Provinz Pommern" in "Berichte über die Landwirtschaft" 1939 p.628
7. Brand p.XV

Appendix B: Farm Output, and the financial position of German agriculture prior to 1933

Table V¹

Production, farm consumption and sales 1924-1933 (Billion RM)

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Sales</u> | <u>Produce consumed on the farm</u> | <u>Total Production</u> | <u>Crops</u> | <u>of which Livestock/ Animal products</u> |
|-------------|--------------|---|-----------------------------|--------------|--|
| 1924/5 | 7.5 | 3.8 | 11.4 | 4.4 | 6.9 |
| 1925/6 | 8.1 | 3.8 | 11.9 | 4.2 | 7.6 |
| 1926/7 | 8.3 | 3.7 | 12.0 | 4.6 | 7.4 |
| 1927/8 | 9.3 | 3.6 | 13.0 | 5.0 | 7.9 |
| 1928/9 | 10.2 | 3.8 | 14.0 | 5.2 | 8.8 |
| 1929/30 | 9.8 | 3.7 | 13.5 | 5.0 | 8.5 |
| 1930/1 | 8.6 | 3.0 | 11.6 | 4.3 | 7.3 |
| 1931/2 | 7.4 | 2.8 | 10.1 | 4.3 | 5.9 |
| 1932/3 | 6.4 | 2.3 | 8.7 | 3.6 | 5.1 |

Minor discrepancies are produced by rounding-off.

Table VI²

Total agricultural output by volume (1927/8 and 1928/9 average = 100)

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Volume</u> | <u>Year</u> | <u>Volume</u> |
|-------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| 1924/5 | 88 | 1929/30 | 105 |
| 1925/6 | 90 | 1930/1 | 105 |
| 1926/7 | 88 | 1931/2 | 108 |
| 1927/8 | 98 | 1932/3 | 104 |
| 1928/9 | 102 | | |

Table VII³

Self-sufficiency in Germany by various agrarian products

| <u>Product</u> | <u>Percentage of domestic consumption produced</u> <u>inside Germany</u> | |
|-------------------------|---|---------------|
| | <u>1927/8</u> | <u>1933/4</u> |
| Bread grain | 79 | 99 |
| Potatoes | 96 | 100 |
| Vegetables | 84 | 90 |
| Sugar | 100 | 99 |
| Meat | 91 | 98 |
| Eggs | 64 | 80 |
| Fats | <u>44</u> | <u>53</u> |
| All foodstuffs combined | 68 | 80 |

Table VIII⁴

Output value of agriculture by item 1928/9 in comparison with

1932/3 (Million RM)

| | <u>Type of Product</u> | <u>Year</u> | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| | | <u>1928/9</u> | <u>1932/3</u> |
| <u>Crops</u> | Rye | 1,055 | 768 |
| | Wheat | 673 | 770 |
| | Oats | 281 | 95 |
| | Barley | 348 | 201 |
| | Potatoes | 805 | 479 |
| | Legumes | 41 | 20 |
| | Sugar | 618 | 544 |
| | Fruit | 618 | 353 |
| | (* except Legumes) | | |
| | * Vegetables | 452 | 214 |
| | Hops | 35 | 9 |
| | Tobacco | 20 | 33 |
| | Wine | 200 | 84 |
| (Ø including flax and hemp) | Ø Miscellaneous | <u>51</u> | <u>18</u> |
| | Crop products together | 5,197 | 3,588 |
| | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| <u>Livestock/ Animal Products</u> | Pigs | 3,400 | 1,694 |
| | Cattle | 1,260 | 671 |
| | Calves | 412 | 196 |
| | Sheep | 94 | 55 |
| | Goats | 34 | 13 |
| | Poultry | 133 | 88 |
| | ± Milk | 2,879 | 1,936 |
| | ± Eggs | 564 | 399 |
| | Wool | 42 | 11 |
| | Honey | <u>26</u> | <u>30</u> |
| | Livestock/Animal Products together | 8,844 | 5,093 |
| (± includes goat and sheep milk) | | <hr/> | <hr/> |
| | Total Output | 14,041 | 8,681 |

Table IX⁵

Farm Products Price Index 1924-1932 (1913 = 100)

| | <u>1924</u> | <u>1925</u> | <u>1926</u> | <u>1927</u> | <u>1928</u> | <u>1930</u> | <u>1931</u> | <u>1932</u> |
|----------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| All agrarian produce together | 119.6 | 133.0 | 129.3 | 137.8 | 134.3 | 113.1 | 103.8 | 91.3 |
| Crop products only | 115.1 | 127.1 | 130.5 | 153.8 | 142.2 | 115.3 | 119.3 | 112.0 |
| Livestock | 102.1 | 120.2 | 120.9 | 111.5 | 111.3 | 112.4 | 83.0 | 65.5 |
| Animal produce | 155.3 | 162.2 | 145.7 | 142.9 | 144.0 | 121.7 | 108.4 | 93.9 |

Table X⁶

German and world prices compared by product (RM per 100 kilogrammes)

| <u>Year</u> | | <u>Product</u> | | | | | |
|-------------|--------|----------------|------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|---------------|
| | | <u>Wheat</u> | <u>Rye</u> | <u>Barley</u> | <u>Cattle</u> | <u>Pigs</u> | <u>Butter</u> |
| 1928 | German | 23.40 | 23.91 | - | 114.20 | 133.60 | 359.17 |
| | World | 22.64 | 22.20 | - | 82.96 | 88.89 | 352.87 |
| 1929 | German | 22.78 | 19.24 | 18.52 | 113.60 | 162.00 | 343.75 |
| | World | 20.67 | 18.34 | 15.17 | 81.43 | 104.10 | 340.73 |
| 1930 | German | 25.64 | 16.19 | 17.36 | 114.60 | 133.40 | 279.02 |
| | World | 16.33 | 10.50 | 9.43 | 80.43 | 87.55 | 276.64 |
| 1931 | German | 24.88 | 18.28 | 18.69 | 89.60 | 97.80 | 250.18 |
| | World | 9.38 | 7.66 | 9.04 | 55.79 | 51.23 | 220.52 |
| 1932 | German | 22.95 | 17.85 | 16.78 | 68.00 | 81.00 | 222.88 |
| | World | 8.51 | 7.81 | 8.50 | 27.83 | 43.38 | 141.82 |

Table XI⁷

Total Farm expenses itemized 1924-1933 (Million RM)

| <u>Item</u> | <u>1924/5</u> | <u>1927/8</u> | <u>1928/9</u> | <u>Year</u> <u>1929/30</u> | <u>1930/1</u> | <u>1931/2</u> | <u>1932/3</u> |
|---|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Wages (including social security payments) | 1,342 | 1,755 | 1,893 | 1,994 | 1,937 | 1,681 | 1,486 |
| Debt interest | 425 | 785 | 920 | 950 | 950 | 1,005 | 850 |
| Taxes | 720 | 730 | 720 | 740 | 640 | 570 | 560 |
| Buildings (new and maintenance of old) | 496 | 771 | 744 | 717 | 628 | 468 | 360 |
| Tools/machinery | 889 | 1,007 | 995 | 920 | 787 | 647 | 613 |
| Fuel/Heating | 259 | 279 | 303 | 309 | 302 | 266 | 245 |
| Fertilizer | 631 | 690 | 775 | 768 | 636 | 503 | 522 |
| Fodder | 763 | 1,786 | 1,515 | 1,314 | 841 | 844 | 698 |
| Seeds etc. | 99 | 96 | 76 | 70 | 90 | 62 | 71 |
| Insurance and sub- scriptions to professional bodies | 79 | 93 | 92 | 99 | 109 | 97 | 111 |
| Total | 5,703 | 7,992 | 8,033 | 7,881 | 6,920 | 6,143 | 5,516 |

Table XII⁸

Sales and expenses compared (Billion RM)

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Sales</u> | <u>Expenses</u> | <u>Balance available</u> |
|-------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 1924/5 | 7.5 | 5.7 | 1.8 |
| 1927/8 | 9.3 | 8.0 | 1.3 |
| 1928/9 | 10.2 | 8.0 | 2.2 |
| 1929/30 | 9.8 | 7.9 | 1.9 |
| 1930/1 | 8.6 | 6.9 | 1.7 |
| 1931/2 | 7.4 | 6.1 | 1.3 |
| 1932/3 | 6.4 | 5.5 | 0.9 |

Table XIII⁹

Farm Indebtedness by farm size, for holdings above 5 Ha

(In RM per Ha)

| <u>Size class</u> | <u>Year</u> | | | |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | <u>1924</u> | <u>1927</u> | <u>1929</u> | <u>1932</u> |
| Small holdings | 239 | 417 | 508 | 569 |
| Medium-sized farms | 254 | 479 | 575 | 625 |
| Large estates | 330 | 604 | 709 | 758 |

Table XIV¹⁰

Number of farms sold by compulsory auction 1931/2 by size range

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Size in Ha</u> | | | | | |
|---|-------------------|------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|
| | <u>Under 2</u> | <u>2-5</u> | <u>5-20</u> | <u>20-50</u> | <u>50-100</u> | <u>over 100</u> |
| 1931 | 2,164 | 943 | 1,470 | 589 | 249 | 383 |
| 1932 | 2,530 | 1,320 | 1,980 | 689 | 239 | 302 |
| | 4,694 | 2,263 | 3,450 | 1,278 | 488 | 685 |
| Total farms in each size range | 826,119 | 783,031 | 1,064,145 | 264,256 | 52,240 | 28,046 |

1. "Landwirtschaftliche Statistik 1937" p.101
2. Ibid p.101
3. Petzina p.95
4. "Landwirtschaftliche Statistik 1937" p.100
5. "Statistisches Jahrbuch 1932" pp.252/6
6. Holt p.217
7. Bente p.177
8. Based on Tables V and X
9. Bente p.152
10. "Landwirtschaftliche Statistik 1938" p.21 and "Wirtschaft und Statistik 1934" p.554

Appendix C: an examination of farm profitability in Schleswig-Holstein
1927-1930

The information given below is based upon Reports prepared by the Agricultural Chamber for the province. A sample survey of 741 peasant holdings was taken in 1927/8 and again in the following year:¹ for 1929/30 700 such farms were examined. These showed the following results in terms of economic returns for agriculture in the region:-

Table XV

Production, expenses, net yield and taxes/interest payments (in RM
per Ha) for selected holdings in Schleswig-Holstein 1927-1930

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Gross Output</u> | <u>Expenses</u> | <u>Net Yield</u> | <u>Tax/Interest payments</u> |
|-------------|---------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| 1927/8 | 429 | 361 | 68 | 70 |
| 1928/9 | 477 | 359 | 118 | 76 |
| 1929/30 | 486 | 365 | 121 | 79 |

As can be seen, there was a marked improvement in the last two years under review, which demonstrates that in microcosm the province reflected the national trend as shown in Appendix B Table XII: for German agriculture as a whole 1927/8 was a very poor year and Schleswig-Holstein was no exception to this. The larger farms in the province conformed to the same pattern;² as the report from the Chamber for 1929/30 confirmed 1928/9 was a relatively good year in comparison with what had gone before. The larger farms showed a net yield of 57 RM per Ha, as against only 12 RM for the previous year.³

1. "Wirtschaftsergebnisse von 741 bäuerlichen Betrieben des Rechnungsjahres 1928/9": LA 301/3518.
2. Of 177 larger farms surveyed in 1927/8, 75 were actually losing money: Ibid.
3. For 1929/30, 193 non-peasant farms were examined as a sample study.

Appendix D: NSDAP election posters of September 1930

DEUTSCHER BAUER!

Vom Staat bist Du verraten und verkauft, von deinen Führern bist Du betrogen.

Wie hieß es im Januar 1930?

**980 Millionen Steuerermäßigung,
Verminderung der Erwerbslosigkeit,
Ankurbelung der Wirtschaft,
Agrar-Programm,
Hilfe für den Osten.**

Und was ist übrig geblieben für das deutsche Volk?
Was ist übrig geblieben für Dich, Bauer?

Die Steuern sind erhöht worden,
die Zahl der Erwerbslosen ist auf 4 Millionen
gestiegen,
die Wirtschaft liegt darnieder wie noch nie,
den kläglichsten Rest eines sogenannten Agrar-
Programms hat man im Reichstag zusammen-
gekoppelt mit unerhörten Verbrauchssteuern,
die Hilfe für den Osten ist in ein Nichts
zerfallen.

Die Preise für Deine Produkte fallen
unaufhörlich,

die Steuern werden immer rigorosier eingetrieben,
die Preise für Kunstdünger und Elektri-
zität steigen und steigen.

Du als deutscher Bauer mußt 10 Mark für den-
selben Zentner Stickstoff zahlen, den das Aus-
land um die Hälfte bekommt.

**Herr über Dich und den Hof Deiner Ahnen
sind Bankjuden, Finanzamt und
Lebensmittelbörse.**

**Bisher hast Du auf Deine Führer vertraut
und jämmerlich bist Du von ihnen betrogen worden.**

Wir fragen Dich:

**Haben Deine landwirtschaftlichen Organisati-
onen, die tausende von Sekretären, die Du
bezahlst, sich einmal dafür eingesetzt, den**

Zwischenhandel der Börse

**auszuschalten, die im Jahre rund fünf Milli-
arden an den landwirtschaftlichen Produkten
verdient?**

**Haben sich Deine Landbundsführer Mühe gege-
ben, dieses Problem zu lösen?**

Wir fragen Dich:

Haben Deine Führer Dir nicht die

Annahme des Dawesplanes,

**der die rechtliche Grundlage für den Youngplan
wurde, empfohlen?**

**Sie haben für seine Annahme gestimmt und
Dich damit ins Verderben gestürzt.**

Wir fragen Dich:

**Was haben Deine Bauernführer getan, als der
Youngplan angenommen war?**

**Haben sie mit allen Mitteln die Steuergesetze
für die Tribute zu verhindern gesucht?**

Nein im Gegenteil!

Sie schielen nach Ministerseffeln,

gaukelten Dir vor, daß nun Deine Rettung durch das Agrarprogramm
käme und arbeiteten mit an den Steuer- und Zöngesetzen, durch die
das ganze deutsche Volk mit dem Bauernstand ruiniert werden muß.
Und wenn du Sie heute fragst, wer die Schuld an Deiner Not trägt,
sie wissen keine andere Antwort als die Bogen der Magisten.

Schuld ist bei ihnen niemals die **eigene Feigheit und Gewinn-
sucht,**

Schuld sind bei ihnen niemals **die Feinde des Vaterlandes,**
sondern immer und immer nur andere deutsche Volksgenossen.

Immer wieder heißt es bei ihnen, die Beamten freissen uns auf,
obchon gerade **die Herren Landwirtschaftsminister recht
gerne die höchsten Gehälter einstecken;** immer wieder heißt
es, Schuld sind die Erwerbslosen, obchon diese entrechteten deutschen
Menschen vollkommen unschuldig am Bankrott eines Staates sind,
der ihnen nicht einmal Arbeit geben kann.

Schuld sind immer alle anderen, bloß sie selber nicht.

Und wieder wird heute die Parole ausgegeben: wählt Standesver-
treter! — „Wählt die grüne Front!“

Da fragen wir:

Wo ist sie denn geblieben, die „Grüne Front?“

Der Landbund ist zersplittert,

ein Teil hat bei der Partei Unterschluß gefunden, ein anderer Teil
hat sich vom Landbund losgelöst, wieder ein anderer Teil hat bei
jener Partei Aufnahme erbettelt und giert dort um Mandate, die
christlichen Bauernvereine traben an der Strippe des Zentrums, das
seit Jahren im Bündnis mit der wurzellosen bauerfeindlichen Sozial-
demokratie steht, wieder andere sind ein Anhängsel der Wirtschafts-
partei geworden. Alles in Allen eine grauenhafte Zersplitterung,
alles andere, nur keine Front.

**Mandatsjäger habt Ihr Unzählige an der Spitze, nur keine
Führer.**

Sie kleben an ihren Sesseln, auch bei uns in Ost-Hannover. Schaut
sie Euch an die **Nebbenriep, Meyer aus Bülkau u. a.!**
**Sie riefen die „Spekumpatrioten“ nach Harburg zusammen
und sagten daß, was auch die Juden sagen:**

„Wählt keine Nationalsozialisten! Wählt uns die bewährten
Führer im Landbund!“

Nichtswisser und Nichtsköner sind es, die wieder um Eure Stimmen
buhlen! In Demut ersterben sie, diese „freien Niederjassen“ vor
den Verderbern des Landvolks!

So und nicht anders sehen diese Landvolksbeglucker aus.

Im Gegensatz hierzu, steht eine Bewegung, die seit 10 Jahren unter
einem Führer
groß geworden ist.

**Sie hat unermüßlich und tapfer den wurzellosen inter-
nationalen Margismus bekämpft, hunderte aus ihr
haben in diesem Kampf Leib und Leben gewagt und
verloren.**

Aber die Bewegung wurde größer, obchon oder weil sie von all den
Geschäftemachern rechts und links, von all den Parlamentsschiebern
und Profitpatrioten verleumdet wurde.

Diese Bewegung heißt:

Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei.

**Sie ist keine Partei einer Klasse, sondern die Freiheits-
bewegung eines ganzen Volkes.**

Sie sagt keinem Stand ich trete für Dich besonders ein, sondern dem
ganzen Volk:

**Unser Ziel ist Deutschland, die Erhaltung der deut-
schen Rasse, die Ernährung Deutschlands aus ei-
genem Grund und Boden und damit die Freiheit
und Größe der Nation!**

Diese Bewegung, die aus innerer weltanschaulicher Einstellung die
**Landwirtschaft als Fundament des künftigen
Staates erkennt,**

tritt auch in diesem Wahlkampf wieder an; während die Andern zer-
fallen, wächst sie allein an Zahl und innerer Stärke und
Geschlossenheit.

Bauer!

In ihre Reihen gehörst Du hinein!

Hier ist Dein Plag!

Hier findest Du Deinen Führer!

Adolf Hitler!

Darum! Her zu uns!

Jeder Bauer wählt am 14. September

Liste 9!

Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (Hitlerbewegung)

Landvolk! Unser Kampf

ist
auch euer
Kampf



Der Reichslandbund

als die wirtschaftliche Vertretung des Bauernvolkes, ist von jeher Wege gewandelt, die seiner Zielsetzung zuwiderlaufen. Anstatt sich auf die wirtschaftliche Vertretung des Bauernvolkes zu beschränken und die Hebung der Landwirtschaft zu fördern, hat er das „politische Pferd“ bestiegen und hat als miserabler Reiter dieses Pferd zuschanden geritten und die Bauern unter die Füße der Schindmähre gerissen.

**Der Reichslandbund hat nicht die Bauerninteressen vertreten,
er hat die Interessen der Bauern verraten! — er hat die Bauernnot mitverschuldet!**

1924 hat der Reichslandbund die Bauern verführt, den Dawes-Isagern ihre Stimmen zu geben, unter dem schwindelhaften Vorgeben, die Dawesnot werde die Bauern nicht treffen!

Schiele wurde später Minister. Unter dem Dawes-System hat er regiert. Aber wie? Gerade unter seiner Regierung wirkten sich die Dawes-Gesetze zu einer entsetzlichen Bauernnot, zu einem „Bauernsterben“ aus. Im Frühjahr 1928 war diese Not so groß geworden, daß der Bauer in unzähligen Protestkundgebungen die Straße beschritt.

Der Reichslandbund aber bog diese Kundgebungen ab!

Am 23. März 1928 hat der Landbundsleiter Graf Reiserling im Preussischen Staatsrat diese Tatsache offen zugegeben.

Der Mitschuldige an der Dawesnot, Dr. Hepp, Präsident des Reichslandbundes, gründete damals, um die verheerenden Folgen der Dawesgesetzgebung zu verdecken, die

Christlich-Nationale Bauernpartei,

der jetzt auch Schiele beigetreten ist. Diese Partei wandte sich mit uns und anderen, durch das Erwachen des Landvolkes gezwungen, gegen den Young-Pakt; heute aber stellt sie sich auf den Boden der Tatsachen und ist bereits zu einer Partei des schwarz-rot-goldenen Systems geworden. So glauben die Landbundsleiter weiter ihr Parteiflüppchen tochen zu können.

Die „Christlich-nationalen“ Reichslandbund-Präsidenten täuschen bewußt das gutgläubige Landvolk. Sie haben die Agrarnot verschuldet und fordern nun ein „Agrar-Programm“! Sie wissen, daß die Not des Bauern bewirkt wird durch die Schandgesetze, die sie im Reichstag entstehen ließen! Sie wissen, daß ein „Agrar-Programm“ keine Hilfe bringen kann, daß die

Not des Bauern die „Deutsche Not“ ist,

daß mit dem deutschen Volke auch der Bauer steht und fällt!

Im Oranger Ministerkabinet schreien sie jetzt nach der Einigung des Landvolkes unter ihrer unfähigen, ohnmächtigen politischen Führung! Der Aufmarsch der verschiedensten Bauernparteien beweist, daß die Zerissenheit des Bauernvolkes nie größer war als gegenwärtig, daß den politischen Landbundsleitern mit Recht die Gefolgschaft versagt wird! All' ihr Tun und Lassen ist umsonst. Sie sind erkannt. Kein denkender Bauer glaubt ihnen mehr.

Ungeheuerlich ist das Verschulden der „Politiker“ im Reichslandbund!

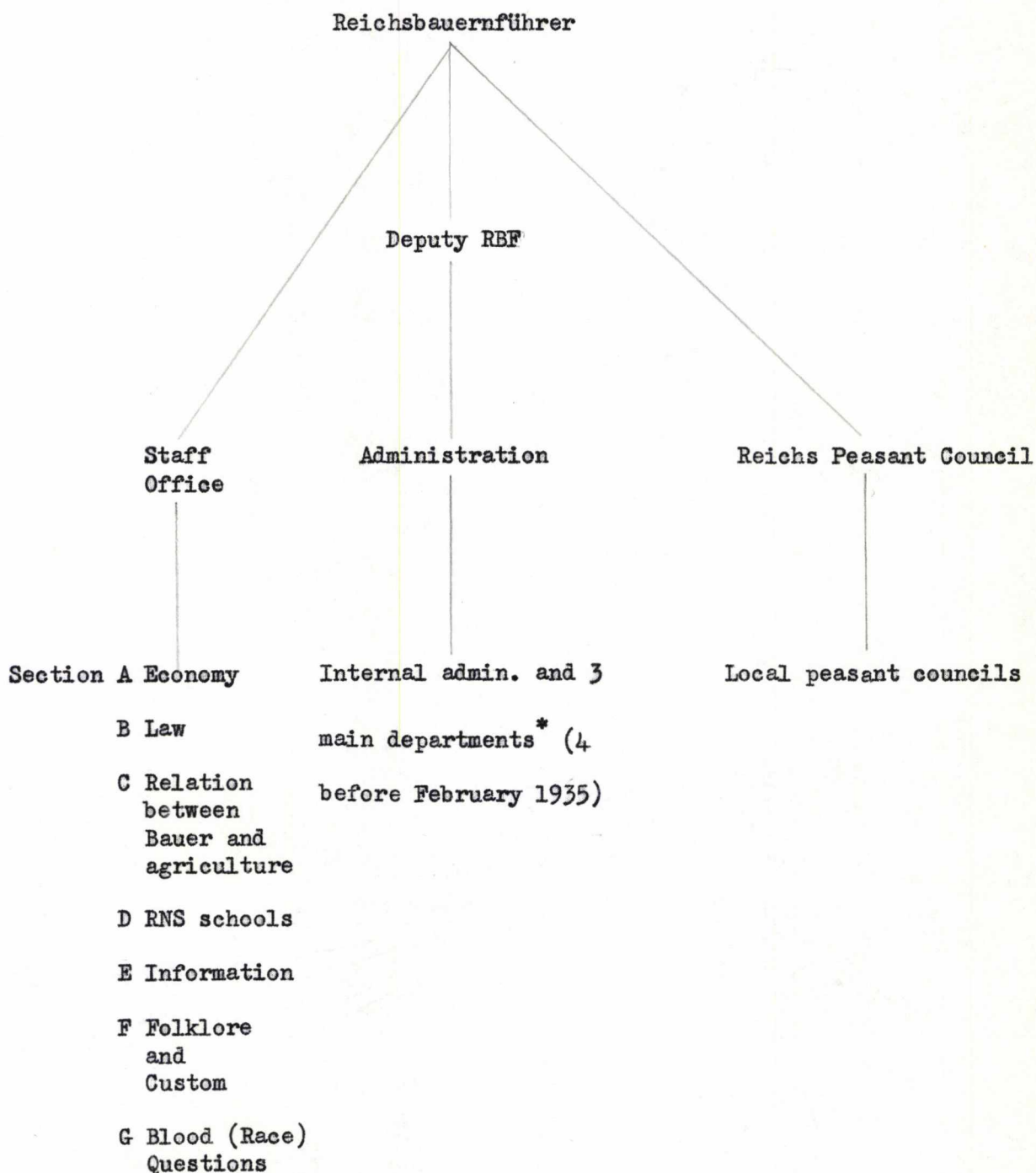
Auch über sie wird einst der Staatsgerichtshof des kommenden Dritten Reiches ein vernichtendes Urteil zu fällen haben.

Bauern, laßt euch nicht länger von Charlatanen der Politik umgarnen! Schreit ihnen zu: „Herunter von den Pferden!“

Wählt Liste 9

**der Nationalsozialistischen Deutschen Arbeiterpartei
Hitlerbewegung.**

Appendix E: Organization of the Reichsnährstand.¹



* See next sheet for details

The organization of the Reichsnährstand departmentally²

1. Internal Administration of the RNS itself

Department A = Administration, Organization, Personnel questions

" B = Finance

" C = Publications and periodicals

2. Administration of agriculture in general

| Departments | <u>I The Peasant</u> | <u>II The Farm</u> | <u>III The Market</u> |
|-------------|----------------------------|--|---|
| | A Administration | A Administration | A Administration |
| | B The peasant | B Farm manage- ment | B Marketing Law |
| | C The peasant's wife | C Soil and plants | C Credit and Finance |
| | D Rural Youth | D Animal husband- ry | D Relation bet- ween producers, processors, distributors |
| | E Ideological Education | E Technical Education | E Internal admin- istration of Verbände |
| | F Settlement | F Forestry | |
| | G Law | G Tools, Machin- ery and Buildings | F Furtherance of the market, inclu- ding co-ops, price regulations |
| | | H Domestic Economy | G Consumption dir- ections, regional and seasonal price variations |

Karte der Landesbauernschaften



Landesbauernschaft

- 1 Ostpreußen
- X 2 Danzig-Westpr.
- X 3 Wartheland
- 4 Pommern
- 5 Mecklenburg
- 6 Kurmark
- 7 Schlesien
- 8 Sachsen
- 9 Sachsen-Anhalt
- 10 Thüringen
- 11 Kurhessen
- 12 Schlesw.-Holst.
- 13 Niedersachsen
- 14 Weser-Ems
- 15 Westfalen
- 16 Rheinland
- 17 Hessen-Nassau
- 18 Saarpfalz
- 19 Baden
- 20 Württemberg
- 21 Bayern
- 22 Bayr. Ostmark
- X 23 Alpenland
- X 24 Donauland
- X 25 Südmark
- X 26 Sudetenland

Erläuterung:

..... alte Grenzen der Reich

X denotes post 1938 only.

1. Reischle and Saure "Der Reichsnährstand: Aufbau, Aufgaben und Bedeutung" p.62
2. Reischle and Saure "Der Reichsnährstand" pp.114-167 and p.62.

Appendix F: the furtherance of agriculture 1933-1939 in respect of technical improvements etc.

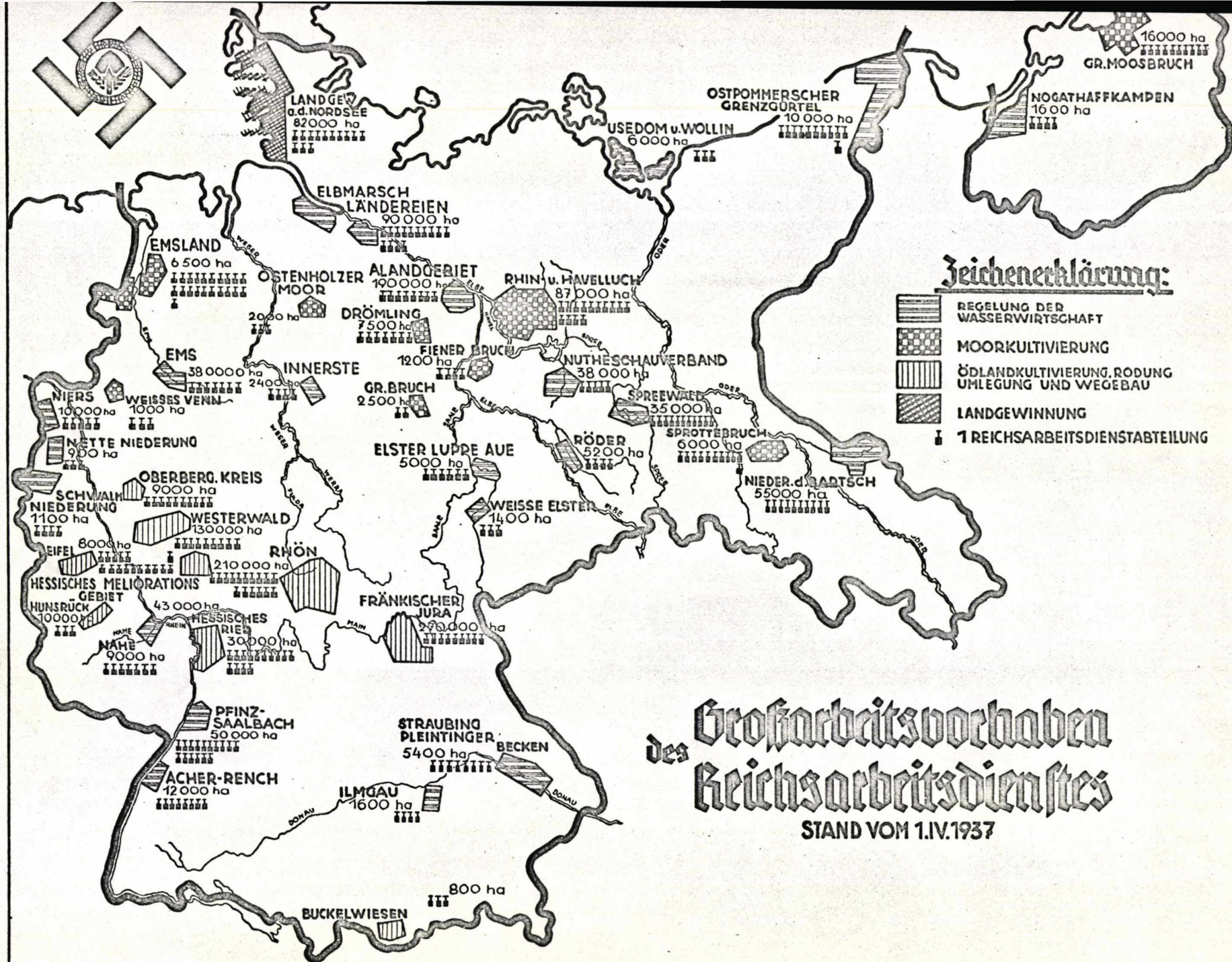
Like its predecessors the NS government devoted some time and energy to the improvement of German agriculture, both in terms of winning new land and by introducing better methods of cultivating the existing. The object of this summary of its activity is to show simply that in this respect the NSDAP continued the policy of loans, subsidies etc. to farming long since adopted by the State in Germany, both at national and regional level.¹ Its efforts to assist agriculture to improve its technique and thereby increase output took several forms, to all of which some space must be given.

- (i) The winning of new land. This was an enormous task; in 1937 it was calculated that 1,795,000 Ha could be added to the existing stock of agrarian land in this way by coastal reclamation and the enclosure of moor and wasteland.² Apart from labour, the financial resources necessitated for the fulfillment of such a programme would have been colossal: the conversion of a quarter of a million Ha of wasteland from 1933-6 had cost 860 Million RM.³ As the amount of land still remaining to be so treated was far greater in area, any programme to undertake its transformation to farming land would have been enormously costly. Even the widespread use of the Labour Corps for such work failed to keep down costs to a truly economic level: the reclamation of coastal land in Schleswig-Holstein, the Adolf Hitler Koog, cost 3.7 Million RM to produce only some 1,350 Ha of new agricultural land, which equalled approximately 2,600 RM per Ha.⁴ This was almost treble the current cost of farmland in the country and was obviously a highly expensive way of acquiring new soil.⁵ Not all land conversion was quite so costly as reclamation from the sea, however; ten individual cases of wasteland enclosure and subsequent conversion in Lower Saxony

in 1939 produced an outlay of some fifty thousand RM for just under thirty Ha.⁶ Even this, however, was relatively expensive in comparison to the price of existing farm land: however much the RNS Press Service might rejoice over marshy soil being made available for settlement as a result of a drainage scheme,⁷ the amount of new land won was rarely commensurate with expenditure; this was the price which Germany paid for autarky.

- (ii) A somewhat more economical approach was that of soil improvement on existing farm land: poor soil capable of yielding vegetables only was converted to ploughland for other crops, or to grazing: some 280,000 Ha were treated in this way, according to one source.⁸ Pasturage could also be bettered with the aid of subsidies to individual farmers to the tune of 80/100 RM per Ha.⁹ For ploughland long-term credits were made available to public bodies only, co-operatives etc. at the fairly high rate of 6.05%, repayable over 28½ years.¹⁰ Even in terms of improving the existing farmlands, however, a vast amount needed to be done: it was estimated in 1939 that a million Ha stood in need of flood protection, four million required drainage and another seven million irrigation.¹¹ As can be seen from the enclosed map the Labour Corps was put on to these mammoth tasks on a considerable scale; but in view of the sheer size of the undertaking clearly progress had to be slow. For the period 1937-1940 one thousand million RM was devoted to land improvement in general;^{12*} but as the foregoing remarks suggest, the real problem was always that of manpower rather than of money. Obviously the Four Year Plan's priority exercised some influence upon this sector of the economy, as well as upon agriculture in general.

* under the Four Year Plan



des Großarbeitsvorhaben Reichsarbeitsdienstes STAND VOM 1.IV.1937

(iii) One of the most important ways of improving yields is by the use of fertilizer; in this respect Germany was relatively backward, due at least partly to high costs, which had been a constant source of complaint under the Republic, even in a democratic organization like the Deutsche Bauernschaft, whose chairman asked Dr. Brüning for a 25% reduction in fertilizer costs in 1931, but in vain.¹³ Consequently the use of these aids to production was limited; in 1934 the average use of nitrogen in advanced enterprises was anywhere from 30-80 kilos per Ha, but the national average was as low as 15 kilos;¹⁴ a business institute at the time estimated that another hundred thousand tons could have produced an additional two million tons of grain annually.¹⁵ The lowering of the prices of artificial fertilizer in general under the Four Year Plan in March 1937 was therefore a considerable advance for the farmers, of which they took full advantage: this is clear from the statistics of fertilizer use after 1936:-

Fertilizer Use by type (000 tons)¹⁶

| | <u>Nitrogen</u> | <u>Phosphate</u> | <u>Potash</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|--------|-----------------|------------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1932/3 | 353 | 470 | 717 | 1,540 |
| 1935/6 | 490 | 636 | 949 | 2,075 |
| 1938/9 | 718 | 749 | 1,254 | 2,721 |

Use of the fertilizers listed increased sharply after 1936, although as can be seen, their employment had been going up quite steadily previously. That Goering's price-cut did make a substantial difference to the rate of increase cannot be denied, and must be accepted as having been a successful move accomplished in the teeth of objections from the manufacturers.¹⁷

(iv) One of the most serious problems in agriculture inherited by the NSDAP was that of fragmentation, the division of the holding into

individual, frequently separated, strips. What effect this had on production can be judged from Dr. Steiger's estimate that the consolidation of a farm of this nature into a compact whole could increase output by one third while simultaneously reducing costs by a quarter.¹⁸ How complicated division could be is shown in two cases quoted in 1939 where farms were eventually made into one unit by re-arrangement.

The Effects of consolidation on the organization of the farmer's work¹⁹

| | <u>Farm A</u> | | <u>Farm B</u> | |
|--|-----------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| | <u>Before Consolidation</u> | <u>After</u> | <u>Before Consolidation</u> | <u>After</u> |
| Size | 21.9 Ha | | 3.4 Ha | |
| No. of strips | 155 | 5 | 36 | 5 |
| Sum total of distances of strips from home-stead | 186 km. | 8 km. | 42 km. | 4.5 km. |
| Average size strip | 19 Ar* | 7.4 Ha | 9 Ar* | 68 Ar* |

* 1 Ar = 100 square metres

As may be judged, the amount of time wasted in simply going from one strip to another must have been enormous prior to the reorganization. Moreover, when holdings were so fragmented machinery could hardly be utilized at all. An examination of six villages in the Magdeburg area in 1935/6 showed little machinery in use at all; only farms of 14 Ha and upwards had binders, for example.²⁰ In some cases peasants had to drive their cows fifteen km. to pasturage.²¹

The government brought in legislation to try to speed up the process of amalgamation into the formation of more viable holdings²² it was hoped to deal with 200,000 Ha annually by 1939, the previous average post 1933 having been 95,000 Ha.²³ From subsequent claims

it does not appear that the target was in fact reached.²⁴ Once again, the sheer size of the problem was daunting: one contemporary writer estimated that between twenty and thirty per cent of all agricultural land in the country was in need of some degree of consolidation.²⁵ Before leaving this point the EHG's relevance to it should be mentioned, since after all it was very often Realteilung, now forbidden, which had caused this particular problem. Even if the NSDAP's progress at amalgamation was relatively slow, the government had at least ensured that the position could not possibly get worse.

- (v) As already stated, the scattered nature of some holdings and their relatively small size made the mechanization of agriculture in Germany difficult. Apparently a certain conservatism on the peasant's part added to this; one writer characterized the situation by saying that "The farmer buys no machines, machines are sold to him."²⁶ In the Kassel district in 1929 only 4.7% of all holdings had power-driven machinery and only one quarter had machines of any kind.²⁷

Basically Darré was in favour of mechanization, without which he believed production increases would be impossible.²⁸ on the other hand he was to a certain extent the prisoner of his own ideology in the matter, since he rejected large farms as the only possible form of agriculture on purely racial grounds, albeit easier to manage, as he admitted.²⁹ This meant that the number of holdings would remain large, which would always make mechanization a problem. The government did facilitate it as far as possible by giving subsidies, especially to new settlers, for machinery purchase and by encouraging co-operative buying.³⁰ Increased incomes for food producers obviously played some part here, and in 1938/9 German farmers were spending far more on acquiring new machines than they had six years previously.³¹ How relatively small-scale this still was, nonetheless, can be seen

by comparing tractor use in the Third Reich to that in contemporary Britain, which brings the relative backwardness of Germany in this respect into sharp relief.³² The point must be made, however, that an enormous increase in tractor output was planned from 1940 onwards;³³ this does raise another issue, namely, the profitability of agriculture, without which the farmers could hardly have afforded the machinery in the first place. It is suggested here that if the REM had really wanted to sell tractors on that scale it would have had to beg the Führer for price increases in foodstuffs.

- (vi) Some space should finally be given to other technical facilities furthered by the government. State aid was given for fodder installations for example; Hugenberg had promised additional aid for this quite soon after assuming office.³⁴ The NS continued with this policy, giving up to half the costs for various types of silage and fodder installations.³⁵ The provision of storage space for manure was also subsidized.³⁶ Again, Germany seems to have been backward in the use of similar technical aids to good farming; the letter from one phosphate firm regarding the provision of a silage holder in Kleinenberg (Lower Saxony) describes the installation as the only one of its kind in the parish³⁷ (which contained eleven Erbhöfe). However, for those farmers who could not store fodder, mobile columns were organized to go from one farm to another treating fodder potatoes to conserve them; by 1939 there were 7,598 such groups formed.³⁸ Finally, aid for animal rearing should be mentioned; in 1937, for example, just over a million RM were given to further the breeding-stock for cattle.³⁹

All in all, a good deal of effort was made over the period 1933-1938 to improve farming in general, of which it appeared to stand in some need. These attempts were handicapped in two ways, firstly, by the size of the task involved, which naturally militated against rapid results. Secondly,

although financial resources and manpower were committed to some degree, the build-up of industry and defence had such precedence that the sum of one billion RM given for land improvement 1937-40 seems puny by comparison. As far as mechanization was concerned, the point about farm size has to be repeated: this has some relevance to improvement in general, as clearly private resources play a part in this, and the size of the average holding did not make for the formation of the large-scale capital resources needed for any betterment, particularly the acquisition of machinery.

1. From 1924 to 1928 the central government devoted 100 million RM to land-betterment alone, affecting some 330,000 Ha: "Bericht über die Tätigkeit des REMs im Haushaltsjahr 1928": HSA(S) 913/E 130/IV. For 1929-31 Prussia spent 78 Million RM on land improvement alone: Braun "Von Weimar zu Hitler" p.375
2. J. von Schultze "Deutsche Siedlung" p.67
3. Bente p.88
4. The scheme was reported in "Arbeitertum" 1st October 1935, pp.7/9
5. Land for settlement in the east cost 905 RM per Ha in 1935: "Vierteljahrsheft zur Statistik" 1939 Sec. III p.4
6. These ten examples were taken at random from amongst a number of similar schemes detailed in NSA 122a XXXII 405.
7. "Zeitungsdienst des RNS" 8th February 1937
8. Enig "Das Reichsministerium für Ernährung und Landwirtschaft" in "Das Dritte Reich im Aufbau" Vol. IV p.292
9. "Reichsbeihilfe für Grünlandumbruch und Grünlandverbesserung" Ministerialblatt 13th March 1937.
10. "Neue Mittel der Deutschen Reutenbank-Kreditanstalt zur Finanzierung von Meliorationen" Ibid 26th March 1937
11. Müller p.103
12. "Westdeutscher Beobachter" 24th March 1937
13. Lübke to Brüning 5th August 1931: BA-R43I/1301
14. Borsig "Reagrarisierung Deutschlands?" p.33
15. Ibid p.33
16. From "Bauerntum" p.49 and Bente p.105
17. According to Dr. Krohn of Department II of the RNS who was involved in the negotiations: Personal interview
18. In the Prussian Landtag February 1930: LA 301/4089
19. From Müller p.87

20. H.J. Metzdorff "Die Stellung der Kleinbetriebe in sechs Dorfgemeinschaften des Fläming" in "Berichte über Landwirtschaft" Vol 24, pp.458/9.
21. Ibid p.459
22. "Reichsumlegungsgesetz" 16th June 1937
23. Müller p.88
24. The figures given were 112,000 Ha and 115,000 Ha for 1938/9 respectively: "Bauerntum" p.77
25. Schultze "Deutsche Siedlung" p.64
26. Hellermann p.63
27. Schoenbaum p.13
28. "Blut und Boden" p.466
29. For example, his speech to the Raiffeisen Co-operative meeting in June 1938 stressed that "Not a multiplicity of machines on a few big estates" could save the racial stock: Ibid p.478
30. Vide "Erstmalige Ausstattung neuer Bauernsiedlungen" etc. Ministerialblatt 28th May 1936
31. 593 Million RM compared to 136 Million RM: F. Sohn "Allgemeiner agrarpolitischer Berichte" in "Berichte über Landwirtschaft" 1939 p.313
32. Whereas Britain had one tractor per 130 Ha, Germany had one for 388 Ha: H. von der Decken "Die Mechanisierung in der Landwirtschaft" in "Vierteljahrsheft zur Konjunkturforschung" 1938/9 pp.355/6
33. Sohn above cit. p.313
34. Hugenberg circular 28th May 1933: LA 301/436
35. "Beihilfen zur Errichtung von Grünfüttertrocknungsanlagen" Ministerialblatt 31st May 1937
36. "Richtlinien für die Gewährung von Reichsbeihilfen zum Bau von Dungstätten und Jauchgrüben" Ibid 24th March 1937

37. Phosphate firm to credit institution 19th January 1937:
NSA 331 B.50
38. "Die Landesbauernschaften in Zahlen" p.123
39. Darre to Lbschs 15th April 1937: NSA 122a XXXII 88a

Appendix G: the financial position of the farming community in the
Third Reich 1933-38

Table XVI¹

The balance sheet of receipts and expenses for the agricultural
sector (000 Million RM)

| (a) | (b) | (c) | (d) | (e) | (f) |
|---------|----------------|---------------|----------------------------|----------|----------------------------|
| Year | Total Sales | From Crops | From Animal Products | Expenses | Surplus of (b) over (e) |
| 1928/9 | 10.2 | 3.7 | 6.5 | 8.6 | 1.6 |
| 1930/31 | 8.6 | 3.2 | 5.4 | 7.4 | 1.2 |
| 1932/33 | 6.4 | 2.6 | 3.8 | 5.9 | 0.5 |
| 1933/4 | 7.4 | 2.8 | 4.6 | 5.9 | 1.5 |
| 1934/5 | 8.3 | 3.1 | 5.2 | 6.0 | 2.3 |
| 1935/6 | 8.8 | 3.4 | 5.4 | 6.3 | 2.5 |
| 1936/7 | 8.9 | 3.4 | 5.5 | 6.4 | 2.5 |
| 1937/8 | 9.5 | 3.6 | 5.9 | 6.9 | 2.6 |

Another source gives rather different figures to the above in so far as Column (f) above, the surplus of sales over expenses, is concerned, these being as follows:-

Table XVII²

Disposable income for the agrarian sector (000 Million RM)

| <u>Year</u> | <u>1933/4</u> | <u>1934/5</u> | <u>1935/6</u> | <u>1936/7</u> | <u>1937/8</u> |
|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | 1.368 | 2.235 | 2.159 | 2.095 | 2.268 |

Table XVIII³

| <u>Annual Increase in agrarian income as expressed as % increase</u> | | | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| <u>over previous year's income</u> | | | | | |
| <u>Year</u> | <u>1933/4</u> | <u>1934/5</u> | <u>1935/6</u> | <u>1936/7</u> | <u>1937/8</u> |
| | 17.1 | 16.9 | 1.0 | 3.8 | 2.8 |
| Annual % increase in income of all other sectors combined. | 6.8 | 12.2 | 12.3 | 9.6 | 6.4 |

Table XIX⁴

Agrarian price index and that of chief farm expenses (1913 = 100)

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Crop Products</u> | <u>Animal Products/ Livestock</u> | <u>All Agric. Products</u> | <u>Agric. Machinery & tools</u> | <u>Fertilizer</u> | <u>Building Costs</u> |
|-------------|--------------------------|---|--------------------------------|---|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 1934 | 89 | 82 | 84 | 111.1 | 68.7 | 131.6 |
| 1935 | 105 | 90 | 94 | 111.1 | 66.8 | 131.8 |
| 1936 | 107 | 100 | 102 | 111.6 | 66.8 | 131.8 |
| 1937 | 107 | 99 | 101 | 112.7 | 57.0 | 134.7 |
| 1938 | 111 | 99 | 102 | 111.3 | 55.3 | 136.1 |

Table XX⁵

The movement of the German GNP 1928-1938 (000 Million RM)

| | <u>Year</u> | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | <u>1928</u> | <u>1932</u> | <u>1933</u> | <u>1934</u> | <u>1935</u> | <u>1936</u> | <u>1937</u> | <u>1938</u> |
| National Income | 72.4 | 42.6 | 44.0 | 50.4 | 56.8 | 63.6 | 71.5 | 79.8 |
| Depreciation | 7.0 | 6.0 | 6.0 | 6.2 | 6.5 | 7.0 | 7.5 | 8.0 |
| Indirect Taxes | 10.0 | 8.2 | 8.7 | 9.5 | 10.0 | 10.8 | 12.5 | 14.2 |
| Total | 89.4 | 56.8 | 58.7 | 66.1 | 73.3 | 81.4 | 91.5 | 102.0 |

1. Bente "Landwirtschaft und Bauerntum" p.172 and "Bauerntum" p.45
2. "Wirtschaft und Statistik" p.852
3. W. Bauer and P. Dehen "Landwirtschaft und Volkseinkommen" p.427
4. "Statistisches Jahrbuch 1941/2" p.358
5. Erbe p.100

Appendix H: a statistical survey of the Erzeugungsschlacht results

Table XXI¹

German agricultural production and stock holding by commodity

(Animals in millions, crop products in million tons)

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Commodity</u> | | | | | | | | |
|-------------|------------------|------------|---------------|-------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|--------------|---------------|-------------|
| | <u>Wheat</u> | <u>Rye</u> | <u>Barley</u> | <u>Oats</u> | <u>Potatoes</u> | <u>Beet</u> <u>Sugar</u> | <u>Sheep</u> | <u>Cattle</u> | <u>Pigs</u> |
| 1930 | 3.8 | 7.7 | 2.9 | 5.7 | 47.1 | 14.9 | 3.5 | 18.5 | 23.6 |
| 1932 | 5.0 | 8.4 | 3.2 | 6.7 | 47.0 | 7.9 | 3.4 | 19.2 | 23.0 |
| 1933 | 5.6 | 8.7 | 3.5 | 7.0 | 44.1 | 8.6 | 3.4 | 19.8 | 24.0 |
| 1934 | 4.6 | 7.6 | 3.2 | 5.5 | 46.8 | 10.4 | 3.5 | 19.3 | 23.3 |
| 1935 | 4.7 | 7.5 | 3.4 | 5.4 | 41.0 | 10.6 | 3.9 | 18.9 | 22.8 |
| 1936 | 4.4 | 7.4 | 3.4 | 5.6 | 46.3 | 12.1 | 4.3 | 20.1 | 25.9 |
| 1937 | 4.5 | 6.9 | 3.6 | 5.9 | 55.3 | 15.7 | 4.3 | 20.5 | 23.8 |
| 1938 | 5.6 | 8.6 | 4.2 | 6.4 | 50.9 | 15.6 | N/A | 19.4 | 23.6 |

Table XXII²

Land sown with fodder and fibre-bearing plants (000 Ha)

| <u>Plant type</u> | <u>Year</u> | | | | |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | <u>1928</u> | <u>1933</u> | <u>1934</u> | <u>1936</u> | <u>1938</u> |
| Rape | 16.8 | 5.2 | 26.7 | 54.6 | 61.9 |
| Flax | 14.5 | 4.9 | 8.8 | 44.1 | 44.9 |
| Hemp | 0.8 | 0.2 | 0.4 | 5.6 | 12.7 |
| Corn maize | 2.1 | 3.7 | 16.3 | 19.3 | 65.8 |
| Sugar beet | 454.0 | 304.0 | 357.0 | 289.0 | 502.0 |
| Winter barley | 183.0 | 271.0 | 307.0 | 436.0 | 517.0 |
| Lucerne | 285.0 | 315.0 | 319.0 | 404.0 | 412.0 |
| Lupin (fodder) | 46.0 | 53.2 | 57.3 | 81.7 | 101.6 |

Table XXIII³

Yield per Ha in selected products in double Zentners

(1 Zentner = 1 cwt) in German agriculture

| <u>Product</u> | <u>Average yield 1929-1933</u> | <u>1938 actual harvest</u> |
|----------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Rye | 17.4 | 19.8 |
| Wheat | 21.5 | 23.6 |
| Barley | 21.6 | 22.2 |
| Potatoes | 156.1 | 182.2 |
| Sugar beet | 283.1 | 333.4 |

Table XXIV⁴

Yield per Ha in selected products for international agriculture⁵

(double Zentners)

| <u>Product</u> | <u>1933</u> | <u>1934</u> | <u>1935</u> | <u>1936</u> | <u>1937</u> | <u>1938</u> |
|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Wheat | 10.2 | 9.7 | 9.7 | 9.4 | 9.7 | 11.0 |
| Rye | 14.2 | 12.9 | 12.2 | 12.2 | 12.1 | 14.0 |
| Barley | 11.6 | 11.5 | 11.5 | 11.2 | 11.4 | 12.1 |
| Oats | 10.5 | 10.7 | 12.2 | 11.0 | 12.4 | 13.1 |

Table XXV⁶

Degree of self-sufficiency for Germany in selected foodstuffs (%)

| <u>Product</u> | <u>1927/8</u> | <u>Year 1933/4</u> | <u>1938/9</u> |
|-------------------|---------------|------------------------|---------------|
| Bread grain | 79 | 99 | 115 |
| Potatoes | 96 | 100 | 100 |
| Vegetables | 84 | 90 | 91 |
| Sugar | 100 | 99 | 101 |
| Meat | 91 | 98 | 97 |
| Eggs | 64 | 80 | 82 |
| Fats | 44 | 53 | 57 |
| All food together | 68 | 80 | 83 |

Table XXVI⁷

German Foodstuff Imports in Value (000 Mill. RM)

| 1929 | 1933 | 1934 | 1935 | 1936 | 1937 | 1938 | 1939 |
|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| 5.5 | 3.6 | 3.7 | 3.2 | 3.1 | 4.1 | 5.0 | 4.4 |

Table XXVII⁸

German foodstuff imports by value and product as a percentage of total

| <u>Product</u> | <u>imports of all types of goods</u> | | | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------|
| | <u>Year</u> | | | | | | | |
| | <u>1929</u> | <u>1930</u> | <u>1932</u> | <u>1933</u> | <u>1934</u> | <u>1936</u> | <u>1937</u> | <u>1938</u> |
| Livestock | 1.1 | 1.1 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 0.7 | 2.3 | 2.0 | 2.1 |
| Animal Products | 11.5 | 12.6 | 12.7 | 10.3 | 8.7 | 10.5 | 8.8 | 8.8 |
| Grain, fruits and vegetables | 21.9 | 20.9 | 25.4 | 20.7 | 18.6 | 15.9 | 20.8 | 21.5 |
| Coffee, Wine & Tobacco | 5.5 | 6.1 | 6.9 | 7.1 | 6.7 | 6.8 | 5.9 | 6.4 |
| Together | 40.0 | 40.7 | 45.7 | 38.8 | 34.7 | 35.5 | 37.5 | 38.8 ⁹ |

Table XXVIII¹⁰

Grain imports by quantity (000 metric tons)

| <u>Type</u> | <u>Year</u> | | | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | <u>1929</u> | <u>1930</u> | <u>1933</u> | <u>1934</u> | <u>1936</u> | <u>1937</u> | <u>1938</u> |
| Wheat | 2140.8 | 1197.2 | 770.3 | 647.0 | 74.0 | 1219.0 | 1267.7 |
| Barley | 1765.8 | 1522.9 | 235.3 | 552.0 | 48.0 | 241.8 | 456.4 |
| Maize | 669.0 | 651.3 | 254.1 | 338.3 | N/A | 2158.9 | 1895.4 |
| Rye | 144.0 | 59.0 | 238.0 | 53.0 | 24.0 | 181.0 | N/A |

Table XXIX¹¹

Consumption of various foodstuffs (kilos per capita yearly)

| <u>Item</u> | <u>Year</u> | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | <u>1933</u> | <u>1934</u> | <u>1935</u> | <u>1937</u> | <u>1938</u> |
| Butter | 7.4 | 7.4 | 7.5 | 8.9 | 8.8 |
| Meat | 42.0 | 45.4 | 44.2 | 47.2 | 48.6 |
| Milk | 104.3 | 106.7 | 107.7 | 109.0 | 112.0 |
| Eggs* | 119.1 | 118.0 | 112.3 | 124.0 | 124.0 |
| Cheese | 6.1 | 5.8 | 5.5 | 5.4 | 5.5 |
| Potatoes | 187.1 | 179.9 | 173.5 | 174.0 | 182.9 |
| White Flour | 46.5 | 49.2 | 51.1 | 54.3 | 51.9 |
| Rye Flour | 54.0 | 52.6 | 53.5 | 55.2 | 53.0 |

* = total number consumed

1. "Statistisches Jahrbuch 1941/2" p.663 and Tracy "Agriculture in Western Europe" p.209
2. Petzina p.93
3. "Bauerntum" p.52 and "Die Landesbauernschaften in Zahlen" pp.26/43
4. "Statistisches Jahrbuch 1941/2" p.51
5. "International" means the average production of all countries except China, Iraq, Iran and the U.S.S.R.: statistics taken from the World Agricultural Institute in Rome
6. Petzina p.95
7. "Statistisches Jahrbuch 1941/2" p.284
8. FEFC p.122
9. Petzina p.95 gives a figure of 40% for 1938/9.
10. FEFC p.125 and Tracy "Agriculture in Western Europe" p.207
11. "Statistisches Jahrbuch 1941/2" pp.436/7 and the 1936 edition pp.350/1

Appendix I: The Erbhöfe in Statistics

Table XXX¹

Erbhöfe as at mid-1938 by size of holding

| <u>Size (Ha)</u> | <u>No. of Erbhöfe</u> | <u>as % of total no. of Erbhöfe</u> | <u>Agricultural land comprised (Ha)</u> | <u>Agric. land comprised as % of total of all Erbhöfe land</u> |
|------------------|---------------------------|---|---|--|
| under 7½ | 20,067 | 2.9 | 134,470 | 0.9 |
| 7½-10 | 99,786 | 14.6 | 875,521 | 5.6 |
| 10-15 | 175,444 | 25.6 | 2,168,463 | 13.9 |
| 15-20 | 118,741 | 17.3 | 2,053,121 | 13.2 |
| 20-25 | 75,696 | 11.0 | 1,692,212 | 10.9 |
| 25-50 | 145,057 | 21.2 | 4,969,085 | 31.9 |
| 50-75 | 33,120 | 4.8 | 1,975,355 | 12.7 |
| 75-100 | 11,320 | 1.7 | 964,612 | 6.2 |
| 100-125 | 4,680 | 0.7 | 520,397 | 3.4 |
| over 125 | 1,086 | 0.2 | 208,637 | 1.3 |
| Total | 684,997 | 100.0 | 15,561,873 | 100.0 |

Table XXXI²

Number of actual Erbhöfe mid 1938 in each size category of holding
compared to total number of holdings in the same category, by region and province

| <u>Prussian Province</u> | <u>Actual Erbhöfe</u> | | <u>Total holdings</u> <u>in province/region *</u> | | <u>% of total holdings</u> <u>enrolled as Erbhöfe</u> | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|--|------------------|--|------------------|
| | <u>7½-20 Ha</u> | <u>20-125 Ha</u> | <u>7½-20 Ha</u> | <u>20-125 Ha</u> | <u>7½-20 Ha</u> | <u>20-125 Ha</u> |
| E. Prussia | 24,911 | 24,332 | 39,366 | 26,666 | 63.3 | 91.2 |
| Berlin | 76 | 24 | 171 | 44 | 44.4 | 54.5 |
| Brandenburg | 18,595 | 21,580 | 32,877 | 22,779 | 56.6 | 94.7 |
| Pomerania | 25,351 | 18,450 | 38,936 | 21,268 | 65.1 | 86.8 |
| Silesia | 34,979 | 15,382 | 49,768 | 16,461 | 70.3 | 93.4 |
| Saxony | 19,816 | 14,697 | 24,661 | 14,881 | 80.4 | 98.8 |
| Schleswig-Holstein | 12,714 | 17,125 | 14,870 | 16,824 | 85.5 | 101.8 Ø |
| Hanover | 33,600 | 32,989 | 39,372 | 30,084 | 85.3 | 109.7 Ø |
| Westphalia | 19,125 | 16,436 | 25,137 | 16,256 | 76.1 | 101.1 Ø |
| Hessen-Nassau | 12,375 | 13,874 | 16,710 | 4,360 | 74.1 | 88.9 |
| Rhine province | 12,133 | 4,208 | 27,958 | 6,161 | 43.4 | 68.3 |
| Hohenzollern | 647 | 207 | 1,750 | 253 | 37.0 | 81.8 |
| PRUSSIA | 214,322 | 169,304 | 311,576 | 176,037 | 68.8 | 96.2 |

Table XXXI (cont.)

| <u>Reichsregion</u> | <u>Actual Erbhöfe</u> | | <u>Total holdings</u> | | <u>% of total holdings</u> | |
|---------------------|---|----------------------|---|------------------|--|------------------|
| | <u>in province/region</u> | | <u>enrolled as Erbhöfe</u> | | | |
| | <u>7¹/₂-20 Ha</u> | <u>20-125 Ha</u> | <u>7¹/₂-20 Ha</u> | <u>20-125 Ha</u> | <u>7¹/₂-125 Ha</u> | <u>20-125 Ha</u> |
| Bavaria | 101,442 | 55,873 | 139,264 | 60,365 | 72.8 | 92.6 |
| Saxony | 21,181 | 10,645 | 22,717 | 10,672 | 93.2 | 99.7 |
| Württemberg | 16,366 | 7,325 | 29,640 | 7,832 | 55.2 | 93.5 |
| Baden | 5,365 | 3,602 | 14,201 | 4,141 | 37.8 | 87.0 |
| Thuringia | 11,910 | 5,428 | 15,856 | 5,787 | 75.1 | 93.8 |
| Hessen | 6,503 | 1,041 | 9,289 | 1,221 | 70.0 | 85.3 |
| Hamburg | 309 | 290 | 354 | 293 | 87.3 | 99.0 |
| Mecklenburg | 2,600 | 6,715 | 6,840 | 7,048 | 38.0 | 95.3 |
| Oldenburg | 7,649 | 5,075 | 7,481 | 4,110 | 102.2 | 123.5 Ø |
| Brunswick | 3,049 | 2,120 | 3,138 | 1,864 | 97.2 | 113.7 Ø |
| Bremen | 144 | 252 | 173 | 217 | 83.2 | 116.1 Ø |
| Anhalt | 1,480 | 940 | 1,713 | 935 | 86.4 | 100.5 Ø |
| Lippe | 800 | 974 | 1,006 | 916 | 79.5 | 106.3 Ø |
| Schaumburg-Lippe | 518 | 252 | 565 | 179 | 91.7 | 140.8 Ø |
| Saarland | 333 | 37 | 1,483 | 115 | 22.5 | 32.2 |
| GERMANY | 393,971 | 269,873 [±] | 565,296 | 281,732 | 69.7 | 95.8 |

1. "Vierteljahrsheft zur Statistik des Deutschen Reiches 1939"
Sec. II p.36.
2. "Vierteljahrsheft zur Statistik 1939" Sec. II p.38.

* Excludes all farms publicly owned by State authorities etc.

Ø Figures in excess of 100% are explained by the fact that the number of total holdings taken in each category are those for 1933, at a time when some of equal size may have been on lease and were therefore not included: if after 1933 the lease expired and they reverted to the original owner for management they were enrolled as Erbhöfe

± The total number of Erbhöfe given in the first two columns together (663,844) does not equal that in Table XXV as the latter includes 21,153 Erbhöfe either below $7\frac{1}{2}$ Ha in size or above 125 Ha.

Table XXXII ¹

Preliminary litigation: the enrolment of the Erbhöfe as at 1st July 1935

and the statistics for objections to enrolment/non-enrolment

| <u>Regional Court</u> | <u>No. of An- erbengerichte attached</u> | <u>No. of potential Erbhöfe in area</u> | <u>No. so far en- rolled</u> | <u>No. of ob- jections to enrolment or non-enrolment</u> | <u>Objections sustained</u> | <u>Objections rejected</u> |
|-----------------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Bamberg | 56 | 38,267 | 29,732 | 5,950 ^X | 2,612 | 1,828 |
| Brunswick | 22 | 6,522 | 5,207 | 575 | 220 | 169 |
| Breslau | 115 | 81,702 | 55,900 | 12,018 | 6,689 | 3,870 |
| Celle ^Ø | 106 | 85,993 | 71,491 | 7,759 | 4,529 | 2,249 |
| Darmstadt | 48 | 10,680 | 8,456 | 1,876 | 715 | 736 |
| Dresden | 104 | 40,361 | 33,404 | 3,102 | 1,338 | 1,225 |
| Düsseldorf | 35 | 13,875 | 8,612 | 1,454 | 662 | 417 |
| Frankfurt a. Main | 31 | 5,475 | 3,306 | 1,633 | 861 | 494 |
| Hamburg | 6 | 1,911 | 1,492 | 308 | 161 | 134 |
| Hamm | 99 | 49,798 | 38,567 | 3,800 | 2,327 | 1,101 |
| Jena | 63 | 23,368 | 17,904 | 2,204 | 994 | 850 |
| Kammergericht | 99 | 64,978 | 47,231 | 9,815 | 6,404 | 2,684 |
| Karlsruhe | 46 | 19,413 | 9,727 | 2,830 | 1,122 | 957 |
| Kassel | 60 | 20,370 | 15,794 | 1,955 | 1,065 | 649 |

Appendix J: Litigation in the Erbhof Courts in statistics.

Table XXXII (cont.)

| <u>Regional Court</u> | <u>No. of An- erbengerichte attached</u> | <u>No. of potential Erbhöfe in area</u> | <u>No. so far en- rolled</u> | <u>No. of ob- jections to enrolment or non-enrolment</u> | <u>Objections sustained</u> | <u>Objections rejected</u> |
|-----------------------|--|---|--------------------------------------|--|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Kiel | 57 | 37,483 | 29,392 | 4,363 | 2,601 | 1,408 |
| Cologne | 69 | 28,674 | 11,002 | 6,782 | 2,859 | 2,238 |
| Königsberg | 63 | 66,703 | 47,404 | 8,984 | 4,606 | 3,160 |
| Marienwerder | 23 | 18,918 | 14,178 | 2,312 | 1,369 | 805 |
| Munich | 96 | 108,226 | 88,363 | 8,909 | 4,051 | 2,779 |
| Naumburg | 105 | 50,822 | 39,437 | 5,391 | 3,185 | 1,614 |
| Nuremberg | 57 | 52,880 | 39,807 | 5,392 | 2,321 | 1,470 |
| Oldenburg | 19 | 15,257 | 12,907 | 1,806 | 1,004 | 503 |
| Rostock | 23 | 15,904 | 9,267 | 1,074 | 598 | 260 |
| Stettin | 57 | 51,682 | 36,061 | 6,040 | 3,079 | 2,050 |
| Stuttgart | 59 | 39,871 | 26,006 | 5,069 | 2,307 | 1,509 |
| Zweibrücken | 26 | 5,318 | 3,122 | 1,038 | 565 | 287 |
| GERMANY | 1,544 | 954,451 | 703,769 | 112,439 | 58,244 | 35,446 |

Table XXXIII²

Anerbengericht litigation in selected districts 1933-1939

| <u>Parish</u> | <u>Region</u> | <u>Relevant Aner- bengericht</u> | <u>No. of Erbhöfe in parish</u> | <u>No. of cases at Anerbengericht level</u> | <u>Appeals to Higher Court</u> |
|---------------|---------------|--|---|---|--|
| Wulkenfelde | Schleswig- | Borgteheide | | | |
| Timmerhorn | Holstein | " | 62 | 32 | 2 |
| Tremsbüttel | " | " | | | |
| Nähe | " | " | | | |
| Aerzen | Lower Saxony | Hamlin | 26 | 10 | |
| Brockensen | " | " | 9 | 5 | |
| Egge | " | " | 11 | 7 | NA |
| Hagen | " | " | 18 | 13 | |
| Kleinenberg | " | " | 11 | 5 | |
| Marienau | " | " | 16 | 9 | |
| Afferde | Westphalia | Unna | 12 | 11 | 2 |
| Hemmerde | " | " | 56 | 38 | 3 |
| Norddinker | " | " | 30 | 13 | 1 |
| Ingelfingen | Württemberg | Künzelsau | 11 | 6 | 1 |
| Schoental | " | " | 11 | 4 | - |
| | | | 273 | 153 | 9 |

Table XXXIV²

Causes of litigation in respect of Table XXXIII: all

above cases subsumed into combined totals

| <u>Übergabe</u> | <u>Mortgage/loan</u> | <u>Sale/Exchange of</u> | <u>Objections to enrolment</u> |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <u>Vertrag</u> | <u>requests by Bauer</u> | <u>Strip/Holding</u> | <u>of strip/holding on</u> |
| | | | <u>Erbhof roll.*</u> |
| 25 | 22 | 52 | 32 |
| <u>Lease of holding</u> | | <u>Sale of Erbhof</u> | <u>Ausstattung</u> |
| 6 | | 3 | 2 |
| <u>Creditor claiming</u> | <u>Declaration of capacity</u> | | <u>Miscellaneous</u> |
| <u>holding not Erbhof</u> | <u>as Bauer</u> | | |
| 1 | 1 | | 9 |

* The motive for trying to keep an unregistered piece of land was frequently Abfindung, since if the land was not enrolled, the Bauer could sell it freely and use the proceeds for his children.

Table XXXV³

| <u>Litigation for Germany at Landeserbhofgericht level 1935-9</u> | | | | | | | |
|---|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---|---|
| <u>Court</u> | <u>Year</u> | | | | | <u>No. of</u> <u>Erbhöfe</u> <u>in area</u> | <u>Total no.</u> <u>of cases</u> <u>1935-9.</u> |
| | <u>1935</u> | <u>1936</u> | <u>1937</u> | <u>1938</u> | <u>1939</u> | | |
| Bamberg | 374 | 523 | 281 | 198 | 124 | 28,238 | 1,500 |
| Brunswick | 45 | 63 | 37 | 52 | 18 | 5,353 | 215 |
| Darmstadt | 31 | 67 | 84 | 55 | 26 | 8,753 | 263 |
| Dresden | 80 | 430 | 418 | 410 | 400 | 33,434 | 1,738 |
| Hamburg | - | 5 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 1,079 | 23 |
| Jena | 33 | 116 | 150 | 84 | 87 | 18,043 | 470 |
| Karlsruhe | 35 | 69 | 87 | 94 | 44 | 9,467 | 329 |
| Munich | 207 | 880 | 746 | 765 | 715 | 89,149 | 3,313 |
| Nuremberg | 197 | 434 | 308 | 255 | 167 | 40,986 | 1,361 |
| Oldenburg | 100 | 188 | 196 | 230 | 116 | 13,372 | 830 |
| Rostock | 28 | 112 | 100 | 89 | 63 | 9,906 | 392 |
| Stuttgart | 93 | 211 | 138 | 138 | 153 | 24,593 | 733 |
| Zweibrücken | 21 | 49 | 45 | 17 | 13 | 3,303 | 145 |
| Celle ^I | 1,105 | 3,041 | 3,180 | 2,927 | 2,311 | 407,000 | 12,564 |
| Cologne | 53 | 54 | 2 | - | - | | 109 |
| | 2,402 | 6,242 | 5,779 | 5,321 | 4,241 | 692,676 | 23,985 |

^I This is the Court for all Prussia.

Table XXXVI⁴

Litigation in Table XXXV in respect of Celle (Prussia) broken down into
Regional Courts cases. 1935-1937

| <u>Regional Court</u> | <u>Year</u> | | | <u>Total</u> |
|-----------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|---------------|
| | <u>1935</u> | <u>1936</u> | <u>1937</u> | <u>1935-7</u> |
| Berlin | 120 | 331 | 320 | 771 |
| Breslau | 195 | 555 | 523 | 1,273 |
| Celle [‡] | 120 | 442 | 576 | 1,138 |
| Düsseldorf | 20 | 57 | 67 | 144 |
| Frankfurt-a.-M. | 30 | 54 | 37 | 121 |
| Hamm | 50 | 213 | 231 | 494 |
| Kassel | 10 | 88 | 93 | 191 |
| Kiel | 60 | 196 | 252 | 508 |
| Cologne | 130 | 174 | 90 | 394 |
| Königsberg | 165 | 356 | 398 | 919 |
| Marienwerder | 30 | 88 | 93 | 211 |
| Naumburg | 85 | 252 | 262 | 599 |
| Stettin | 100 | 235 | 238 | 573 |
| | 1,115 * | 3,041 | 3,180 | 7,336 |

[‡] This is the court for the local area only

* In Table XXX this figure is shown as 1,105, the discrepancy being part of the original records.

1. From Dr. Hopp "Die Anlegung der Erbhöferrolle nach dem Stand vom 1. Juli 1935" in "Deutsche Justiz" No. 1324: BA-Rss/2183.

± These may later have been taken to the Reichserbhofgericht

* These figures do not add across as cases still undecided have been omitted.

Ø This refers to the ordinary Regional Court at Celle, and not to the Court for all Prussia in the same town.

X Objections could be lodged by either the Bauernführer or the peasant, and both types are here comprehended.

2. This survey has been obtained from the following sources:-

Schleswig-Holstein: LA 355/nos. 351 to 412 inclusive

Lower Saxony: NSA 331 /B.1, 12, 21, 35, 50 & 61

Westphalia: Agricultural Chamber Westphalia-Lippe's branch
Unna.

Württemberg: LUD Bundles 209/210 in F.277

3. From undated minute: BA-R22/2248: these are the cases referred to Regional Courts from Anerbengerichte as a result of appeals against the local courts' decisions.
4. Undated minute: BA-R22/2248.

Appendix K: Land Control in the Third Reich

(i) The needs of war had induced the German government to produce a law in March 1918, which imposed official supervision of land sales and leases for the agrarian sector.¹ The object was to ensure that agricultural land did not come into the possession of those who might use it for other purposes, thereby making it harder to feed the population in wartime: the sale and lease of such land, therefore, required official permission from then on. Once the war was over the Act remained on the Statute books, which resulted in considerable legal delays every time a farmer wanted to sell a piece of land, even to another farmer, since the law regulated all sales; this led to parliamentary questions as to whether or not the Act should now be repealed.² A conference was called on the matter in 1924, since the legislation was delaying the Settlement programme in some cases, by making it hard for companies to acquire land quickly. Most State governments at the meeting wanted to let the issue remain under discussion still further, and nothing conclusive seems to have been achieved;³ one state authority did however agree to let one farmer sell freely to another where the land involved amounted to 3 Ha or less.⁴ Little more seems then to have been done in the matter.

The advent of the NSDAP changed this, as after all the Party had sworn to end speculation in land, and the EHG covered only a little over half of the agriculturally-used area of the country. As early as September 1933 the Prussian Ministry of Agriculture was urging its administrative apparatus to make full use of the legislation of 1918, which was still on the statute book; it was pointed out that permission could be refused to anyone trying to acquire agricultural land if he himself was in another main occupation: the Ministry was concerned chiefly with the effect of such purchases upon the settlement plans.⁵ The weakness of the existing law from this standpoint was its use of the word "could": it would appear that because of

this local authorities did not enforce its provisions, which resulted in land suitable for settlement still going to non-agrarian buyers in the Third Reich. One Landesbauernschaft demanded that the wording be changed to "must" in order to assist the settlement programme.⁶

(ii) Darré had already concerned himself in the matter, and as early as October 1933 made an attempt to extend his control of land over that not already included under the Erbhof legislation and sent a draft law along these lines to the Chancellery.⁷ He ran into very determined opposition in this project from both Seldte, Minister of Labour, and from Dr. Schmitt, the Minister of Economic Affairs, who apparently did not wish to see the REM getting a virtual monopoly in land control: Seldte pointed out that Darré had already brought 55% of all agrarian land under the EHG, (and therefore out of the market), and now he wished to take over the remainder. After a conference on 16th November 1933 the draft law was dropped.⁸

By the following year prices were rising so rapidly that Darré took up the cudgels again, this time with a letter to Hitler, pointing out that land was now so dear that peasants could not buy it to add to their farms: he alleged that the estate-owners were making a handsome profit out of the settlement programme by being able to command such prices; as a remedy the RBF wanted to make it illegal to sell any piece over 2 Ha in area without permission.⁹ The Führer passed the suggestion to his economics adviser, Keppler; the latter replied the following month pointing out that the proposed measure would hit the large estates which were selling land, as a result of which he favoured dealing with each case on its merits, rather than comprehensive general legislation.¹⁰

Since Darré's efforts at national control had twice been baulked, individual regions were left to do the best they could to supervise the disposal of agricultural land in their own areas, at a time of great

demand and limited supply. Württemberg introduced control of the sale of all pieces of agrarian land over 3 Ha in size: this went somewhat farther than the 1918 law in that permission could now be refused, where the transfer might change the present agrarian use of the soil even to another, but less desirable, agricultural product e.g. meadow and ploughland turned to forest.¹¹ In Schleswig-Holstein a watch also seems to have been kept, without any new enactment however: where one farm sold four pieces by an agreement to pay off debts, the KBF objected that one portion was going to a butcher, so the local court rejected this particular sales contract;¹² the Debt-Relief Office then complained about this decision, as the opportunity to unburden the holding of its debts had been partially lost;¹³ the Court at Celle upheld the original KBF objection, however, and a new purchaser had to be found.¹⁴ Some local effort was made to keep agricultural land within the agrarian community. In Baden the settlement authorities made use of a right which gave them priority of purchase at all land sales in order to exclude speculation forcing up the price, sometimes at the instigation of the Bauernführer.¹⁵ But evidence exists to show that speculation did nonetheless exist in the Third Reich, simply due to a loophole.¹⁶ The settlement companies could buy up holdings available for purchase in theory, since those not large enough to be Erbhöfe were not, of course, subject to that Act's provisions; but precisely because they were not big enough to qualify in that respect meant that they were useless to the settlement programme, designed to create new Erbhöfe: consequently non-farmers with plenty of money bought them up.¹⁷ Even worse from the NSDAP standpoint were those cases where Erbhöfe came on to the market as well (presumably because their owners had no heirs).¹⁸ In Bavaria there were twelve such cases from January to July 1936, including that of a 33 Ha farm owned by a Jew who had to sell it as he was a non-Aryan: a local Bauer wanted to buy it for his son

but could not pay the price, so it went to a director of I.G. Farben Industrie. The father expressed his belief that in the Third Reich purchases for a Bauer should be subsidized by Party or State. In reporting the case the Landesbauernschaft concluded that if this sort of situation was not prevented, the opinion would arise "that the NS State ... either does not have the goodwill to direct this (matter), or does not have the power to block the way for capitalists."

(iii) This kind of situation was intolerable in the long run to a movement which in principle was against speculation and in practice was faced by grave shortage of land and rising prices. The net result was the new law of January 1937 which virtually incorporated Darré's earlier demands; from now on the local authority, in conjunction with the Bauernführer, were to decide on all sales of agricultural land, usually where the piece involved was 2 Ha or more in area.¹⁹ The general philosophy behind the Act was expressed in the clause which stated that "The change in ownership in agricultural land is not simply one of traffic in property ... but a process which concerns the whole community."²⁰ The really important proviso in the new Act, which distinguished it from the 1918 legislation, was that the intervention of the appropriate Bauernführer was legally established as a means of executing "NS land policy," as the new law put it; this meant that the old "could refuse" permission of the local authorities was virtually certain to become "would" do so. Agricultural land as defined in the enactment meant that which was naturally appropriate for agriculture, whether the old owner had so regarded it or not. This in itself granted wide powers to those giving approval, since it meant that not merely existing, but also potential, agrarian land was included (building plots etc. in cities were exempted). It is interesting to note that the justificatory text for the introduction of the new Act stated frankly that the EHG had made land acquisition in general more difficult, as a result of which it had increasingly

been bought for non-agricultural purchases, which had caused bitterness among farmers.²¹ To obviate this kind of situation had taken a long time for the Party, although as already recounted, this had not been Darré's fault.

Finishing touches were put to the new law in the form of two further decrees, the first in September 1937 when it was announced that wherever settlement would be affected by a land sale its administrators must be heard by the local authority concerned before approval was given.²² The Erbhof law was also to be taken into account, according to a further enactment in 1938: wherever there was a family arrangement to dispose of land by a holding of Erbhof size but not enrolled, then the sale was not to be permitted if the farm would become fragmented by it. Where there was no prospect of the holding ever qualifying for inclusion under the EHG, however, family arrangements for its disposal were to be respected.²³

Armed with the new legislation the Bauernführer proceeded to ensure that agricultural land was not sold outside their community; one farmer in the Rhineland for example was called on to produce a sworn oath that this was his profession when he bought 9 Ha from another farmer.²⁴ An OBF in Hagen (Lower Saxony) laid down stringent conditions to the relevant Bürgermeister when apprised of a sale which was due to take place, and which he stated flatly should be so arranged as to give him no cause for complaint; only a good, politically reliable purchaser should be considered, there must be no element of supply and demand regulating the price, the actual yield should be used to compute this: the land should go to a holding which would enable it to become an Erbhof.²⁵

By December 1937 the sales to persons outside the peasant community was so difficult to arrange due to RNS vigilance that the local authorities began to remark on this fact.²⁶ Even rural craftsmen and landworkers began

to find it hard to acquire land, which moved the Minister of Justice to pen a recriminatory letter on the subject; the REM already controlled over half the land through the EHG, he pointed out, and some way must be found in which the aspiring farm labourer could rise in the world, since so few were being catered for in the settlement programme.²⁷ Moreover, the long delays involved in obtaining approval for sales was having an adverse effect on the rural community, for example where wills were concerned.²⁸ Presumably this last remark was intended to convey that people did not know whether they could bequeath land, as the sale was still awaiting approval. The missive seems to have struck home, as in March 1939 the RNS were instructed to let land go to other rural trades where it seemed appropriate, since this worked against the land-flight assisted those craftsmen "on whose activity farmers and landlords depend."²⁹ Previous excess of zeal was to be curbed, in other words.³⁰ It is interesting to notice that the same official instruction speaks of sales now being illegally modified after approval, in some instances land was being acquired in reality by persons other than those named in the conveyances: this seems to suggest that RNS supervision had been so restrictive that landowners were driven to subterfuge to circumvent it, so that even the latest legislation was inadequate to prevent speculation. The law of supply and demand appeared to be making a comeback.

Before any summary of attempts at land control are made, there is the final matter of leases to be mentioned. These were subject in principle to the 1918 law, and Darré apparently gave instructions that the provision should be used, and that the appropriate Landrat should consult the RNS before approving the lease of any agricultural land.³¹ In Lower Saxony the LRF called a conference in 1935 and asked the assembled local authority representatives through his deputy to give such approval "in an NS spirit" (the lower size limit for leases in Prussia was 5 Ha) that is, no lease should be permitted to those persons not intending to use the land for the common good.³²

Thus rented land as well as sold was closely watched over.

(iv) In retrospect it seems curious that land speculation was not cut out earlier and more thoroughly in the Third Reich, since after all promises to do so had been contained both in Point 17 of the original twenty-five and in the March 1930 programme for agriculture. It seems clear that the reluctance of other Ministries to see one only controlling all the land was at the root of this, since this kind of opposition had killed Darré's draft law in 1933; once the RME did obtain supervision on behalf of the Bauernführer then the Ministry of Justice complained about how it was being used. Finally, there is the effect of the EHG upon land sales, which clearly tended to push up the price of what remained on the free market; in this connection it is interesting to notice that Willikens admitted even before 1933 that changes in the inheritance laws would create some difficulties over land supply:³³ the experience of the Third Reich proved him to have been correct in so thinking. Ultimately, the whole matter of land control and the efforts at excluding speculation carried an air of half-measure; from the national standpoint it would have been better to have either left all land to the free market forces or have brought all under the supervision of one agency from the start.

1. For a summary of its provisions see WB 7th January 1931
2. "Kleine Anfrage 489" 26th March 1924 in the Württemberg Landtag:
HSA(S) 980/E130/IV
3. Ministry of Labour/REM joint letter to Ministries 2nd August 1924
reports the conference of 10th July 1924: Ibid
4. Ministry of Justice Württemberg reply to "Kleine Anfrage 489" 4th
April 1924: Ibid
5. For this instruction see WB 6th September 1933
6. Lbsch Schleswig-Holstein to REM 9th November 1934: BA-NS26/955
7. Darré to Chancellery 21st October 1933: BA-R43I/1301
8. Minutes in Ibid
9. Darré to Hitler 22nd June 1934: BA-R43II/207
10. Keppler to Chancellery 26th July 1934: Ibid
11. See "Regierungsblatt für Württemberg" No.19 1st November 1935
12. Court decision 14th January 1937: LA 355/368
13. Debt-Relief Office to Anerbengericht 25th January 1937: Ibid
14. Celle decision 28th May 1937: Ibid
15. See Court President Karlsruhe to Ministry of Justice 1st February 1937:
BA-R22/2130
16. The facts given in this paragraph are from Lbsch Bavaria to REM 15th
August 1936: BA-R22/2131
17. Presumably if the settlement companies did not exercise the right of
priority of purchase then the local authority did not refuse permission
to sell.
18. Properties, even of Erbhof size, would not normally be bought by a
settlement company unless they were near the frontiers.
19. This was a guide-line only; in some parts of Prussia the limit was
5 Ha, in other places, such as Oldenburg or Thuringia, as low as
1 Ha: RGB(I) p.534.

20. Ministerialblatt 26th January 1937
21. "Grundstückverkehrsbekanntmachung" RGB(I) p.32
22. Ministerialblatt 15th September 1937
23. Ministerialblatt 31st January 1938
24. HSA(D) 51 (Vohwinkel)
25. OBF Hagen to Bürgermeister 29th December 1938: NSA 331 B.35
26. Landrat Aachen to Regierungspräsident Cologne 4th December 1937:
HSA(D) 1068
27. There were evidently no illusions in official circles about this particular aspect of NS policy.
28. Minister of Justice to REM 2nd December 1938: BA-R22/2129
29. Ministerialblatt 30th March 1939
30. Although as late as February 1938 Eltz-Rübenach was still complaining that in the Rhineland too much land was going to city people: Eltz-Rübenach to RNS 26th February 1938: ADC Reichsnährstand Eltz-Rübenach.
31. See Lbsch Rhineland to KBF Birkenfeld 8th April 1936: HSA(D) 1043
32. Conference minutes 3rd April 1935: NSA/22a XXXII 80
33. "Westfälische Landeszeitung" 25th July 1932

Appendix L: Landworkers' status under the Republic and in the Third Reich.

(i) At the time of the National Socialist accession to office the landworkers in Germany were poorly paid, badly housed and had only an extremely low social standing.¹ The NSDAP inherited a situation where a considerable gulf existed between the employer and his labour in the agrarian sector, which has to be remembered when the activities of both the RNS and DAF are assessed.

As far as wages were concerned, they were frankly low, although varying considerably according to the region: in 1927 it was estimated that income for a family of three wage-earners, husband, wife, and eighteen-year-old son, ranged from 92 RM monthly in Central Germany to only 65 RM in East Prussia.² Living-conditions in general were extremely poor, especially in the East; a survey of nearly three hundred farms in East Prussia revealed a disturbing picture of how workers were lodged in the province, even when in married quarters.³ Many did not even enjoy separate accommodation, but lived in "barrack-like" blocks inside the boundaries of the estate where they worked.⁴ Conditions did vary according to type of job, however, as well as by geographical region, and some farmworkers enjoyed better conditions than others. The two most superior grades were the Deputate who had a piece of land as well as wages and received some payment in kind, and those classified as Heuerling, for which no translation exists; these latter also held land but virtually under feudal terms, in that they worked so many days annually for the owner, without however being his direct wage-employee, like the Deputat. At the bottom of the scale came the day labourers (Tagesarbeiter) and the farm servants living in (Gesinde).

Conditions varied therefore for farm labour both in terms of occupation and by region:⁵ the two distinctions were sometimes really only one, as the different soil etc. conditions in the various regions, plus local custom,

favoured in itself which type of labour was most prevalent in that area; the Heuerling was most often found in North West Germany, the day labourer on the eastern estates.⁶ The status was liable to be low wherever there was hired labour, although the eastern regions were the worst in that respect: even in 1933 it was still common practice there for the labourer to kiss the hem of his employer's coat when greeting him.⁷ How the estate-owners regarded their employees is deducible from Oldenburg-Januschau's anecdote about the worker on his estate who declared to him in November 1918 that he would soon be master there and was promptly forced to his knees in order to beg forgiveness and threatened with physical punishment should he ever recant: Hindenburg's neighbour was apparently fond of relating the entire incident as a joke.⁸ This kind of event would hardly have taken place in South or West Germany, but seems to have been widespread in the east: the Prussian government instituted a procedure for allowing court action where ill-treatment of farmworkers could be proved, to enable them to obtain redress: between October 1928 and February 1930 forty-six cases of physical mishandling of labourers from East Prussia and Silesia alone were reported as a result of this decree.⁹

Even the fact that trade union representation was possible seems to have had its effect mitigated by private contracts on different estates, as can be seen on the attached specimen of such a treaty between employer and labour: the words underlined in the original oblige the employee to recognize that the normal rates were not valid for this contract. Some progress was made prior to 1933 in improving wages, as the Farmworkers Union admitted, but clearly this was patchy, judging from the contract shown.¹⁰ The position of farm labour in 1933 was on the whole not a particularly happy one: perhaps the best evidence is rural migration itself: of the 9,381 landworkers who left Pomerania in 1929 only 7.7% took up agricultural employment elsewhere.¹¹

Kuenheim, Juditten

Bahnstation:
Dampendeht

Juditten, den 30. September 1932.
Post Bartenstein (Ostpr.) Land.

Fernsprecher: Schönbruch 44
Postscheckkonto:
Amt Königsberg Nr. 1293
Bank-Verbindung:
Bank der Ostpr. Landschaft
Bartenstein

V e r t r a g

Hiermit verpflichte ich mich, bei der Gutsverwaltung Juditten für
nachstehenden Lohnsatz in dem Winterhalbjahr vom 1.10.1932 bis 31.3.
1933 zu arbeiten und zwar:

Barlohn p.Monat.....Rmk.20,--

Naturallohn p.Monat.....1 Ctr.Roggen.

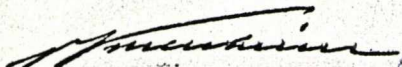
Ausserdem erhält der Deputant, bei dem ich wohne, die übliche Hofgänger-
zulage, sowie Brennung und Kuhlhaltung. Sämtliche Beiträge zu den Sozial-
versicherungen trägt die Gutsverwaltung.

Ferner verpflichte ich mich, die übliche Arbeitszeit einzuhalten in dem
oben angegebenen Winterhalbjahr und erkenne an, dass die tariflichen

Bestimmungen für die Vertrag keine Gültigkeit haben. Kündigungs-
frist: 14 Tage.

Juditten, den 30. September 1932.

Der Arbeitgeber:



Der Arbeitnehmer:

(ii) This was the situation which the NSDAP took over in 1933: most of the measures taken by it in terms of the land-flight, social status and wage regulations have been described in the main text, and the purpose of this Appendix is merely to set these in their context, that is, National Socialist belief about farm labour in general; the bedrock of its outlook was that the rural proletariat could best be ruled by raising its status in such a way that it no longer thought of itself as a separate class. In this sense the NSDAP was well in the tradition of earlier völkische groups which had tried to combine nationalism with radical social measures; in 1919, for example, one such movement described the basis of its outlook towards the workers by saying, "If you want to make the workers nationalist-minded (vaterländisch) then you must give them a piece of the Fatherland."¹² The NSDAP simply continued in this line of thought in its agrarian policy, the standing of farm labour should be improved in such a way that the class-struggle on the land would be overcome by rubbing out the line between employer and hired hand, not by lowering the former but rather by improving the position of the latter.

The struggle between RNS and DAF must be seen in this framework, as one concerned with methods rather than with goals, as both corporations appeared to be in accord that the landworker should be raised to the status of Heuerling, wherever possible, which one Landesbauernschaft described as "the soundest form in agriculture."¹³ another pointed out that having some land of their own was good training in management for the farm labourer, acting as a kind of springboard which the vigorous could employ as the first step to becoming Bauern in their own right.¹⁴ The DAF similarly regarded Heuerling's status as the best goal to achieve for farm labour, offering as it did a means of overcoming the class-struggle; one article in "Arbeitertum" recommended that every labourer should get two to five Ha of land in order to overcome Marxist conceptions. Action along these lines

was carried out, as witness the settlement company in East Havelland which gave plots of five Ha each to landworkers.¹⁵ They were encouraged to buy land whenever possible, for example in Schleswig-Holstein, where an Anerbengericht approved the sale of a piece of an Erbhof to a farm labourer precisely on the grounds that they should be afforded the chance to rise.¹⁶ As far as the settlement programme was concerned, however, this proved a disappointment: it might have been exactly the method by which most labourers could have found a new dignity as independent proprietors, but as described elsewhere few could so do because of the increasing cost of land; the proportion of landworkers who became Bauern in this way steadily diminished the longer the Third Reich lasted.¹⁷

As some form of compensation, assistance was offered to enable farm labour to acquire at least some form of subsidiary income via the holdings of their own stocks of poultry and other animals: there seems even to have been some kind of ideological slant in favour of supplementing incomes by payment in kind as well, judging from the remarks of Haidn, leader of Department I in the RNS, who described the pure cash wage as "Jewish-Marxist."¹⁸ In lieu of land farm labourers collected either more fuel and foodstuffs from their employers, or got favourable credit terms enabling them to purchase their own cows, poultry, even fruit-trees: the farmer himself was called upon to act as guarantor for the loans which the worker obtained from the appropriate Landesbauernschaft.¹⁹ Of course, part of the motive for this kind of measure was to prevent rural migration by making farm wages seem more attractive: one RNS official claimed that a Pomeranian landworker was actually better-off than a dealer in Hamburg because he received so many benefits on the side apart from actual cash:²⁰ judging from the continued land-flight in the Third Reich most farm labour did not agree with him.

As far as farm servants were concerned little seems to have been done

to improve their position, except for attempts to make their standing seem better by way of laudatory articles on their services to agriculture.²¹ they also shared in the awards given in recognition of long-service to all farm labour which were on quite a considerable scale, nearly a quarter of a million hired hands being so honoured over the period 1934-39.²² It must be accepted, however, that in purely monetary terms maids and male farm servants (Knechte) did well from 1933 onwards, since the fear that they might leave and thereby cause the farmer's wife to become even more over-worked led to substantial wage increases, even as early as 1936.²³ This probably accounts for the fact that in 1939 eleven Landesbauernschaften out of nineteen actually had more female labour in the 14-18 years age-range than four years before, despite a general decrease in farm labour over the same period.²⁴

(iii) In sum, the chief goal of the NSDAP on the land was to overcome the class-struggle by removing the distinction as far as possible between worker and employer by giving land or other benefits over and above the cash wage to farm labour. Ultimately the scale of this programme cannot have been very large as the land simply was not available, especially when the needs of a settlement scheme for farmers' sons was taken into account. There were in Germany in 1938 in round figures 650,000 Knechte:²⁵ to have given each one three Ha would have necessitated a land-stock of two million Ha being available, over and above the internal colonization along the frontiers, and the requirements of the defence programme. It would appear that the NSDAP concept of raising all farm workers to Heuerling status simply was never realizable within the borders of the country as they were in 1938. The only choices left were presumably either more territory or simply more payment in kind: as the latter had not stopped rural migration it cannot have been a long-term solution.

1. Although they were the largest single working-class group, with about one and a half million members of their trade union in 1929, as compared to 1.3 million in the building trade: "Schleswig-holsteinische Volkeszeitung" 5th June 1929 "20 Jahre Landarbeiterverband"
2. "Die Wirtschaftliche Lage der Landarbeiter und Arbeiterinnen in Deutschland" published by the Agricultural Workers Union 1928:
Appendix
3. Of 4,257 labourers dwellings investigated 2,759 had one or two rooms only for the whole family: Ibid p.10
4. Brand "Die Frau in der deutschen Landwirtschaft" p.67
5. The various grades of labour in 1925 were as follows:- Male Workers (no land) 830,287: similar but with some owned or leased land 101,683: Deputate 218,477: Farm Servants 1,115,303: Cowmen 65,971: Vine growers 7,855: Misc. including craftsmen 50,754. From Wunderlich p.15.
6. Ibid. pp.14-18
7. Topf "Die Grüne Front" p.168
8. Goerlitz p.329
9. See speech by Dr. Steiger, Prussian Landtag February 1930: LA 301/4089
10. Wages substantially improved in the twenties; a deputant receiving 26.9 Pfennigs hourly in Königsberg in July 1924 got 33.99 in August 1927, whilst in Thuringia the corresponding change was from 24.34 to 34.10: "Denkschrift über die wirtschaftliche Lage der Landarbeiter in Deutschland" published by the Landarbeiter Verband January 1928,
Appendix
11. Helleman "Landmaschinen gegen Landflucht" p.18
12. Appeal to the National Assembly in May 1919 in a völkisch publication "National Sozialismus": quoted in G. Franz-Willing "Die Hitler Bewegung" Vol. I p.76.

13. "Die landwirtschaftlichen Verhältnisse in der Landesbauernschaft
Weser-Ems" etc. p.43: NSA 122a XXXII 88a
14. "Wochenblatt der Landesbauernschaft Württemberg" 25th May 1935
15. "Von Landproletarier zum Heuerling" "Arbeitertum" 1st July 1937
16. Anerbengericht Borgteheide 14th Jan, 1937: LA 355/368
17. Whereas in 1934 29% of all new settlers were farm-workers, by 1938
the proportion had fallen to 16%: Wunderlich p.183.
18. Ibid p.231
19. Under this scheme it was claimed that landworkers in 1942 owned
200,000 cows, 300,000 goats, $\frac{3}{4}$ million pigs and 4 million poultry:
Dittmer "Der Bauer im Grossdeutschen Reich" p.24
20. Wunderlich p.238
21. See VB 12th June 1935 for an example of NS efforts to explain away the
titles maid and male servant (Knecht) as "titles of honour of the
Reichsnährstand"
22. "Die Landesbauernschaften in Zahlen" p.151
23. Maids and Knechte were earning 20.8% and 25.7% more in 1936 than three
years before according to one report: Reichsamt für Agrarpolitik to
Minister President Württemberg February 1938: HSA(S) 646/E/30/IV
24. "West Deutsche Landzeitung" 28th April 1939
25. "Die Landesbauernschaften in Zahlen" p.4

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