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THE BAVARIAN PEASANTRY UNDER NATIONAL SOCIALIST RULE, 1933-1945

City University of New York

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THE BAVARIAN PEASANTRY UNDER NATIONAL SOCIALIST RULE 1933-1945

by

Jon Jucovy

A dissertation submitted
to the Graduate Faculty in History
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
The City University of New York

1985

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

27 June 1985
date

Chairman, Examining Committee

6/27/85
date

Abraham Ascher
Executive Officer

Allen R. Douglas

William Shanahan

John Weiss

Supervisory Committee

The City University of New York

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Preface

This dissertation examines National Socialist agrarian policies as applied in Bavaria. By focusing on Bavaria, rather than Germany as a whole, I could observe and describe these policies in greater detail, and I could isolate more easily the factors which influenced peasant responses to them. Moreover, Bavaria proved a happy choice by virtue of its rich archives and the great geographic diversity within its borders. Though my dissertation concentrates on Bavaria, I believe that many of my descriptions and conclusions are valid for peasants throughout Germany, particularly in the western and southern regions where peasant farming was dominant. However, peasant discontent with a wide range of Nazi agricultural policies might well have been intensified due to religious and particularist traditions unique to Bavaria. The relative backwardness and isolation of the peasant farm in much of Bavaria may also have contributed to peasant resentment and encouraged resistance to National Socialist directives and laws.

Although the National Socialists stressed the importance of agrarian reform, claimed that rural life was vastly superior to urban life, and received their first dramatic electoral breakthrough in rural districts, the fate of agriculture in the Third Reich has attracted scant scholarly attention.

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To the extent that rural Nazi Germany has been studied, most historians judge that the early promises of the National Socialists to revive rural Germany were ultimately abandoned due to the military build-up which began in earnest after 1935. They have argued that the shift in priorities which took place was reflected in the rapid ascendancy of the pragmatic wing within the Nazi party in the mid-30's and the corresponding decline in the influence of the Blut and Boden Volkist romantics.

The Volkists had inveighed against modern, urban, and industrial society and had called for a return to the rural and small town virtues of medieval Germany. They insisted upon the ineluctable link between the German peasantry and the German race, holding that the basis of German greatness had always been the peasantry. With hoe in one hand and sword in the other, the peasant had pushed the boundaries of Germandom forever outward, vanquishing enemies wherever they were encountered. He had defended the Volk when it was assailed by Roman law, Christianity, Judaism, Liberalism, and Marxism. Though the cities had succumbed to these enemies, the land had retained a large measure of its spirit and vitality. The peasantry, with its higher birthrate and greater devotion to the nation, was the mainstay of the armed forces. Peasant farms, hacked from the forest fastness, fed the Volk in peacetime and wartime. Remove the "life source" of the German people and the military might of Germany would wither and the nation would starve or surrender to foreign

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blackmail. The public policy of the state must therefore have as its aim the preservation of the peasant "estate."

The Volkist ideology was symptomatic of the profound "cultural despair" experienced by many educated Germans in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Indeeed, before 1933, much of the Nazis' electoral support came from social groups which shared this particular version of the dislocations of modern society. These groups--mainly peasants, artisans, and shopkeepers, but also professionals and civil servants--collectively made up what historians have called the _Mittelstand_ (middle class), a term popularized by German social critics at the turn of the century. Many see the romantics within the Nazi Party as the spokesmen for the _Mittelstand_, enabling the party to attract mass support from groups which felt threatened by rapid social change. Thus, the victory of the Nazi appeared to represent the triumph of the romantics and their reactionary supporters. However, after Hitler assumed power, the ideologues were ultimately relegated to secondary status within the Party and the hopes of the _Mittelstand_ were betrayed.

In the dissertation which follows, I will show that such an interpretation of National Socialism and its rural policies is flawed. First of all, I take issue with the characterization of the _Blut und Boden_ ideologues as purely romantic reactionaries. Too many historians have been fascinated by the almost mystical pronouncements of the ideologues, though their program went well beyond mere obscurantism. In

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fact, the Volkists called for the adoption of the most modern agricultural techniques by the peasant farm and the peasant village--cooperatives, fertilizers, electrification, mechanization, and plot consolidation. Indeed, similar measures had enabled Danish and Dutch agriculture to experience impressive prosperity in the early twentieth century. Whatever the extent of the "cultural despair" felt by the Blut und Boden advocates, it did not entail a wholesale rejection of modernity, but merely of the form which modernization had assumed.

Second, I will show that the supposed betrayal of agriculture after 1935 never occurred. No doubt, there was a deterioration of agricultural income relative to other social groups after 1935, and rural reforms simultaneously became more onerous for the peasantry. But the increased pace and severity of rural reform was not a reversal of previous policy. It was a response to peasant resistance to earlier, more modest reforms. For despite the Nazis' avowed intent to reinvigorate peasant life, their agrarian program was resisted by a considerable proportion of the peasant population. While peasants welcomed measures that guaranteed prices and protected them against mortgage foreclosures, many of them opposed laws which would alter traditional farm and marketing practices or set limits on their profits and property rights. In consequence, the reform measures came to assume a life of their own. As early legislation failed to accomplish its objectives, the regime responded with more

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laws and more rigorous interference. However, it never ceased trying to implement policy goals announced as early as 1933, such as modernization of processing and marketing activities.

Finally, I will investigate the extent of National Socialist control of the countryside. Nazi authority proved to be less effective in rural areas than in cities. Local traditions, physical remoteness, the influence of traditional elites, inter-agency rivalry, and inter-group conflict all contributed to undermine the power of the National Socialists. Of these, the existence of conflicts within the peasantry and between the peasantry and other social groups directly contradicts the notion of a pre-industrial *Mittelstand* united by a shared outlook and common values. Much of the drama in rural Nazi Germany was generated by the suspicions among the many components of the supposed *Mittelstand*, rather than between rural and urban interests. Therefore, I shall not use the term in the text which follows.

The National Socialist rural program defies easy characterization. It was neither reactionary nor progressive, but had elements of both. It favored neither the estate-owner nor the peasantry, but tried to mediate between the various components of German agriculture, often with contradictory results.

The Third Reich contributed to the modernization of German peasant agriculture. Rural modernization is an oft-debated term. I use it to denote the growth of state control over

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farm production and over the allocation of land, investments, and produce. Another aspect of rural modernization includes increased specialization between the rural producer, agricultural processor, and commercial enterprises. With the growing rationalization of the agrarian structure comes an increase in literacy, technical education, and mechanization. The administration and supervision of a vastly more complex agrarian sector requires the development of a large bureaucracy. Indeed, under National Socialism, the peasant farm was reduced to the role of primary producer, having been first encouraged, then compelled, to relinquish its control over the processing and marketing of farm produce. The government also promoted modern farming techniques, such as the increased use of fertilizer, electricity, and machinery. Better storage facilities were constructed and better sanitation methods introduced.

But the Nazis also encouraged contrary trends in rural Germany. The Nazi reforms reversed the centuries-old trend toward specialized farming. Peasants were exhorted to grow flax, raise sheep, and increase dairy production, regardless of the regional variations which affected local farming. Indeed, the National Socialist commitment to the maintenance of the eastern estates can be seen as a reactionary policy goal, for it was at odds with efficient agricultural development and retarded productivity improvements in peasant farming. Some might also view the retention of peasant farming as being incompatible with a modern farm sector, although

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I am not convinced of that.

Moreover, given the commitment of the National Socialist regime to territorial expansion and massive rearmament, its plans for agrarian reform, in the last analysis, represented an instance of the deeply contradictory objectives the regime exhibited in various fields. Rearmament required the most rational use of resources, but the government, pressed by R. Walther Darré, the Minister of Agriculture, was unwilling to countenance the destruction of the peasant sector and its replacement by huge agribusinesses. A more productive peasant sector necessitated a far more radical policy of expropriation of the large eastern estates and an end to import restrictions on foreign fodder supplies. Yet the influence of the estate owners in the army and bureaucracy precluded such a policy choice. Thus, Nazi Germany remained saddled with both the estates and peasants, and productivity lagged among both groups.

Irrespective of the direction of Nazi agrarian goals, the National Socialist rural reform program could not be accomplished without transforming the peasant community, undermining parental authority, and promoting the establishment of modern rural cooperatives. German peasants hardly envisioned such paradoxical results. They had been attracted to the Nazis by promises of support and protection, not radical upheaval. As the full scope of Nazi rural policy was revealed to them, they reacted by resisting or impeding reforms. In turn, the regime responded by intensifying state intervention

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in the farm enterprise. Although Nazi policies were intended to place the peasant farm on a sound footing, the initial effects were wrenching and onerous to many peasants. Military expenditures and the state's refusal to abandon the grain-growing estates diminished the otherwise beneficial results of Nazi policies to the peasant farm: The economic position of the average peasant farm deteriorated between 1935 and 1939. Only with the war did higher prices--both legal and black market--bring a kind of renewed prosperity to the peasant sector. Yet even before the war, the comparatively minor benefits which the rural reforms brought to individual peasants were outweighed by the benefits which they brought to German society in the form of increased productivity and improved quality of German farm products. Besides, the reforms laid the foundations for further improvements in German agriculture in the decades ahead. In many respects, the National Socialists accomplished in twelve years tasks which had been neglected or derailed by successive German governments ever since the unification of Germany.

The accomplishments, intended and unintended, the contradictions, the scope of reforms and the limits placed on their implementation emerge clearly in Bavaria. Though but a single province, Bavaria is large enough to encompass a broad range of climatic, geographic, confessional, and regional distinctions which allow researchers to make useful comparisons. It contains a number of major arable zones. The rolling hills

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of Swabia and Franconia, as well as the well-drained limestone soil grow rye, oats, and summer barley. The area of southern Franconia and northern Upper Bavaria was, and remains, one of the world's most important hops growing regions, the backbone of the fine and varied Bavarian beer industry. The fertile Danubian valley and basin between Regensburg and Passau is known as the Bavarian Corn Chamber. Here the summers tend to be warmer and autumn milder and sunnier than elsewhere in Bavaria. Wheat and summer barley are the chief products grown here. Aside from the major arable zones, Bavaria also possesses some minor sub-zones. The most important are the viniculture on the slopes in the Wuerzburg area and the potato farming on the reclaimed Donaumoos soil.

But it is the pasturelands which give Bavaria its distinctive agricultural cast. They stretch in a crescent from Lake Constance in the southwest to the edge of the Bohemian mountain range in the east. Although oats, potatoes, rye, and spelt (a kind of wheat) may be cultivated in the pasture regions, the primary farm activity is, of course, animal husbandry, with its varied final products--cheese, milk, butter, and meat. I will devote an entire chapter to dairy farming because of its importance to Bavarian agriculture, but also because the clash between traditional farm practice and the Nazi reforms was particularly severe in the dairy sector.

The peasant farm dominated Bavarian agriculture, as it

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did elsewhere in west and south Germany. There was also a wide range in settlement and ownership patterns in Bavaria, from the middle-sized isolated farms in the subalpine regions to the small-sized and dwarf farms in the villages of Lower Franconia. It is this variety which makes Bavaria an ideal region to study the effects of the Nazi reforms on the peasantry. Estate-farming was almost non-existent in Bavaria, less than 1 percent of all farms were larger than one hundred acres. Middle-sized peasant farms, ranging from five to twenty acres in size, consisting of a nucleus of a peasant family, farm house, and outbuildings, constituted 43 percent of all Bavarian farms in 1933. Two areas of particular concern for the peasantry--the Erbhof Law and cooperative arrangements in rural areas--will receive special attention in my dissertation, in two chapters devoted to the subjects.

Throughout the dissertation, I will be using the terms reform and modernization to describe what took place in Bavarian peasant agriculture. I do not ascribe any moral value to these terms, nor should the reader. By reform, I mean the attempt to remove or eradicate perceived defects in Bavarian farming and marketing practices. The agrarian reforms were supposed to create a more rational farm sector. The reformers hoped to eliminate huge swings in agricultural supplies and prices. They also wanted to reduce losses due to spoilage and disease. I have already indicated what I consider to be the essential components of rural modernization.

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I should like to add that I believe that modernization has assumed many different guises throughout the world. The particular path it took in western Europe and the United States was by no means the only road to modernization. Modernization need not mean that land can be bought and sold without restriction, that farm labor be free, or that all production take place on huge estates or properties. The experiences of Denmark, the United States, Germany, and the Soviet Union, though vastly different from each other, all represent a form of agricultural modernization. With that in mind, Nazi policies, consciously and, to some extent, successfully, contributed to German agrarian modernization.

After describing what my dissertation is about, I should point out what it is not intended to be. Since I am chiefly interested in what happened to the Bavarian peasant, there will be very little discussion of National Socialist foreign policy, the war, and Nazi agrarian goals in both conquered and Nazi-dominated Europe. The effects of Nazi policies in areas other than Bavaria are also beyond the scope of my dissertation. Therefore, the extent to which my observations and conclusions apply to other regions in Germany are limited, especially where the agricultural environment differed extensively from Bavaria. Though the wider dimension is important to Nazi agricultural policies in general, I am more interested in a detailed examination of the immediate peasant environment and of policies aimed directly at the peasantry.

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Despite the self-imposed limitation, I think that my investigation of Nazi rural policies in Bavaria will contribute to a reassessment of National Socialism. I believe that the Nazis represented one, albeit monstrous, variant of the centuries-old invasion of traditional societies by expanding, centralizing, and modernizing governments. In their invasion of the German farm sector, the Nazis relied on ideology, suasion, and pressure, and especially on technocracy--the agrarian experts. Indeed, the Nazi era was the heyday of the rural technocrat, who was now freer than ever to impose his ideas upon a recalcitrant constituency. If National Socialism did not succeed in achieving the objective which lay behind the rural reforms, if the reforms did not ultimately serve to secure internal and external power for the movement, this was largely the result of the incompleteness of the Nazi victory and the conflicts and rivalries among its servants. In this way, too, the history of National Socialist agrarian policies reflects the history of National Socialist policies in general.

I would like to express my thanks to all those persons who have assisted me with the preparation of this dissertation. Dr. Timothy Mason encouraged me to undertake my research into Nazi agrarian policies. Dr. Christoph M. Kimmich was always available with advice through all the stages of research and writing; Dr. Abraham Ascher made many worthwhile suggestions as well. The archivists at the Bayerische Hauptstaatsarchiv

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and the regional archives in Landshut, Munich, Neuburg an der Donau, and Wuerzburg were always helpful and courteous. I should particularly like to thank Dr. Reinhard H. Seitz at the Staatsarchiv in Neuburg an der Donau. Without the help of our many friends in Germany, it would have been impossible to undertake the research for this dissertation; our thanks to them once again. The City University of New York provided me with a grant upon my return to New York, which enabled me to concentrate on writing the manuscript. My parents, Milton and Shirley Jucovy, have been unwavering in their encouragement and aid. There is no way that I could sufficiently express my appreciation to them. Finally, my wife, Beth, has been patient and supportive throughout the long years of research, writing and revising. I hope the results were worth the wait.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

1. Regional and Local Authorities; Laws and Directives

AEG	Anerbengericht
BA	Bezirksamt
BBF	Bezirksbauernfuehrer
KBF	Kreisbauernfuehrer
KBS	Kreisbauernschaft
LBF	Landesbauernfuehrer
LBS	Landesbauernschaft
LRA	Landratsamt
MEG	Milcheinzugsgebiet
MF	Mittelfranken
MFWV	Milch- und Fettwirtschaftsverband
MB	Monatsbericht
MLA	Milchleistungsausschuss
MLP	Milchleistungspruefung
MVV	Milchversorgungsverband
MWV	Milchwirtschaftsverband
NB	Niederbayern
OB	Oberbayern
OBF	Ortsbauernfuehrer
OBS	Ortsbauernschaft
OF	Oberfranken
RBF	Reichsbauernfuehrer
REG	Reichserbhofgesetz
RNS	Reichsnaehrstand
Sch	Schwaben
SMW,L	Staatsministerium fuer Wirtschaft, Abteilung Landwirtschaft
UF	Unterfranken

2. Political Parties and Organizations

aA	agrarpolitischer Apparat
BBB	Bayerischer Bauernbund
BBMB	Bayerischer Bauern- und Mittelstandsbund
BDM	Bund deutscher Maedel
CBV	Christliche Bauernpartei
CNBLP	Christlich-Nationale Bauern- und Landvolkpartei
DAF	Deutsche Arbeiter Front
HJ	Hitlerjugend
KdF	Kraft durch Freude
NS	Nationalsozialistische
NSDAP	Nazionalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
NS-Hago	Nazionalsozialistische Handels- und Gewerbeorganisation
NSV	Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt

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RLB	Reichslandbund
SA	Sturmabteilung
WHW	Winterhilfswerk

3. Archives and Government Publications

BA Koblenz	Bundesarchiv Koblenz
BHSA	Bayerisches Hauptstaatsarchiv
RGBL	Reichsgesetzblatt
StAL	Staatsarchiv Landshut
StAM	Staatsarchiv Muenchen
StAND	Staatsarchiv Neuburg an der Donau
StAW	Staatsarchiv Wuerzburg

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BAVARIA
1933
(excluding the Bavarian Palatinate)

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CHAPTER I

NATIONAL SOCIALIST AGRARIAN POLICIES

1928-1945

It is remarkable that the National Socialists should have been the agents of a rural revolution for they had paid scant attention to rural issues prior to 1928 and their prestige among the rural voters had not been high. But the German agricultural crisis which began in 1928, a subsequent reorientation of Nazi propaganda activity, and highly effective organizational changes in the Nazi movement combined to attract large numbers of rural residents to the Party. Although the growing sympathy of peasants did not always translate into membership increases, it helped give the NSDAP its first electoral breakthroughs in the 1930 Reichstag elections. Between 1930 and 1933, the Nazis expanded and consolidated their electoral hold on the German peasantry. They captured control of the most important interest groups in German agriculture or destroyed their rivals. Political parties which had been powerful in peasant districts were also shattered.

Hitler's rise to power began with the rural voters, driven to desperation by the agricultural crisis which preceded the Great Depression. The crisis was long overdue and its origins could be traced back to the previous century.

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Though enormous progress had been achieved in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in farming techniques and farm productivity, German agriculture retained a flawed structure which was not suited to the needs of the twentieth century German industrial economy. Its chief problems were insufficient capitalization, soil parcellization, and underutilization of fertilizers and machinery. Tariff protections dating from 1879 exacerbated rural backwardness. Pressing reforms were delayed, since landowners were protected from the worst effects of foreign competition. One of the most important results of protection was the encouragement of grain cultivation by the East Elbian landowners. Peasant producers in the south and west were forced to buy more expensive domestic grain for fodder or pay the higher costs for foreign fodder as a result of the tariffs imposed on grains. Excess expenditure diverted funds from improvements and modernization of peasant enterprises. But peasant enterprises produced chiefly dairy and livestock products and consumer demand for high-quality food products was increasing in Germany, while it was on the decline for the rye grains grown by the East Elbians. Thus, precisely the products, and the farms which produced them, that ought to have been encouraged, were, in fact, discouraged. However, peasants, their agricultural interest organizations, and deputies in the Reichstag followed the lead of the East Elbian dominated interest group organization, the Bund der Landwirte, in calling for increased protection of the

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domestic grain market.[1]

Such policy decisions prevented the solution of Germany's most pressing agricultural problems prior to the First World War. Mechanization remained far less advanced than in Denmark and Holland, not to mention the United States. Capital resources were still inadequate, despite the growth of cooperative financing. The German tariff policies continued to favor Eastern grain production over high quality fats and proteins, even though it was irrational from the standpoint of demand.[2]

The First World War and immediate postwar period were further set-backs for agriculture. The impoverished peasantry was unable to undertake any improvements. In fact, the condition of the farm deteriorated. Though the return of prosperity in 1924 enabled agriculture to once again reach a level attained in 1914, further progress was unthinkable. Besides, prosperity was short-lived. A price decline in the grain market set in by 1927-1928 and spread to the dairy and livestock sectors by 1930-1932.[3] (See Table 1 on page 4.)

The Bavarian peasant, with whom we are mainly concerned, was particularly hard hit. The indebtedness of the Bavarian peasantry, relatively high even before the onset of the crisis, arose to alarming proportions. As more and more farms failed to meet their obligations, the number of farm auctions in Bavaria rose to nearly two thousand in 1932--about a third of the number of such auctions (6,200) in Germany that year.[4]

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Table 1

Domestic Farm Prices (1913 = 100)

	1927	1928	1929	1930	1932
Plant	163	152	128	115	106
Livestock	113	111	128	114	67
Dairy	149	149	138	120	88

Source: Walther G. Hoffmann, Das Wachstum der deutschen Wirtschaft (Berlin-Heidelberg, 1965), p. 562 cited in David Abraham, The Collapse of the Weimar Republic (Princeton University Press, 1981), p. 81.

Agrarian organizations insisted that the government meet the crisis by adopting a wide range of fiscal and tariff reforms--reduced freight charges for agricultural products, lowered tax assessments, elimination of the slaughter tax (in Bavaria), government purchases of agricultural surpluses, and higher import tariffs. Some experts, however, argued that simply alleviating financial pressures would not suffice. Max Sering, the head of the prestigious Deutsche Forschungsinstitut fuer Agrar-und Siedlungswesen, edited a monumental study of German agriculture, Die deutsche Landwirtschaft unter volks- und weltwirtschaftlichen Gesichtspunkten (1932). While agreeing on the need for protection and relief, the study argued for a complete overhaul of German farming--land amelioration, plot consolidation, greater production and use of machinery and fertilizer, higher quality seed, compulsory breedstock selection, more cooperatives, and marketing reforms. A renewed agriculture

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would not only require industrial products to increase farm productivity, it would enable a prosperous rural population to buy increasing amounts of consumer goods from industry. Thus, German industrial and agricultural prosperity would complement each other. In fact, a similar program would be implemented under the auspices of the Nazi government in the years ahead. For the moment, the program remained still-born and farm income continued to plummet.[5]

As the agrarian crisis grew worse, there was an increasing peasant radicalism. Bavaria was spared some of the most violent manifestations of desperation, but elsewhere in Germany--Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony in particular--peasant demonstrations and armed attacks on tax collectors and farm foreclosure agents took place as early as 1928. Officials in Bavaria noted an increasing restiveness on the part of the peasants and a growing impatience with the seemingly impotent democratic, parliamentary system.[6]

One important aspect of the peasant radicalization was the growing tension between the German peasantry and peasant agricultural interest groups, on the one hand, and the traditional leaders of German agriculture, the East Elbian landowners and their organization, the Reichslandbund (the successor to the Bund der Landwirte), on the other hand. The Grüne Front, an umbrella organization of leading agrarian organizations, was unable to mend the fences between the peasants and estate owners. There was a dawning conviction among peasants that German agricultural policies favored the

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influential East Elbians, often at the expense of the peasants. They were hardly reassured by government measures in response to the crisis--domestic grain quotas for German millers, successive increases in the grain tariff between 1929 and 1932, and, most blatently of all, the *Osthilfe*. The last measure provided subsidies and debt relief for overindebted farms in the East. Although it was not supposed to aid farms which were the victims of poor management, it soon became clear that the relief was simply a bailout for inefficient estate owners. Widespread accusations of corruption connected with the *Osthilfe* program finally led Chancellor Bruening to investigate the payments. The *Osthilfe* scandal was one of the factors which led President Hindenburg to ask for Bruening's resignation, which ushered in the final stages of political chaos.[7]

The National Socialist German Workers' Party (NSDAP) had been the chief beneficiary of the rural crisis and parliamentary instability, though it had paid scant attention to rural interests and the growing rural plight prior to 1928. The only group which the Party had singled out for attention was the working class, in the hope that it could be wooed from its allegiance to the Marxist political parties and trade unions. Since the working class proved relatively immune to the blandishments of the NSDAP, Hitler was quite willing to appeal to more receptive social groups. Thus, the Party deemphasized radical social programs and concentrated its propaganda on the middle classes, students, and peasants.[8]

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The reorientation of policy was hampered by the earlier reputation which the NSDAP had earned. The peasants, for example, were suspicious of the Party program of 1920 which had called for an end to land speculation and raised the spector of land expropriation without compensation. The radical wing of the NSDAP, grouped around Gregor Strasser and Josef Goebbels, had unsuccessfully attempted to add even more extreme clauses to the program in 1925-1926. They had called for expropriation of all properties over 250 hectares, a grant of two hectares to every farm laborer, to be held in perpetuity from the state, and forced membership in local sales cooperatives. Although most alarming to the eastern estate owners, the radical demands could hardly have endeared the National Socialist to the average rural voter, who was wary of unsolicited state intervention into his private affairs.[9]

The National Socialists now tried, in April 1928, to reinterpret the offending points of the Party program. In particular, they announced that land expropriation would be limited to land owned by Jews or other enemies of the nation. Subsequently, in articles printed in the NSDAP Jahrbuch in 1929 and 1930, a new agricultural program was outlined that was hardly distinguishable from the demands of agrarian deputies in the Reichstag and agrarian interest groups. Among the many reforms now proposed by the NSDAP were a new inheritance law to prevent divided inheritance and an accelerated settlement program on land gained from eastern

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estates.[10] The NSDAP also issued its first official policy statement for agriculture in March, 1930, paying homage to the peasant as the "backbone" of the national defense and the "life-source" of the people. It blamed the Jews for the Weimar policy of insufficient tariff protection, excessive taxes, expensive electricity and fertilizer, and overly high profit margins for wholesalers and retailers. These practices would be ended by the Nazis, the statement pledged. The Nazis also promised to prohibit Landflucht (rural migration), provide land for new farm settlements, aid the farm laborer, and ensure the cultural and social advancement of the peasantry.[11] The program eclectically combined proposals to modernize peasant farming, laws to protect the peasant farm, plans to enhance rural life and appeals to peasant and rural pride. It could be supported by almost anyone.

In early 1930, Hitler was introduced to R. Walther Darré, the man who would spearhead the National Socialist campaign among rural voters. Darré, born of German parents in Argentina, had prepared for a career as a colonial farmer. He studied in England and Germany before the First World War and, after the war, resumed his agricultural studies at Halle and Giessen. He graduated as a Diplomlandwirt in 1925.[12]

With one foot planted firmly in the soil of the agricultural technocracy, Darré planted the other in the fertile postwar soil of the burgeoning Voelkisch movement of romantic nationalists. Darré was, at one time or another, a

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member of the "back to the soil" Artamanen movement, the paramilitary Stahlhelm, the Nordic Ring, and the Saatacker Kreis. It was from such associates that Darré picked up ideas, which he would later expand upon, such as entailed peasant farms and a new peasant "aristocracy" to replace the now moribund old aristocracy of nobleman and Junkers. For all their romantic airs, the Voelkisch proposals to revive agriculture required the farm enterprise to adopt modern farming and marketing methods. The Blut und Boden ideology provided a meeting ground for technocrats and ideologues and the Nazi movement represented the political expression of their common interests.

Darré and a fellow member of the Artamanen movement, Georg Kenstler, were the editors of a journal printed by that group, Blut und Boden. The two men joined together to advocate a "nationwide network of cells," made up of "radically-minded peasants" which would overthrow the Weimar government by withholding food from the urban centers. Darré presented this proposal to the NSDAP, which responded warily because of its patent illegality. In the wake of the unsuccessful Beer Hall Putsch in 1923, Hitler was committed to the legal path to power and was probably suspicious that such a network would also be too independent of Party control. Nevertheless, Hitler appointed Darré to head a newly created Agrarpolitischer Apparat (aA) in July 1930. This apparatus was placed within Department II of the NSDAP, which served as Hitler's shadow cabinet. Its goal was to attract farmers and

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peasants to the Hitler movement. Although it played only a minor role in the spectacular September 1930 Reichstag election gains among peasant voters, it was destined to become a major force within the rural milieu.[13]

The aA was initially designed as an advisory organization of the NSDAP. Each Party leader was supposed to have a member of the aA assigned to him to advise him on agricultural questions. At the same time, each agrarian official was responsible to the next highest member of the aA hierarchy, on up to Darré. In December 1932, the aA was placed directly under Hitler's authority and given a measure of autonomy from the Party organization. So, in a sense, Darré had already established the prerequisite for his subsequent position as the overlord of German agriculture, subservient only to Hitler.

The changes undergone by the NSDAP between 1928 and 1932 were critical in increasing its popularity in rural districts. Its rural program, the adhesian of Darré to the Party, and the creation of the aA enabled the NSDAP to appeal to a broad spectrum of rural society. Its economic proposals attracted desperate peasants and agrarian technocrats alike. Darré could attract the Blut und Boden ideologists, many of whom were, like Darré, agronomists. The aA, consciously, though not always successfully, recruited rural elites. Having created a new rural organization which united technocrats, peasant elites, and the peasant masses, the NSDAP was now poised to attack the established organizations of rural

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society.

The NSDAP began to make real progress among agricultural voters in the Reichstag elections of 1930, with major electoral gains in the rural regions of Schleswig-Holstein, Hannover, and Franconia. The bulk of the peasant vote in Franconia had previously gone to the Deutschnationale Volkspartei (DNVP). In the autumn of 1928, the DNVP had been taken over by Alfred Hugenberg, leader of the party wing which was most amenable to industrial and landed estate interests. A regional splinter party in Southern Germany was formed by opponents of Hugenberg, which appealed to peasants who had voted for the DNVP--the Christlich-Nationale Bauern- und Landvolkpartei (CNBLP). The DNVP vote in Franconia collapsed, as peasants split their support between the CNBLP and the NSDAP. The CNBLP vote disappeared entirely in 1932 and went over en masse to the NSDAP.[14]

Nazi election gains in Catholic Bavaria were also substantial, though not nearly so large as in Protestant Franconia. The hitherto powerful Bayerische Bauernbund (BBB), renamed the Bayerische Bauern- und Mittelstandspartei or (BBMB) to broaden its appeal, was split between its radical and moderate wings. The radicals were in the ascendant by 1930 and under their influence the party quit the Bavarian coalition government over the issue of introducing a much disliked slaughter tax in Bavaria. Since the BBMB had not prevented the introduction of the tax while in the government and had no power to influence policy outside of the

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government, peasants may have felt increasingly willing to turn to political parties with more control over policy. The most attractive alternatives for peasants were the powerful regional party in control of Bavaria, the Bayerische Volkspartei (BVP), or the nationally organized NSDAP. In fact, the increasingly radical language heard at BBMB campaign rallies or in the party press reflected the growing influence of the Nazis, since the language used was often indistinguishable from that of the Nazis.[15]

The well organized aA, led by qualified and respected local farm owners at Darré's insistence, was soon able to make important gains in the quasi-official Landwirtschaftsrat. The NSDAP won one-third of the seats contested in the 1931 elections to the councils. The agricultural interest groups were also successfully attacked. The Reichslandbund (RLB), the largest and most influential group, was successfully infiltrated and, in effect, taken over by the Nazis, who exploited the political rivalries within the organization, chiefly that between the DNVP and CNBLP. The decisive moment in the relationship between the NSDAP and the RLB came after the Prussian Agricultural Chamber elections in 1931 and 1932. The Nazis had campaigned on charges of corruption and mismanagement against the Chamber leadership. As the results came in, indicating impressive Nazi gains, the RLB capitulated to Darré's demand that the Nazis receive representation on the national board of the RLB. Darré's deputy in the aA, Werner Willikins, was elected to a newly created fourth

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presidential position in the RLB on December 18, 1931.[16]

The growth of the NSDAP at the expense of the formerly influential rural political parties continued along similarly impressive lines. Some groups completely disintegrated under the onslaught of the NSDAP. The CNBLP had no more deputies left in the Reichstag by November 1932, and the once powerful BBMB was a shell of its former self, losing 50% of its 1930 vote by November 1932. The demise of the BBMB in one stronghold, the Swabian district of Günzberg, was typical of its fate throughout Bavaria. It has been estimated that only 15% of the BBMB voters in 1928 remained loyal to the party by 1933. The loss of electoral strength was paralleled by a loss in the leadership ranks as well. Many former BBMB leaders ended up defecting to the NSDAP.[17]

The Nazi success vis-à-vis the BBMB was aided by the rather restrained propaganda offensive the NSDAP aimed at the BBMB. The NSDAP had recruited many former BBMB members since 1930 and the Nazis did not want to create emotional barriers to further conversions and defections. The main propaganda argument used by the Nazis in their attempts to attract BBMB voters, and, no doubt, CNBLP voters in Franconia, was expressed in the slogan, "from now on, only the large parties can help." The ability of the Bund to counter Nazi propaganda was increasingly diminished as the economic crisis deepened, without the Bund having any impact on events or policy. Its opposition status, nationwide and, since 1930, in Bavaria, made it less and less attractive to rural voters,

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since minor parties can only succeed by bargaining their votes within a coalition, not outside of it. The BBMB contended that the NSDAP was made up of dangerous drifters and demobilized veterans who were in no way fit to represent the peasant class. But the Bund's argument was belied by the aforementioned accretion to the NSDAP of village elites and respectable community members.[18]

The NSDAP was able to strike a responsive chord in the Bund voter because it offered a solution to two of the most vexing shortcomings of the Bund. As the depression reached its nadir, the splinter interest group parties, like the Bund and the CNBLP, suffered from their inability to have any meaningful influence on government policy. The NSDAP references to "large parties" accorded with a growing belief among many voters that only a major national party could implement the reforms which the peasants desperately needed, especially in the face of the nationwide parties of the left--the SPD and the KPD. Side by side with this interest group calculation by the peasants was a growing belief that the agricultural crisis was but one aspect of a general economic crisis. Farm voters were becoming convinced that selfish interest group politics were inadequate if rural economic health were to be restored. The NSDAP, which claimed to represent the race and the nation, was a major beneficiary of this changing attitude, just as the regional, but multi-class BVP gained a share of these voters or held on to its previous electorate.

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One perplexing aspect of the National Socialist popularity among the former Bundler was that the campaign propaganda of the Nazis was almost entirely of a general nature. Vague promises seem hardly likely to have appealed to the interest group voters who had followed the Bund. As one historian, Zdenak Zofka, points out in his study of Günzberg, this contradiction is more apparent than real. The campaign propaganda of the NSDAP served as a "ground breaking" device to establish the benign attitude of the NSDAP toward the peasantry, who had regarded the party with suspicion, as we have mentioned. The more specific, economic proposals of the Party were spread by word of mouth. Personal contacts with the peasants, even more effective if passed by local notables, created the particular expectations which the peasants felt toward the NSDAP. Therefore, the exact nature of peasant expectations is difficult to ascertain. Some sense of its content can be gleaned from the behavior of the peasants after Hitler assumed the chancellorship in January 1933. Immediately after Hitler's appointment the peasants began to pay their laborers at rates lower than those established by law. They also went on a veritable tax strike, refusing to pay public charges of any sort. In addition, the peasants withheld their debt service payments. The widespread "anarchistic, anti-state attitude" indicates that the peasant, in voting for the NSDAP, had by no means abandoned his basic economic outlook in favor of the far-ranging NSDAP *Voelkisch* ideology. The vote for the NSDAP

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was based on the conviction that the Party, national in scope and vital in its behavior, would be the most effective representative of peasant economic interests. The ideological content of the Nazi program--nationalism, anti-Bolshevism, and anti-Semitism--seems to have played a comparatively minor role in the appeal of the NSDAP.[19]

As we shall see in subsequent chapters, the peasants had miscalculated. The contradiction between the interest group policies which the peasants thought the NSDAP would pursue and the salvation measures which the Party implemented was to form the essential drama in the relationship between the Nazis and the peasantry. The denoument involved nothing less than the complete reorientation of peasant life--within the home and family, as well as in the barnyard, stall, fields, and markets where the peasant earned his livelihood.

The full scope of National Socialist agrarian reforms emerged only gradually, since Hitler ruled by coalition until mid-1933. When Hitler assumed the chancellorship on January 30, 1933, only two other National Socialists joined him in the new Cabinet--Wilhelm Frick in the Interior Ministry and Hermann Goering as a Minister without Portfolio. The new Minister of Food and Agriculture was Alfred Hugenberg, the head of the DNVP, which had allied itself with the Nazis. He was joined in the Ministry by his party colleague, Hansjoachim von Rohr, as the State Secretary for

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Agriculture. It was expected that the new cabinet would be able to end the political instability which had plagued Germany ever since 1930.

Hugenberg moved immediately to restore agricultural prosperity. One of the most pressing problems lay with the depressed prices for agricultural products, especially since the 1933 harvest was a bumper crop. As far as the peasant was concerned, the most important agricultural products were in the dairy and livestock sectors. Hugenberg initiated a series of measures designed to support the prices for these products. He ordered the German margarine industry to mix a specified quantity of domestic butter with the margarine and he raised the import duties of meat, livestock, and fats by as much as four hundred percent. Fodder imports were also restricted and the income from fodder duties was applied to support grain prices. The result was to divert domestic rye for fodder use and raise the price of rye. A Fats Plan was also enacted which taxed margarine production at fifty pfennigs per kilo and applied the proceeds to subsidize fats purchases for the poor, since Hitler was ever sensitive to consumer unrest. A quota on margarine production was also introduced. In addition, trade agreements with major foreign suppliers of agricultural products were re-negotiated.[20]

Perhaps the most important achievement of Hugenberg was in the area of debt relief. Shortly after assuming his ministerial post, he ordered an extension of the moratorium

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which the previous government had decreed on farm foreclosures. The Landwirtschaftliche Schuldenregelungsgesetz of June 1, 1933 permitted over-indebted farm owners to petition for the rescheduling of their debts. This could result in partial cancellation of the debts, lowered interest rates on the remaining debt, and a lower amortization of the remaining principal. At the same time, the Minister of the Interior, Frick, sponsored another extension of the foreclosure moratorium. By 1934 the number of farm auctions in Bavaria had declined to 248.[21]

Even as the Nationalist, Hugenberg, served as Agriculture Minister and contributed to a measure of agricultural recovery, the last remaining vestiges of non-Nazi influence in the rural sector were purged, enabling Darré to claim at least theoretical control over German agriculture. Beginning in March, important figures in the rural associations were arrested on trumped-up charges of corruption and their posts taken over by National Socialists. The leaders of the CBV and the RLB were among those arrested and imprisoned. Meanwhile, a campaign was initiated within the RLB and the CBV for the creation of a single German Farmers' Association and culminated in a meeting attended by representatives of the aA, the CBV, and the RLB on April 1. There, the soon-to-be arrested RLB president, Graf von Kalkreuth, proposed that a unified farm association be founded no later than January 1, 1934. For the time being, a provisional organization was created, the Community of the German Farming Profession.

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The chairman of the newly formed Community was R. Walther Darré. Each of the three founding organizations was entitled to four representatives on the governing board of the Community. Attrition of the non-Nazi board members through arrests gave the National Socialists a majority within two months. That June, Darré capped his takeover of German farming with a call to all remaining farm organizations to affiliate with the provisional Community or to disband. By early autumn, the last hold-outs had disappeared.[22]

Events in Bavaria paralleled those on the national level. Offices of independent agricultural groups were taken over and cells of Nazi agricultural organizations established. On July 14, 1933, the leaders of the Bavarian branches of the CBV, the RLB, and the NS Bauernschaft met and dissolved their respective organizations, merging into a new group entitled the Bavarian Bauernschaft. This group was the predecessor to the Landesbauernschaft Bayern, the Bavarian branch of the nationwide agricultural corporation which Darré proposed to establish. The head of the Bauernschaft, Georg Luber, would eventually become the first head of the Landesbauernschaft.[23]

Simultaneously, Darré worked to take control of the other organs of German agriculture. He was named the head of the largest German cooperative organization in April--the Reichsverband Deutsche Landwirtschaftliche Genossenschaften--Raiffeisen--while the regional cooperatives were taken over by trustworthy subordinates. That same month, Darré became

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the head of the Landhandelsbund, the organ of agricultural business interests, and the Landwirtschaftsrat. The various Agricultural Chambers were also gleichgeschaltet (the term used by the Nazis to describe their takeover of all the institutions of German public life). Non-Nazis were threatened, physically attacked, arrested, or otherwise forcibly removed from their posts, often by SA squads. Strong-arm tactics inspired Hugenberg to protest within the cabinet, since many of those so mistreated were members of the DNVP. But Goering defended the SA. He claimed that in light of recent elections, the Chambers were no longer representative of the will of the German peasantry. Unless the Chambers moved more expeditiously to reapportion their posts, such extra-legal methods were necessary.[24]

Hugenberg continued to hold on to his position as Agricultural Minister through the spring, but his power was increasingly undermined by Darré's growing control of these agricultural organizations. In addition, all political influences other than that of the NSDAP were being eliminated from Germany. The Laender were taken over by Reich plenipotentiaries sent out under Hitler's control, thereby destroying the Federal basis of the Weimar constitution. Bavaria was the last holdout in the process of federalization. Its BVP government, under the leadership of Minister President Held, was dissolved on March 9, 1933. The new Reich plenipotentiary was the former Freikorps commander, Franz Freiherr Ritter von Epp. The new Minister

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President was the Nazi Burgomaster of Lindau, Ludwig Siebert, who was also named to head the Finance Ministry. An Economics Ministry was created and an Agricultural Section was established within it. Its tasks had formerly been handled within the Interior Ministry. The Economics Ministry was taken over by Siebert in June. Its Agricultural Section was headed by the leader of the Bavarian Bauernschaft, Georg Luber. Because of certain financial indiscretions, Luber was forced to take a leave of absence in December and was replaced in both posts by the Burgomaster of Kulmbach, Fritz Schuberth.[25]

Meanwhile, the remaining political parties other than the NSDAP were abolished or pressured to dissolve themselves. The Communists had already been suppressed at the time of the Reichstag Fire. The Socialists were destroyed in late June. On June 27, the DNVP dissolved itself. The remaining parties dissolved themselves in late June and early July; the BVP on July 3. A law passed on July 14, 1933 announced that from henceforth, only the NSDAP was legally free to function in the Third Reich.[26]

The destruction of the DNVP, not to mention the other parties, and the Gleichschaltung of German agriculture, rendered Hugenberg's position completely untenable. Darré had told friends as early as January that the post of Minister of Agriculture had been promised to him by Hitler. His attack on Hugenberg began in April, ostensibly over Hugenberg's debt relief program. Simultaneously, peasant

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meetings organized by Darré or his subordinates began to call for Hugenberg's removal and his replacement by Darré. Finally, Hugenberg, in tandem with the collapse of the DNVP, resigned on June 27, 1933. The new minister was R. Walther Darré, well rewarded for his services to the NSDAP. State Secretary von Rohr hung on until October, when he was replaced by Darré's assistant Hermann Backe.[27] Darré now united in his person all state, semi-public, and private agricultural organs, thereby abolishing any distinctions between them.

Now in complete command of the rural sector, Darré moved to confirm his victory. The cabinet passed the Law concerning the competence of the Reich for the regulation of the Permanent Structure of German Agriculture in July. Darré acquired the power to regulate the entire body of German agriculture and to appoint deputies at the regional level to carry out his instructions. More comprehensive legislation was passed on September 13. The Law concerning the Preliminary Structure of the Reichsnaehrstand (Reich Food Estate or RNS) and Measures for the Market and Price Regulation of Agricultural Products created the basis of the future RNS, which would include all farm owners, agricultural retailers, wholesalers, and processors. The structure of the new corporation was as follows: The Reichsbauernfuehrer (or RBF), Darré, was the head of the new Estate. He was assisted by a Reichsobmann, Wilhelm Meinberg, and a Stabsamtfuehrer, Hermann Reischle. The RNS was divided into

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four departments. As Darré had written in May in the _Nationalsozialistische Landpost_, the Party newspaper for agriculture, the four departments represented the now defunct or _gleichgeschaltet_ agricultural organs of the pre-Nazi era. They had been like weeds which now had to be uprooted in order that the garden of German agriculture could grow. Department I, entitled _Menschen_ (Men), would be the successor to the former agricultural interest groups. Department II, entitled _Hof_ (Farm), was the successor to the semi-official agricultural agencies such as the Agricultural Chambers and the German Agricultural Council. Department III took up the work of the _gleichgeschaltet_ German rural cooperative movement and Department IV included organizations of the German rural business community and agricultural suppliers. Geographically, the RNS was subdivided into nineteen _Laender_ organizations, the _Landesbauernschaften_ (LBS), 514 _Kreisbauernschaften_ (KBS) at the district level, and over fifty thousand _Ortsbauernschaften_ (OBS) at the town and village level. A _Bauernfuehrer_ (Peasant Leader) was placed in command of the organization at each level--the _Landesbauernfuehrer_ (LBF), _Kreisbauernfuehrer_ (KBF), and _Ortsbauernfuehrer_ (OBF)--each appointed from the next highest level in accordance with the _Fuehrerprinzip_. At least initially, an intermediate level was inserted between the KBS and the LBS in some areas, such as Bavaria, with overly cumbersome organizations--the _Bezirksbauernschaft_ led by a

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Bezirksbauernfuehrer (BBF). The RNS organization at the Reich level was duplicated in each of these subdivisions higher than the OBS.[28]

Once the Gleichschaltung of German agriculture was completed, the RNS embraced the entire spectrum of the agricultural elite. The merger of Nazism and official agriculture was made all the easier because they shared the same goals--the reorganization and revitalization of agriculture without sacrificing the peasant farm or the landed estates. The agricultural technocracy was now free to pursue their long-desired goals without the restraints imposed by political democracy. But, as we shall see, the power of the agrarian experts would be limited by other rivals.

One of the nineteen LBS was the LBS Bayern, an immense organization, which included all of Bavaria. The LBS was divided into twenty-two KBS. Subsequently, it was reduced in size and three of the KBS were detached from the Bavarian Palatinate to become part of a separate LBS. Even the remaining nineteen KBS were considered too large to be properly administered and were reorganized into fifty-eight KBS in 1935, when the Bezirk level was finally discarded. After the annexation of the Sudetenland, twenty of these KBS were detached to become part of the newly formed LBS Bayerische Ostmark, leaving thirty-six KBS in the LBS Bayern. Plans were afoot to further divide the Bavarian LBS by detaching the Franconian regions to form a new LBS. It appears likely

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that the subdivisions were undertaken for reasons other than administrative efficiency alone. There may also have been a wish to undermine any vestiges of Bavarian regionalism by destroying an organization with such close links to the Bavarian *Land* administration. The Bavarian Minister President, Ludwig Siebert, certainly argued strenuously against the division of the LBS Bayern, claiming that the historical unity of Bavaria was being destroyed and that the less developed regions of Bavaria were left bereft of the aid and support they had always received from the *Land* government.[29]

As the above example illustrates, the RNS, for all its impressive potential power, met with considerable suspicion and opposition from various quarters--the state apparatus on a national and regional level, Party organizations, and non-peasant segments of German society--which restricted its authority. Relations between the LBS Bayern and the *Land* administration were, for example, at times quite stormy. Some of the difficulties arose from the attempts of headstrong RNS officials to circumvent the normal avenues of authority, a common enough occurrence in the early days of extra-legal actions, when the limits of the NS revolution had not yet been established. One KBF in Bavaria had sent three SA men to a farm to arrest the owner, leading to a complaint from the Agricultural Section of the Economics Ministry cautioning the RNS that arrests were a police and state concern, not a Corporate privilege.[30]

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The major conflict within Bavaria concerned the state's attempt to defend its long-standing areas of responsibilities against the encroachments of the RNS. The problem was particularly intense because the Bavarian government had been especially active in promoting agricultural research and progress. Unlike the states of northern Germany, the Bavarian administration controlled, supervised, supported, and otherwise regulated many aspects of agricultural activity in Bavaria. Elsewhere, many of these functions were the responsibility of the semi-public Agricultural Chambers. When the RNS was created, and the Chambers merged into Department II of the new corporation, these functions had been taken over by it. But in Bavaria these activities remained part of the _Land_ administration, leading, as the RNS expanded its functions, to either blurred boundaries of authority or to a duplication of responsibilities. The Bavarian Economics Ministry even protested that the RNS had no right to incorporate the Agricultural Chambers in Bavaria, since the state had given long-standing support to them. They also insisted that such activities as milk inspection, which the RNS proposed to undertake, were the proper responsibility of a disinterested state referee, not a corporate agency.[31]

One way to overcome this duality was for the RNS to infiltrate, as it were, the state agricultural administration. The Bavarian Bauernschaft, the forerunner of the LBS Bayern, had orchestrated a campaign in July and August, 1933, in which peasant meetings had issued declarations de-

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manding that a Bavarian Agricultural Ministry be created under the control of the Bavarian LLF Georg Luber. This did not materialize and the LBS had to be content with less direct forms of control. When the newly created Economics Ministry took charge of agricultural affairs in Bavaria, Luber was placed in charge of the agricultural section. Thus, both the Nazi agricultural organ and the state agricultural services were headed by Luber, duplicating the same blurring of state and corporate boundaries which existed on a national level.[32]

But the pressure for amalgamation did not subside. A year later, in December 1934, the Bavarian _Landesobmann_, Johann Deininger, spelled out the ambitions of the LBS in a memorandum which called for most of the state agricultural agencies to be taken over by the RNS: the Agricultural Schools, the inspectorates for fruits, gardening, vineyards, hops, and tobacco, the livestock breeding inspectorates, the seed inspectorate, and the state Agricultural Offices, of which there were over one hundred, each of them run by a state agricultural advisor. Deininger justified his demands by pointing out that many of the former semi-public agricultural organizations were now part of the RNS, creating a problem of dual or divided authority. For example, the livestock breeding associations of private breedstock owners were now part of the RNS. The associations were responsible for the milk productivity tests used to further eugenic breeding of milk cows. But the supervisor of the tests was

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a state official. The breeding associations also came under the authority of the state livestock breeding inspector, creating further confusion between the RNS and _Land_ authorities. It would be so much simpler if both the state officials were placed within the RNS, Deininger suggested.[33]

The Bavarian Cabinet met to consider the draft proposals. They rejected them in their entirety. They claimed that, "since the LBF in Bavaria has, at the same time, been appointed the State Secretary for Agriculture, close communication between the state administration and the RNS ought to be established." Despite numerous exchanges between the two parties, no agreement could be reached until the pace of negotiations accelerated in 1937. Final agreement was reached in May. Bavaria placed all of its agricultural offices at the complete disposal of the RNS. State officials were attached to the LBS as liasons. Other clauses of the agreement protected the official status of the agricultural personnel who now found themselves transferred to the RNS. Personnel questions continued to be subject to the authority of the state. With these decisions, most of the outstanding difficulties between Bavaria and the LBS Bayern were solved, although the RNS continued to agitate for total transfer of the state agencies and personnel to its jurisdiction.[34] However, the bitter defense of _Land_ authority hampered RNS control over the peasants. The existence of competing organizations in the countryside encouraged peasants to defy RNS dictates and eased their

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task of opposition. For example, the state Agricultural Offices, with their roots in pre-Nazi society and staffed by state personnel, were often a source of support and sympathy for the peasants in conflicts with the OBFs and KBFs, a point which will be discussed in subsequent chapters.

There were serious problems also between the RNS and various Party circles. The Gauleiters, the regional party leaders, created particular difficulties for the new agricultural corporation. In the early years of the Third Reich, many of them were tempted to carve out personal fiefdoms independent of state control, aiming at what one historian has called the partification of German society.[35] Some of these Gauleiters were more successful or ambitious than others. In July 1934, Darré's office repeatedly complained about Otto Telschow in Ost-Hannover and the notorious Wilhelm Karpenstein in Pomerania. Telschow had claimed that any KBF, BBF, and OBF appointed to his jurisdiction required his approval. In the meantime, he was blocking the appointments of other RNS officials, claiming that the posts (for Peasant Women Leaders) appeared to conflict with the NS Frauenschaft organization. Karpenstein went even further. He prohibited RNS meetings, threatened RNS personnel, forced RNS appointees to resign, gave "false instructions" to RNS personnel, and spread rumors about the LBF. The major charge levelled against the RNS by Karpenstein was that it was an instrument of class struggle, a serious accusation in Nazi Germany. Karpenstein demanded that the RNS renounce

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its encouragement of peasant egotism or be drummed out of the movement. Behind his complaint, aside from the raw personal ambition of a leading Nazi "duke," lay the feeling that the Party which had fought for peasant interests during the Kampfzeit was being shunted aside by an upstart organization.[36]

One of the most dangerous rivals of the RNS was the gigantic Deutsche Arbeitsfront (or DAF) controlled by Robert Ley. Ley's ambitious dreams were even directed against the NSDAP; he hoped to turn the DAF into an all-embracing institution, which, combined with the NSDAP, would be the "University of National Socialism."[37] The problems for the RNS was that the DAF, as the organization of the German working man, laid claim to the agricultural laborers who were considered to fall within RNS jurisdiction. Labor disputes had intensified under the circumstances of rural labor scarcity which prevailed during the Third Reich. The competition for scarce labor between farmers and industry or among farmers alone, led to intense wage pressures and many broken contracts. The regime attempted to regulate rural labor more stringently, requiring the rural worker to remain on his job unless he was granted permission to leave. Some workers were even threatened with Dachau if they violated labor contracts. In rural labor disputes the DAF proved a far better representative of the rural laborer than the RNS, which, understandably, identified more readily with the peasant employers. Darré and Ley finally succeeded in

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reaching an agreement which delineated the responsibilities of and relations between the two organizations--the Buchberg Agreement, announced at the Erntedankfest in 1935. Under its terms, the RNS became a corporate member of the DAF. Agricultural laborers could now enjoy the services of the DAF and were required to pay dues to it. But even after the agreement, the DAF continued to stir up conflict between the peasants and workers, to induce the workers to join the DAF directly and to accuse the RNS of encouraging peasants to pay low wages to the farmowners.[38]

The creation of the RNS also aroused fears within trade and business circles, who believed that the NS dictatorship was veering too far in its efforts to help the peasantry. The RNS, soon after it was formed, became the focus of a widespread campaign by various trade and industry representatives who were already angry and enraged over the debt rescheduling regulations. The regulations, and the formation of the RNS, led many to believe that the peasants were receiving undue favors from the new regime. The torrent of complaints from non-farm groups underscored the divisions within the lower middle classes of Germany and belied the gospel of solidarity preached by the National Socialists.

A circular from the office of the Industrie- und Handelskammer in Munich, distributed shortly after the September law announcing the creation of the RNS, is typical of the fears aroused by the new corporation. The circular warned that the new organization would ultimately assume

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more and more control over businesses intimately tied to agriculture, such as sugar refining, the tobacco industry, and the marmalade industry. In fact, the prediction was borne out three years later, when the RNS did set up marketing structures for these business sectors. A second criticism was directed against the pricing measures enacted at the same time as the RNS was created. The Chamber expressed fears that the right to regulate prices, quality, and quantity left open the possibility that new regulations would be issued concerning compulsory sales and quotas. They complained that market controls would considerably shrink the freedom of businessmen to choose raw materials as they saw fit, would lead to a lowering of quality, and would, ultimately, victimize the consumer. The circular concluded with a request to the membership to communicate their own anxieties, and the Chamber called on farm, industry, and trade representatives to meet and discuss appropriate boundaries for the RNS. As part of the campaign to restrict the size and importance of the RNS, a meeting of the Bavarian Industrie- und Handelskammern took place in Munich in late October 1933. The meeting called for non-interference in the organizations of trade and industry. A subsequent declaration by the Chamber warned against attempts to annex or merge trade and business organizations with other professional organizations. But, of course, this is just what occurred as the RNS began to incorporate businesses involved with the agricultural sector.[39]

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Other complaints by business circles were directed against the debt liquidation laws passed by the regime and administered, in part, by the RNS. Businessmen complained that the laws were unfair to the non-agricultural Mittelstand, which had suffered at least as much from the depression as the agricultural sector. The Bavarian Landes-Gewerbebank, for example, asked the Agricultural Section of the Economics Ministry and the Bavarian LBF to exert themselves to get the peasants to repay their debts.[40] A private businessman wrote the Industrie- und Handelskammer to ask it to intercede with the appropriate offices to remind the peasants that the debt repayment freeze was supposed to apply only to cases of need and that "it is by no means the intent of the lawmakers that the protection is also claimed by enterprises which are able to pay off their debts."[41] A doctor in the Deggendorf district wrote a long letter to the Business Section of the Economics Ministry in which he described the catastrophic effect of the debt and auction moratorium on creditors. Demands for repayment were met with derisive laughter from the peasants. The doctor, himself, was owed forty thousand marks and he estimated that he would get back only about half the amount. Meanwhile, he observed, the peasants, with cash in hand since the harvest, were to be seen "everywhere, at every festival, every race, and every dance." The doctor had made sacrifices, dismissing his chauffeur, and so could the peasantry. If it did not, he believed "that the threat of a concentration camp or even the

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implementation of this threat would be the best means of eliminating such abuses."[42] Of course, such accusations are, to some degree, suspect. The loss of one's chauffeur does not quite compare to the loss of a farm and recreation on the order of what the doctor described could hardly have been a major dent in the family budget. But the letter is an indication of the anger and frustration felt within a segment of the middle classes toward the laws designed to effect agricultural recovery. They are also illustrative of the tensions between social classes in rural society, a point which will be expanded upon in later chapters.

The National Socialists also entered the fray. The NS-Hago, the Party organization for the non-agricultural middle classes, complained that though it had been the custom for peasants to settle their bills after the harvest, they were not doing so in 1933. As a result, tradesmen and businessmen everywhere were unable to pay their bills for their supplies. Meanwhile, they had none of the protection which the peasants received from the regime. One NS-Hago _Ortsgruppenleiter_ wrote to his _Gau_ leader: "There are, unfortunately, very many peasants who misuse the aid which they receive from the regime so that they simply declare that they are not required to pay their business bills: these will be paid by the debt liquidation offices or state. The most shameless of them pay their bills, as the Germans say, with shit."[43]

Lest attacks from all these sections of German society and from within the Nazi movement itself endanger the new

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organization, lest the excesses of one section of the peasantry endanger the entire program of rural and agricultural revival, the RNS moved to curb the false and exaggerated expectations of the debt protection laws. The Bavarian LBF, Schuberth, for one, issued a call to the peasantry in September 1934: The harvest was in, the contracts closed. There were no longer any grounds for not paying one's debt. Just as importantly, the honor of the peasantry required such repayment and those who brought dishonor to the peasant estate might lose the administration, even the ownership, of their farms.[44]

The conflict between business and agriculture in the first year and one-half of the Third Reich was a reflection of the uncertainty over the direction in which the new government was heading. Just as the extra-legal actions by the SA were an attempt to stretch its powers, the peasants, like every other social group in Germany, save, probably, the working class, were trying to turn the new regime to its advantage. The agricultural salvation laws, the creation of the RNS, and the promises made to the peasants prior to and immediately after the National Socialist victory had led the peasants to believe that a marvelous reorientation of public policy was in the making, that a peasant Germany would emerge from the ruins of Weimar. Indeed, similar charges were levelled at the RNS, by von Rohr, within the Cabinet.[45] Even the RNS leadership, not to mention subordinates, had high hopes in the early days of reorganization. They believed

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that the RNS was but the first of many corporations which the new government would set up for every trade and industry in Germany. As late as 1938, when the position of agriculture in relation to business had sharply deteriorated, the RNS leadership continued to agitate for an extension of the corporate principle to trade and industry. Hermann Backe, the State Secretary in the Agriculture Ministry and the liaison between the RNS and the Four Year Plan, demanded, at the Sixth Reichsbauerntag in November 1938, that a controlled economy be organized for all of Germany, since two economic principles could not possibly coexist in a single economic system without harmful results. In other words, the RNS was asking that the relative impoverishment of agriculture be ended by adopting wage, price, investment, and profit controls for industry as they had long since been applied to agriculture. Darré, in a memorandum delivered to Hitler in January 1939, made a similar appeal. The German economy must be reorganized entirely along corporate principles, he insisted, or else agriculture would collapse.[46] Darré's proposal was never adopted. No doubt, the opposition of the private business sector doomed it from the beginning, since Hitler was more interested in winning its cooperation for military production. Business opposition also hampered, though it did not halt, the steady expansion of rural cooperatives, a critical part of the agrarian modernization program advocated by Darré and the agrarian technocracy.

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Despite its corporate airs, the RNS was actually an organ of state control, transmitting the laws and directives of the regime to the peasant and the agricultural sector which it claimed to represent. In that role, the RNS encouraged radical changes in peasant agriculture. Although some of its laws were refinements and extensions of Weimar legislation and others were inspired by National Socialist Blut und Boden ideology, the corpus of agricultural legislation added up to a unified attack on German peasant farming tradition. There can be no doubt that the appointment of Darré marked a real shift from the largely defensive measures of the Hugenberg ministry. The laws and directives issued by the Agriculture Ministry or the RNS overturned age-old labor, market, and family relations. They shifted farm production onto new or long-since abandoned paths. Finally, to ensure acquiescence in the radical new measures, the farm and farm owner were placed under state or corporate control by a variety of direct or indirect measures. However, the revolutionary impact of Nazi legislation did not emerge full-blown in 1933. In part, the pace of regulation only accelerated when early regulation proved insufficient, raised new difficulties, or prompted peasant resistance. But by 1940, the peasant farm and peasant community had been steered in the direction of a modern, efficient farming sector, firmly integrated into the national community.

The flow of agricultural legislation which issued from the Reich Cabinet after January 30 accelerated further after

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Darré assumed Hugenberg's posts in the Ministry of Food and Agriculture. Existing laws were retained and expanded. For example, a long awaited amendment to the 1930 Milk Law tightened up its regulations by including retailers in its statutes and placing the Reich, rather than the Laender authorities, in control of its implementation. At the same time, the Darré ministry began to go well beyond the measures developed prior to Hitler's Chancellorship. The Erbhof Law was one of the most important of these measures in the Third Reich. The law, which affected nearly 700,000 farms, prohibited those farms from being sold or divided, required that they be deeded to a single heir, and laid down a strict order of preference for inheritance. Farm indebtedness was also carefully monitored and controlled by special courts set up to supervise the so-called Erbhof farms.[47]

Darré also established a coherent administration of market regulation for the full range of agricultural production, known as the Marktordnung. The legal basis for market regulation was contained in the RNS legislation of September 15, 1933, which gave the Food and Agriculture Minister the right to regulate production, sales, prices, and profit margins for agricultural products in the interest of the community. He could order producers, processors, and middlemen to form compulsory market associations. He had the right to fine violators of his directives or those of the market associations. He could order violators to close their enterprises.[48]

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The *Marktordnung* came under the supervision of Departments III and IV of the RNS. These two departments were ultimately combined, in 1935, to form a single Department III, entitled The Market. This department supervised the activities of ten market associations (*Hauptvereinigungen*) and related bodies which had been created by that time. It fell to these ten associations to administer the vast market regulatory system. The ten associations were for dairy, grain, potatoes, eggs, sugar, fish, livestock, vine products, garden products, and breweries.[49]

However, the system described above represented only the final form of the *Marktordnung* as it had taken shape after three years of experimentation and alteration. Although there was no single pattern for the new market system, the model for the ten market associations was the system of market regulation which had been devised for the dairy sector of 1933 and then applied, with appropriate adjustments, to the remaining branches of agricultural production. The last market associations which were created were those for products closely linked to industrial production, such as the brewing industry.

The market associations supervised production, marketing, processing, and development of agricultural production for the entire Reich. Directly under their control were the *Wirtschaftsverbaende* (trade or sector associations). The associations generally coincided with the boundaries of the LBS, although there were special situations where this was

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not so. For example, the Dairy Trade Association Allgäu encompassed parts of both the LBS Bavaria and the LBS Wuerttemberg, due to the special role of the dairy industry in the Allgäu. Over the years, there was a discernable tendency toward centralization and simplification of the *Marktordnung*. The Dairy Trade Associations had initially supervised groups of Milk Supply Associations, which were, in turn, composed of the individual dairy producers and processors. Holdovers from the Weimar period, they were abolished in 1936, so that the Dairy Trade Associations thenceforth controlled the individual members and firms directly. The *Marktordnung* also steadily expanded its authority over individuals and firms which were not originally included in its structures. The Livestock Associations and the Egg Associations did not include primary producers until November 22, 1935. Neither did the Livestock Associations initially include those middlemen and agents who were active at any of the middle-sized and smaller livestock markets.[50]

The professed goal of the Associations was to regulate the marketplace in the interests of the whole society, to secure the nutritional needs of the populace, and to guarantee a decent profit for the farm producers. They had the legal power to regulate production, delivery, sales, processing, allocation, and distribution of agricultural products. Regulations concerning quality, condition, labelling, storage, and any other related matters were also

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controlled by the associations. They were run according to the *Fuehrerprinzip*, with the heads of the Market Associations under the direct authority of the RBF, in agreement with the Agriculture Minister. Of course, Darré held both these posts. The chairman of the Market Association had an advisory board under his direction, which was composed of representatives of the appropriate economic interest groups for that sector. The boards were supposed to participate in the framing of directives. Committees of scientific and economic experts were also attached to the Market and Trade Associations to help write regulations and directives.[51]

The Market Associations were charged with the task of achieving greater rationalization of the agricultural markets. They were supposed to smooth over the often huge seasonal and regional swings in supplies and prices. Market regulation would enable the peasant to manage his farm more profitably and avoid market scarcities for the consumers. Price controls and delivery assignments were the chief tools used by the Market Associations.

At first the Market Associations relied on price setting to regulate the marketplace. Prices were staggered from month to month to ensure stable supplies. Premiums and discounts were also offered for product quality and by location. Ultimately, compulsory deliveries of most products were ordered and delivery quotas set. A second group of agencies, the *Reichsstellen* also contributed to market regulation. They possessed the exclusive right to purchase foreign agricul-

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tural products for the German market. There were five Reichsstellen--for milk, oil, and fats; grains, eggs; livestock; and garden and vineyard products.

The Marktordnung and related policies were initially successful. As early as June 1933, the regime could boast that fats prices had risen 25 percent since taking office in January. It was the first time fats prices had increased since 1930. The true test of the Marktordnung came in 1934, after the poor harvest results. Darré was not averse to adjusting prices upward, requesting a 20 percent rise in bread prices. But Hitler had no intention of using market controls for the benefit of the farm sector alone. Just as regulation had guaranteed a decent profit for the farm producers at a time of lowered consumption and overproduction, it should now guarantee fair producer prices, lest recovery, military expenditures, and domestic peace be threatened. Darré's request was refused. That November, the retail food price index had increased to only 119.5 from 111.3 a year earlier (1913 = 100).[52]

But if prices were to be kept at an artifically low level, the peasant was not likely to offer his product on the marketplace. He might choose to increase his own consumption, reduce cultivation or production, offer the produce on the black market, or adopt some combination of these three possibilities. Market shortages and price increases for the urban consumer in one form or another would thereby ensue.

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If urban unrest was to be avoided, then the regime would have to allocate money to subsidize food imports. Lastly, hard currency earnings would be depleted, jeopardizing the rearmament program begun by Hitler.

The result was a major intensification of the *Marktordnung*. Initially, it promoted rural development behind a shield of protective measures designed to limit competition and reduce surpluses. As early as the autumn of 1934 it became a vehicle for compulsory deliveries at state-decreed prices. An additional element of control was introduced with the creation of the post of Reich Price Commissioner in November 1934, a temporary solution scheduled to lapse in July 1935. Carl Goerdeler, who was named to the post (he held a similar position under the Weimar regime), and Darré, as Agriculture Minister, now regulated agricultural prices through consultation.[53]

Such solutions were incomplete at best. As Hitler foresaw, a continued recovery would, in fact, exacerbate the gap between resurgent demand, fed by increasing purchasing power, and limited domestic production. The most critical bottleneck was in the area of protein and fats supplies. The only way in which German production of these high quality meat and dairy products could increase was if sufficient fodder could be made available to the peasant. German fodder production did not nearly suffice. But, here too, outlays for foreign fodder threatened to eat up valuable hard currency resources. Only by raising German production could this be

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avoided or ameliorated. Thus, everywhere the regime turned, the failure to achieve significant progress in agricultural productivity was a threat to Hitler's foreign policy goals.[54]

The Erzeugungsschlacht, the Battle of Production, attempted to solve the dilemma. Announced by Darré and his aide, Hermann Backe, at the Second Reichsbauerntag in 1934, the program was designed to increase the productivity of the German soil. The German farm owner was told to reduce the land devoted to bread grain cultivation without decreasing the total yield of these products. The acreage released should then be turned over to fodder and fiber plant cultivation. At the Green Week agricultural exhibition in Berlin in January 1935, more details of the Battle were announced by Darré in a ten point program. The ten points called for intensive soil cultivation, increased fertilizer use, better development of all branches of farm production, increased cultivation of oil-yielding and textile plants, increased cultivation of cover crops for fodder purposes, soil improvement, more rational livestock holdings and increased sheep raising on otherwise useless soil.[55]

The Battle of Production was the embodiment of the rural philosophy of the National Socialists as it had been expressed over the previous six years. The goals of the Battle can be divided into two major groups. On the one hand, there was an attempt to improve the productivity of the land through the use of more modern farming techniques.

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The encouragement of fertilizer use, better seed, soil amelioration, and cover crop cultivation fell into this category. Other goals fostered by the Battle, such as education about sanitation and the subsidization of farm machinery purchases and storage facility construction, were also part of the modernization program. On the other hand, there was the highly autarkic tendency represented by the support given for flax cultivation, sheep raising, and more varied farm production. In this sense, the National Socialist program represented a turning away from the specialization which was characteristic of modern farming elsewhere. But, in either case, the Battle of Production enlarged upon the rural salvation measures of the first two years of the Third Reich, to promote accelerated rural development.

The first year in which the essential apparatus of German agricultural policy was completely in place was 1935. The immediate results proved disappointing as far as yield and productivity were concerned. As a result of the poor 1934-1935 harvest, the predictable consequences in the dairy and livestock sector began to develop in late 1935, as livestock holdings and dairy production declined. The *Marktordnung* was able to ensure stable prices for milk, butter, and meat, despite the growing shortages of these products. Yet price regulation contributed to further shortages since the peasant withheld his product in expectation of price increases or, perhapse worse, he sold it on the black market.[56]

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Rather than abandon market controls, which Hitler was convinced would have led to urban unrest and spelled the end of rearmament, the RNS responded with increasing market controls. Quotas were introduced for grain deliveries, for whipped cream production, and livestock slaughtering. The number of peasants who were required to deliver their milk to dairies was expanded, and the Reich concluded a number of contracts with pig growers to raise a specified quantity of pigs at guaranteed prices, in order to maintain livestock supplies.[57] So, once again, the regime reacted to disappointing results by increasing regulation and controls.

Although the worst of the shortages was over by the spring of 1936, the pace of market regulation continued to accelerate. Milk deliveries to the dairies continued to expand, a trend which continued until 1943. Fixed prices for eggs were introduced. Restrictions of barley sales were decreed to prevent fodder grains from being sold at higher prices to the breweries. Livestock markets and sales were subjected to more regulation--sales beyond the producing area required the approval of the Livestock Sector Associations. The RNS continued to fine tune its pricing policy, based on the lessons of the first five years. Ongoing fodder shortages, which were a constant threat to dairy and meat production, led the Central Association of the German Grain Sector to raise rye prices, lest rye be used for fodder and endanger bread production, and to add fodder

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grains to the delivery quotas introduced for bread grains. Sales licenses for livestock sales were now introduced to prevent livestock from being overvalued (a form of hidden inflation).[58]

Two other major reforms introduced in 1935 involved the animal husbandry sector and the dairy sector and marked an extension of state interference into private farming practices--the *Reichsgesetz zur Foerderung der Tierzucht*, known as the *Koerordnung* or Selective Breeding Decree, and the *Verordnung über Milchleistungspruefungen*. The *Koerordnung* superseded the various *Laender* regulations in existence, placing the Agriculture Ministry in charge of selective breeding regulations. The Minister could name a Commissioner for German Animal Husbandry, who would, in turn, delegate his authority to the LBS. Each LBS would create a *Koeramt*, a Selective Breeding Office, which would control the district offices in charge of selective breeding. The district offices would include representatives of the state animal husbandry administration, a local district representative, the district veterinarian, and two livestock breeders. Under the new law, only certified animals could be used as breedstock. There were two types of certification. The A Class livestock could be used as breed animals under all circumstances. The B Class animals were only allowed to be used to breed with the livestock owned by the owner of the B class animal. The Milk Productivity Tests law gave Darré the authority to order the extension of milk

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productivity tests to all cows in Germany. The law complemented the Koerordnung, since it would enable the owners to select the most productive cows for further breeding.[59]

There were few significant additions to the Marktordnung after 1936. Even the announcement of the Four Year Plan meant few changes in the direction of agricultural policy. The administrator of the Plan was Hermann Goering. His assistant for the agriculture sector was Hermann Backe.[60] One major change before the war was in 1938 and concerned the decades old overvaluation of grain products relative to dairy and meat products. The RNS had not been able to eliminate this discrepancy. Its pricing policies may well have exacerbated it. It represented an everpresent dam on increasing production of meat and fats. After a major debate within the Reich Cabinet, some relief was granted in 1938 in the form of price increases for livestock, eggs, and dairy products. With this modest but important concession, the German farm sector stood at the threshhold of 1939 and the Second World War. All that remained was the introduction of rationing, begun in August 1939 and finalized in September, after the war began. But wartime controls had, in reality, long since been introduced to the German economy.[61]

The results of six years of growing controls, compulsion, organization, and exhortation were mixed. Fertilizer use rose 80 percent from 1932 to 1939. Machinery purchases

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also increased, although scattered holdings continued to impede mechanization. Livestock slaughter weights were higher, as were milk yields. Silos had been constructed, reducing storage damage. Moreover, many of the effects of more scientific farming, such as selective breeding, would only be felt after many more years had passed. Agricultural production in 1938-1939 was already 20 percent more than in 1928-1929. But the National Socialists were unable to significantly narrow the Fats Gap against which they so often inveighed. Although Germany now produced 83% of its own nutritional needs, up from 68% ten years earlier, German fats production covered only 57% of domestic consumption. Despite a major effort, fodder production remained in short supply, hampering and derailing any efforts to increase fats production. Germany did provide its own needs for other foods. The most important success of Nazi agricultural policy was in the area of marketing. More farm production reached the cities through state-directed agencies, enabling food resources to be allocated equitably and at affordable prices. Autarky also enabled Hitler to achieve his rearmament goals without seriously compromising the German standard of living.[62]

The results of Nazi policies for the German peasant were less satisfying. A report prepared by the Bavarian Reich Plenipotentiary, Ritter von Epp, in March 1939, indicates the severity of the agricultural decline and the dismal long-term prospects for the peasant farmer. Bavarian

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agriculture was increasingly unprofitable, reported von Epp, as labor became ever scarcer, producer costs rose, and income failed to keep pace with costs.[63]

The labor problem was paramount. Since 1933, the Bavarian LBS estimated that agriculture had lost at least 120,000 farm hands out of a total of 1,300,000, almost 10 percent. The Landflucht was an outgrowth of industrial recovery and the construction boom. Agriculture could not hope to compete with the better pay, free weekends, regular hours, leisure activities, and KdF (Kraft durch Freude, a program initiated by the DAF) holidays available to industrial workers. Some districts reported 30 percent of the laborers had left the countryside. In one community, only twelve farms hands out 120 remained. The Landflucht created intense wage pressures. Wages had risen at least 100 percent in every Bavarian district since 1933. On top of rising wages, the peasant owner had to pay increasing social benefits. In fact, the scarcity of farm labor had reversed age-old social relations. Some laborers were telling each other, and their employers, "now we are the bosses." Although tension between laborers and owners was hardly new, incidents were on the rise. One farm hand threw his meal of roast beef away, exclaiming that he wanted pork instead.

As their labor force dwindled, the farm owners were turning to extensive farming. Livestock holdings were declining and low quality crops requiring less labor time were being increasingly cultivated. The decline in young live-

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stock holdings was even more severe. At an unprecedented public demonstration in Munich in February 1939, fifty peasants threatened to cease intensive cultivation.

Other disastrous social consequences occurred. Marriages were declining, as were births. Formerly, in 1913, 100 peasant parents had an average of 398 children. This figure had declined to 100 children. Peasant sons were reporting that they could not find any women to marry them. The ironic result was that the men were taking Polish farm laborers as their brides. So much for the peasantry as the "Life Source of the German Nation."[64]

The outbreak of the Second World War in no way represented a major break with pre-war agricultural conditions and policies: it merely exacerbated them. The shift of manpower and production to wartime needs was the most dangerous threat to agriculture. Productivity increases prior to the war had been based on greater use of machines and fertilizers to replace dwindling labor supplies. Now, labor shortages were worse than ever before, as draft-aged men went into the army. But there was now no compensation for these losses. Machine production was geared toward war needs and even if machines were available, there was not enough fuel to power them. Fertilizer production was also hurt by the need for nitrates in explosives.

The inevitable result was a decline in crop yields and a trend toward extensive agriculture. Foreign fodder imports could not match German needs, which created pressure in the

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livestock sector. Pigs, in particular, were harder to raise, since they consumed the same foods as humans (beets, potatoes, corn). As grain production levelled off and declined, humans turned increasingly to these substitutes, leading to a decline in pig raising. The price structure for livestock also contributed to shortages, as slaughter animals were undervalued compared to young pigs and calves. There was some attempt made to redress the price differential in 1941, but holdings of pigs had already declined by 15%-20% since the start of the war. The decline reached 33% by 1943 and in some Bavarian districts it was 50% or higher. (See Table 2 and Table 3 on pages 52 and 53.) Cattle holdings did not suffer to the same degree. Germany was able to increase its production of certain fodder crops which humans did not eat. There was even a slight increase in the number of milk cows, due to price increases for milk in 1940.[65] The livestock sector was becoming an adjunct to the dairy sector.

Table 2

Pig Holdings in Bavaria

1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	9/1938	1943
2,564,119	2,612,999	2,460,916	2,733,503	2,624,199	2,426,997	1,483,385

Source: For 1933, Statistiches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 18 (1934) p. 78. For 1934 to 1938, Statistiches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 22 (1938) p. 91. For 1943, StAND KBS Nördlingen II B100, "Der Schweinbestand in Deutschen Reich vom 3 Juni 1943 nach Kleineren Verwaltungbezirken."

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Table 3

Pig Holdings

Selected Bavarian Districts

	1939	1943
Kaufbeuren	12,372	7,327
Landberg a. Lech	14,320	8,276
Neuberg a.d. Donau	42,000	18,063
Nördlingen	34,248	27,481
KBS Rosenheim	14,013	9,506[a]

a. 1944

Source: For 1939: Kaufbeuren, BHSA MA106684, MB/Sch., 12 January 1942; Landberg a. Lech, June 1941; Neuberg a.d. Donau, BHSA MA106683, MB/Sch., 8 January 1941; Nordlingen, StAND KBS Nördlingen, MB KBS Nördlingen, January 1943; Rosenheim (1939 and 1944), StAM LRA113813, MB KBS Rosenheim, December 1944. For 1943: StAND KBS Nördlingen IIB100, "Der Schweinbestand in Deutschen Reich vom 3 Juni 1943...."

Even when supplies were adequate, there was always a problem of marketing. The regime wanted to make sure that food was available to the working class at affordable prices. But during the war, the black market blossomed as never before. As the figures for market deliveries to the Nördlingen and Hilfing markets indicate, legal trade had all but disappeared in some areas. Whereas hundreds of pigs had been brought to the two markets in the past, a mere three appeared at the Nördlingen market in the spring of 1943 and

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none at the market in Hilfing, a direct consequence of the increasing regimentation of the marketplace. As long as prices remained artifically low, the peasant could not be induced to deliver his reduced livestock holdings to the legal marketplaces.[66]

The decline in pig holdings meant that the fats gap was greater than ever before. Darré had predicted before the war that Germany would not be able to close this gap in the event of a total war.[67] Now his prediction was borne out. The loss of whale oil, due to the Allied blockade, the lack of labor and fertilizer for oil-bearing plants, and the already discussed declines in pig stocks, meant that Germany was even less self-sufficient in fats. The one bright spot was the dairy sector. A belated increase in milk and butter prices was decreed in 1940 as part of a special program known as the Milcherzeugungsschlacht, the Dairy Battle or Production. Special dairy committees were attached to all German dairies to supervise deliveries and production. Premiums were also offered to above average milk producers. The higher returns from milk production led, as we have mentioned above, to modest increases in milk cows and milk deliveries.[68]

The regime attempted to counteract the productivity declines by a stricter regimentation of labor. The most famous examples of this were the forced labor and foreign labor programs during the war. But Germans, too, were affected. School-age children were enlisted in labor ser-

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vices and farm owners were required to perform communal services, such as helping out on other farms where all the men were in the army.[69]

The regime continued to plan for the happier days to follow, after military victory was secured. Darré announced a postwar plan for rural rehabilitation in December, 1940, known as <u>Dorfaufrüstung</u>. Billions of marks were projected to be spent under the program to build new facilities, housing, and for land improvements. Meanwhile, plans were also revealed for the resettlement of the German population in the newly conquered eastern territories. Planning was begun in 1939, under Himmler's auspices, and was quite detailed. They called for regional centers to be developed, surrounded by the farming villages. Specific guidelines were established concerning the number of farms, the exact proportions of dwarf, middle-sized, and large farms, the types of non-farming settlers required. All that was lacking was the willingness of Germans to resettle in the East and the final victory which would make it possible.[70]

The war did not bring unremitting dreariness to the peasant. Inflationary pressures brought a substantial rise in the value of livestock and land, though it might only be reflected in the black market or other illegal paths. For example, city residents sometimes purchased geese as investments, letting the peasant raise them on the farm. Peasants had so much money at last that they began to

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worry about revaluation. They rushed to spend it on repairs, construction, commodities, and livestock whenever possible.

Perhaps the most important result of the National Socialist agricultural reform policies was the transformation undergone by the peasant farm enterprise, its owner, and peasant society. After twelve years of Nazi rule, the peasantry had lost its social and economic autonomy. To a considerable degree, autonomy had rarely been anything but an illusion, as the peasant sector was, even before 1933, largely beholden to the East Elbian estate owners or to industry, trade, and banking circles. Under the National Socialists, even the illusion of independence was destroyed. The *Erbhof* Law placed the farm family under the control of the state and, during the war, the law was used to justify forced labor programs. The peasant farm was forced, through various direct and indirect techniques, to produce and deliver the agricultural products desired by the state. The *Marktordnung*, which had been welcomed as a price support mechanism for farm production had become, by 1935, a means of direction and compulsion. The agricultural populace which had demanded state intervention now found this same intervention being turned against agriculture.

Growing state intervention tugged the peasant farm in two directions. On the one hand, it was compelled to become an efficient producer of a varied line of agricultural products even though the developments of the past

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century had led it in precisely the opposite direction. In articles in its newspapers, the RNS emphasized that single-crop farm production must become a relic of the past. Grain growers, for example, were scolded for neglecting their dairy farming and treating their livestock as mere manure producers. Their short-sighted attitude contributed to overcrowded stalls, poor feeding practices, and low milk output, in short, the waste of a valuable potential farm and national resource. The trend toward varied production was in accord also with the romantic strain present in the National Socialist philosophy and articles appeared extolling the virtues of farm self-sufficiency, as in the days of yore. One of these pieces recalled how, one hundred years earlier, the peasants had baked their own bread and made their own schmalz. Foreign luxuries like levantine coffee were unknown to the peasants of that bygone era. "Every peasant had wood and it was his pride, whether it was a 'right' or his actual property...in other words, whatever a peasant needed for his simple way of life was provided almost entirely by his 'Ackernaehrung'." Indeed, the concept of an _Ackernaehrung_ could be found in the _Erbhof_ Law, with its minimum soil requirements.[71]

On the other hand, peasant farms were to become the starting point in the production cycle for agricultural products, the primary producers, in the interest of marketing and production efficiency. Self-sufficiency

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should not be carried too far, or Germany would be unable to feed its urban population. The RNS promoted modern marketing techniques such as egg and dairy cooperatives as early as 1933. But the RNS was not initially certain if peasants should be allowed to decide whether to process and sell their farm production. The regime hoped to achieve reforms by example and encouragement. As peasants began to complain that they were no longer being permitted to determine the form in which they brought their product into the marketplace, the RNS tried to calm their anxieties. In 1934, Wilhelm Meinberg, RNS _Reichsobmann_, announced that: "The form in which the peasant brings his products to the market, whether in a processed or an unprocessed state, must be left open. Further, the peasant should be at liberty to determine whether he himself processes his production or leaves the task to the business enterprise."[72] When the pace of reform failed to match the regime's expectations, direct coercion replaced propaganda by 1936. The tone of official RNS pronouncements also underwent considerable change. An article in _Wochenblatt des Landesbauernschaft Bayerns_, the Bavarian RNS weekly, in November 1936, described the deleterious effects of peasant commercial activity on the peasant wife: "She can only dedicate half her time to farm production, the other half is spent in selling her wares. The peasant wife sits all day long at the weekly market, in order to sell her goods to the consumer. She, the soul

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of every single peasant farm, is taken from her proper work."[73] The elimination of peasant marketing activities meant that women began to vanish from the marketplace. As mechanization of field and stall work was promoted, men also began to invade the traditional female territory in the barnyard and stall. Thus, as the RNS came increasingly to emphasize farm efficiency, division of labor, and modernization, work roles on the farm were transformed. In addition, the wrenching changes in the farming sector necessitated the adoption of the most modern farming techniques and the extension of rural cooperatives. The rural reforms could only be carried out by increasing state intervention in and direction of the peasant enterprise and peasant family life. Such extensive changes in the German farming sector could not possibly be introduced without the opposition and resistance of those concerned. The Nazi rural reforms, the extent and form of peasant resistance to them, as well as the methods adopted by the National Socialists to deal with peasant reactions will be the focus of our remaining chapters.

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[3]Gessner, p. 767; Max Sering, Die deutsche Landwirtschaft unter volks- und weltwirtschaftlichen Gesichtspunkten (Berlin: Reichsministerium fuer Ernaehrung und Landwirtschaft, 1932), pp. 39-68.

[4]David Abraham, The Collapse of the Weimar Republic; Political Economy and Crisis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981, p. 86; Bayerische Landesregierung, Bayern im ersten Vierjahresplan (Munich: Zentralverlag der NSDAP, 1937), p. 409; Sering, pp. 45-54.

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Horst Gies, "NSDAP und landwirtschaftliche Organisationen in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik." Vierteljahreshefte fuer Zeitgeschichte 15 (October 1967): 341-376. On the Osthilfe see Gessner, pp. 772-73.

[8]Dietrich Orlow, The History of the Nazi Party: 1933-1945 (Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 1973), pp. 103-10.

[9]J.E. Farquharson, The Plough and Swastika (London: Sage Publications, 1976), pp. 1-2.

[10]Farquharson, p. 13; Orlow, pp. 117-18; Pridham, pp. 116-17.

[11]Farquharson, pp. 14-15.

[12]Clifford Lovin, "German Agricultural Policy 1933-1936" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1965), p. 12.

[13]For the activities of Darré in the Voelkische Movement, see Heinz Haushofer, Ideengeschichte der Agrarwirtschaft und Agrarpolitik in deutschen Sprachgebieten, 2 vols. (Munich: Bayerischer Landwirtschaftsverlag, 1958), 2: 162-65. The creation of the aA is described in Farquharson, pp. 17-18; Lovin, pp. 17-18.

[14]Pridham, pp. 119, 122-23, 139-43.

[15]Pridham, pp. 120-122, 139-43; Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer den Freistaat Bayern 28(1930); p.128. Zeitschrift des Bayerischen Statistischen Landesamtes (1932-1933).

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[18]Zofka, pp. 107, 110-111.

[19]Ibid., pp. 119-20

[20]Berichte ueber Landwirtschaft, 18 (1933): 84-85, 96-101.

[21]On debt relief bill, see Reichsgesetzblatt, I (1933), pp. 331-344; on the foreclosure moratorium, see Farquharson,

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p. 53; for auctions see Bayern im Vierjahresplan, p. 409.

[22]Farquharson, pp. 44-49.

[23]Wochenblatt der Landesbauernschaft Bayern, 19 July, 1933.

[24]Farquharson, pp. 46-47. For Hugenberg's protest, see BA Koblenz R43II/203, Cabinet minutes 4 April 1933.

[25]Bayern im Vierjahresplan, pp. 25-26; Klaus Schonhoven, "Zwischen Anpassung und Ausschaltung; Die Bayerische Volkspartei in der Endphase der Weimarer Republik," Historische Zeitschrift 224 (1977): 340-378.

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[30]BHSA ML 3641, SMW, L to RNS, 8 May 1934.

[31]BHSA ML 3641, SMW, L minutes, 20 December 1933.

[32]Lovin, p. 16.

[33]BA Koblenz R43II/203, Deininger memorandum, 6 December 1934.

[34]BA Koblenz R43II/203, Bavarian Secretary for Economy to Darré, 22 December 1934; BHSA ML 3649, SMW,L,minutes, 1 March 1934, 12 July 1934; ML 3649, Correspondence between SMW,L to Bavarian Finance Ministry and Ministry for Education and Culture, 7 November 1934; BHSA ML 3650, Minutes of joint conference of SMW,L and LBS Bayern, 2 February, 10 February 1937; ML 3651, agreement between LBS Bayern and SMW,L, 21 May 1937.

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[35] On Partification, see Orlow, pp. 13-14.

[36] BA Koblenz R43II/203, Reich Agriculture Ministry to Telschow, 13 June 1934; same to Karpenstein, 18 June 1934; Karpenstein to Politische Leiter Gau Pommern, 12 June 1934.

[37] Orlow, pp. 69-70.

[38] Falk Wiesemann, "Arbeitskonflikte in der Landwirtschaft waehrend der NS-Zeit in Bayern 1933-1938," Vierteljahreshefte fuer Zeitgeschichte 25 (1977): 575-76, 583, 588-89. The Buchberg Agreement is printed in BHSA ML 3642, copy sent by Reich Agriculture Ministry to the Landesregierungen, 27 September 1935.

[39] BHSA ML 3641, Bavarian Industrie- und Handelskammer circulars, 19 October, 26 October, 3 November 1933; Resolution passed by Bavarian Industrie- und Handelskammer, 30 October 1933.

[40] BHSA ML 3010, Bavarian Landes-Gewerbebank to SMW,L.

[41] BHSA ML 3010, Julius Hinskel to Industrie- und Handelsgremium, 30 November 1933.

[42] BHSA ML 3010, Dr. Stein to State Secretary Stoecker, 6 November 1933.

[43] BHSA ML 3010, NS-Hago Ortsgruppenleiter Geissenfeld to NS-Hago Gauamtsleitung, 28 November 1933, 2 January 1934.

[44] BHSA ML 3010, LBF Bayern call to the peasantry, September 1934.

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[46] Berichte 24 (1939): 309; BA Koblenz R43II/213b, Darré memorandum to Hitler, delivered January 1939.

[47] BA Koblenz R43II/192, Draft of Amendment to Milk Law, 13 January 1933; Amendment to Milk Law published in Reichsgesetzblatt I (1933), p. 527; Erbhof Law in Reichsgesetzblatt I (1933), p. 685.

[48] Reichsgesetzblatt I (1933), p. 626.

[49] Bernhard Mehrens, Die Marktordnung des Reichsnaehrstandes (Berlin: Verlag Franz Vahlens, 1938), p. 13.

[50] Ibid., pp. 24-28.

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[51]Mehrens, 28-32, 39-41, 51-58, 66-67; _Reichsgesetzblatt_ I (1934), p. 629.

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[55]Farquharson, p. 163; Lovin, pp. 90-97.

[56]_Berichte_ 21 (1936): 66-67.

[57]Ibid., p. 68.

[58]Ibid., pp. 267, 269.

[59]_Korordnung_ in _Reichsgesetzblatt_ I(1936), pp. 175, 470; MLP im _Reichsgesetzblatt_ I (1935), p. 1354.

[60]Farquharson, pp. 170-71.

[61]_Berichte_ 24 (1939): 321-23; on rationing, see _Reichsgesetzblatt_ I (1939), p. 1498.

[62]Farqharson, p. 176; _Wochenblatt_, 24 August 1933; BHSA ML106670, MB/OB, 9 March 1936, 16 November 1937

[63]The discussion of the von Epp memorandum is based on BA Koblenz R43II/195, von Epp to Lammers, 1 March 1939.

[64]A reference to R. Walther Darré, _Das Bauerntum als Lebensquell der nördischen Rasse_, second edition (Goslar: Verlag Blut und Boden, 1940). _Lebensquell_ translates to lifesource.

[65]Farquharson, pp. 225, 238-40; Karl Lindauer, _Geschichte der Allgaeuer Milchwirtschaft_ (Kempten: Milchwirtschaftlicher Verein im Allgaeu, 1955), pp. 490-91.

[66]BHSA MA105584, MB/Sch, 10 May 1943; StAM LRA113813, MB Bad Aibling, 11 January 1943.

[67]BA Koblenz R43II/213b, Darré memorandum, January 1940.

[68]_Berichte_ 26 (1941): 171-72.

[69]Farquharson, pp. 233-34.

[70]BHSA MA106674, MB/NB, 8 August 1941, MA106695, MB/OB, 8 February 1944; StAM LRA 113813, MB Gendarmerie Post Aibling,

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25 June 1943, 25 September 1943; Gendarmerie Post Feldbach, 24 June 1943.

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[73]Ibid., 2 August 1934.

[74]Ibid., 26 November 1936.

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CHAPTER II

THE *ERBHOF* LAW

The *Reichserbhofgesetz* (*Erbhof* Law) decreed on September 29, 1933 was the most important agricultural reform undertaken by the National Socialist regime, for its impact on peasant life and its disruption of age-old peasant traditions were potentially limitless. The regulations regarding hereditary succession and the rules concerning property mobility, taken alone, portended a radical transformation of agricultural life. But, beyond that, and more by implication than explicit statement, the *Erbhof* Law was a powerful tool with which the regime could enforce compliance with the entire spectrum of legislation decreed during the Third Reich. The law was intended to preserve the German peasantry for all time, yet no other measure passed by the state aroused as much opposition, resentment, and anxiety among the peasants.

The ideological origins of the *Erbhof* Law lay in the decades-old debate in Germany between the advocates of a liberal economic order and those who defended the economic structures overthrown during and after the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars. These latter critics traced the crisis in peasant agriculture (described in Chapter I) to

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the creation of absolute rural property rights, which meant that rural property would, like any other type of property, be freed from any restrictions on its sale, transfer, and purchase. Freed from all ownership restrictions, rural land soon became the object of speculation which rapidly inflated land values during the agricultural boom in the early nineteenth century. Peasants were now able to contract debts based on the hypothetical capital frozen in their land and far in excess of their ability to repay. When economic contractions occurred, the huge debts and interest charges led to bankruptcy. Moreover, inflated land prices meant that the small landowners could no longer raise their status through timely land purchases, as they had in the past, since these would now prove too costly. The final triumph of the liberal principle was the enactment of the Prussian Civil Code in 1900, which made no distinction between mobile and immobile farm property.[1]

The inflation of property value also affected hereditary customs. Most German peasants followed the custom of deeding the farm to only one child. The choice of eldest, youngest, or other child varied according to local customs. As part of the settlement, the child who received the farm was usually required to pay an appropriate sum to the remaining children. It was only in areas which lay close to urban and commercial centers in the south and west of Germany that peasants deviated from this practice and divided their land equally among all the children. The large and profitable

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nearby markets enabled peasants to practice labor intensive dairy farming on their small plots of land.[2]

There had been attempts throughout the nineteenth century to codify peasant hereditary customs but the peasants themselves showed little enthusiasm for this. Bavaria passed a law in 1855 which allowed peasants to establish entailed farms which had to pass undivided to a single child, yet few peasants took advantage of the opportunity.[3] The customary inheritance practices only began to create difficulties as land prices rose and prices for agricultural products stagnated or declined. The monetary settlements with the non-inheriting children became increasingly burdensome, since these were often linked to land values. At the least, even if the settlements did not create crushing debts, the farms which were inherited were still over-indebted as a consequence of land purchases or other improvements made by the previous owner. Advocates of compulsory inheritance laws, who could be found through the entire spectrum of rural interest groups, warned that the peasants were being driven to extinction. They predicted that the precarious balance between city and countryside would be upset unless the peasants were offered the protection of compulsory inheritance laws. The rural farm unit must be removed, they argued, from speculative markets. The farm must pass undivided and without excessive charges to the succeeding generations. After the First World War and its lesson of the danger of economic blockade and blackmail, the arguments

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of these advocates proved increasingly persuasive. The farm crisis after the war led peasant interest groups to join the chorus calling for inheritance reform. The Bavarian Bauernkammer announced in 1922 and 1927 that it was in favor of a compulsory inheritance law. It should be noted, however, that during the brief period of agricultural prosperity between 1923 and 1928, the Bavarian peasants themselves were opposed to such reforms, as revealed in a questionnaire distributed by the Bavarian Bauernkammer in 1924.[4]

R. Walther Darré was one of those who favored radical reform of inheritance practices. In Neuadel aus Blut and Boden (1930) he called for some form of farm entail which would eliminate farm divisions among a number of heirs. The National Socialist agrarian program, published in 1930, also called for a nationwide and compulsory hereditary law, as did Werner Willikins in his contribution to the NS Jahrbuch in 1930.[5]

Soon after the National Socialist government was formed in 1933, the Agrarian Office of the NSDAP began to prepare compulsory inheritance legislation for Prussia, where the Minister of Justice was a Party member. The Prussian Anerbenrecht (Compulsory Inheritance Law) was enacted on May 15, 1933. All peasants who cwned property between 7-1/2 and 125 hectares were affected by the law. Their farms were now entailed. They could not be sold, divided, or auctioned without court approval. Only one child was per-

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mitted to inherit the farm and the remaining children could not receive any payments which would require a loan.[6]

Once Darré became the Minister of Agriculture, pressure increased for the extension of the Prussian law to the remainder of the Reich. However, there was some delay in the preparation of a Reich law because the southern and southwestern states were worried that such a law would ignore the wide variations in inheritance and ownership which existed in Germany. An article in a Bavarian newspaper in July, 1933 informed its readers that a Bavarian law was in preparation which would take into account the special circumstances prevailing in Bavaria. But any possibility that the individual states would be permitted to prepare their own laws was ruled out by the publication of a nationwide law on September 29, 1933. The _Reichserbhofgesetz_ (REG) followed closely the Prussian law.[7] One major distinction was the introduction of the concept of _Ackernaehrung_ (farm self-sufficiency). This did not imply that the farm subsisted entirely independently from the marketplace. It merely meant that income from farm operations as well as consumption of farm products were sufficient to guarantee the survival of the farm family regardless of prevailing market conditions. As long as a farm possessed an _Ackernaehrung_ and was less than 125 hectares it could become an _Erbhof_. Thus, there were no minimum soil requirements and an _Ackernaehrung_ could vary, depending on local conditions such as soil quality, the size of the individual

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plots, and the distance of the plots from each other and the farm.

Unlike previous Anerbenrecht legislation in Germany, the farm came under the provisions of the REG as long as certain prerequisites were met. The farmer did not have to petition for inclusion in the Erbhof lists, nor could he escape inclusion by failing to petition for it, something many farm owners did not initially understand. The prerequisites for an Erbhof were that the farm must possess an Ackernaehrung, a family (corporations and churches were not allowed to own an Erbhof), a farm dwelling and a barn. The farm had to be owned by a single person who was a German citizen and of German or "related" blood. Jews and "colored" were forbidden to own an Erbhof.

The REG was a revolutionary attempt to legislate behavior and consciousness, as the Erbhof owner had to possess Bauernfaehigkeit and Bauernehre--that is, to be an able farmer and have an acceptable character. Peasant morals, family relationships, hereditary tradition, and economic activities could be scrutinized by the authorities. Criminal behavior, drunkenness, mental illness, mental retardation, and profligacy could disqualify a peasant from ownership of an Erbhof. In such cases he could lose his farm, although his family might be permitted to retain it. Other provisions of the REG required that the farm owner work the Erbhof himself and not rent it or parts of it to others. Nevertheless, longstanding rentals dating from be-

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fore the REG would not disqualify the farm from Erbhof status. Co-ownership of the Erbhof was not permitted. This, the lawmakers felt, would raise the prospect that the farm would eventually pass to a member of the spouse's family and be lost to the original bloodline. A qualified farm owner was entitled to be called a Bauer or Bäuerin (peasant or peasant woman). Only Erbhof owners could carry this honorific.

Unlike all previous inheritance legislation, the REG laid down a strict order of preference for inheritance. The ranks were ordered as follows: Sons, son's sons, father, brothers, brothers' sons, daughters, daughters' sons, sisters, sisters' sons, and not previously mentioned female descendents. The wife and the mother of the Erbhof owner were excluded from the rankings to prevent the farm from passing out of the original family. A widow could retain the administration of the farm only until the legal heir reached the age of 21 or 25, thereafter she was entitled to the traditional Altenteil (retirement income). The discrimination against the women was partially mitigated by the clause which permitted them to inherit the farm if "important grounds exist." Within each rank, there were no prescriptions favoring the oldest or the youngest member of that rank. Local customs was to be followed in each case. If no custom held sway, the youngest member of that rank would stand to inherit, since the older children would presumably have established themselves by that time. If

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local custom granted the farm owner free choice of heir, this too would be permitted under the REG, as long as the free choice was exercised within the proper rank. Finally, whatever custom dictated, the rules could be waived with court permission if important grounds existed for setting them aside. One National Socialist commentator on the law averred, not without reason, that only the ignorant could represent the law as schematic.[8]

The treatment of the non-inheriting children was similar to that which prevailed under the Prussian *Anerbenrecht*. Monetary compensation could be paid to the siblings but it was strictly limited to the current farm yield; indebtedness had to be avoided. All payments had to be approved by the special courts set up under the REG (see below page 86), as did all transfer agreements. The harsh settlement provisions were counterbalanced, so the lawmakers argued, by the support and shelter rights retained by the siblings. The siblings were entitled to remain on the farm until they reached maturity and to receive vocational preparation and education to ensure an independent existence. Dowries were permitted but were also not allowed to exceed the ability of the farm to pay for them.

Finally, the *Erbhof*, inalienable and indivisible, was not subject to evictions or attachments on property listed as part of the *Erbhof* or needed by the *Erbhof* family. To avoid abuses, the REG decreed that peasants who misused

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Erbhof privileges could lose their certification of Bauernfaehigkeit and thus their farm.

The REG met with strong criticism outside the circles directly responsible for its enactment. The attack on the law even involved many advocates of some type of hereditary reform, such as Max Sering. His privately printed manuscript, Erbhofrecht und Entschuldung (1933), received sympathetic attention from high Nazi officials and was cited in the foreign press, to the chagrin of Darré.[9]

Sering argued that the REG was alien to German peasant hereditary tradition. The law, in fact, bore closer resemblance to the customs of the German and English nobility, whose Fideikommisse passed undivided to a single heir. The customs of the German peasant were quite otherwise. Sources going as far back as the twelfth century in Schleswig-Holstein revealed the peasants deeding their farms to a single heir and providing their other children with a settlement based on the principle of equal inheritance. Through the centuries this practice was maintained. Even though rising land values threatened to undermine the tradition of equal inheritance, the peasants continued to share equally among the children by paying the children who did not inherit the farm a sum based on the farm yield rather than land prices. Thus, the integrity of the farm was preserved.[10]

Sering claimed that the REG contradicted peasant custom in three major instances. The law abolished the traditional

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freedom of the peasant to choose his own heir. It undermined the peasant's control over his own farm within his lifetime. And it eliminated the equal treatment of all heirs, whether through the division of the farmstead or single inheritance combined with monetary settlement. As an alternative to the REG, Sering recommended that control over the farm be returned to the peasant and he be allowed to choose his heir. He also proposed that a new law re-establish the equal treatment of all the children. As a precaution against over-indebtedness, he suggested that the settlement and all other debts be restricted to 60 percent of the value of the farm. The shelter rights established in the REG would become superfluous and could be eliminated.

The State Secretary in the Ministry of Agriculture, von Rohr, a member of the Nationalist Party, criticized the settlement provisions of the REG. He predicted that wives would withhold the land they brought to their marriage rather than see it become part of an Erbhof they could not inherit; thus reducing the size of future Erbhofs. Actually, most wives would no longer be allowed to acquire parental land in the future, if it belonged to an Erbhof. Von Rohr also worried that the REG would cause a credit crunch, since lenders would refuse to extend unsecured loans to the peasants.[11]

The Prussian and Reich hereditary laws also provoked criticism by the eastern landowners who believed that the new administration was preparing to abandon the estate

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sector. These landowners viewed the two laws as preludes to the "peasantization" of the Reich. Even as the Prussian law was still in preparation, the Reichsgrundbesitzer-Verband, representing the estate owners, entreated Hitler to protect the large estates. While protesting their loyalty to the new regime and harping on the age-old themes of greater productivity on the estates and their role as bulwarks against the Polish enemy, the league even went so far as to call for a halt to the *Fideikommisse* dissolutions decreed in 1919 and a restoration of the entailed estates. Hitler assured the anxious delegates that he recognized the crucial role played by the great estates, especially in providing sugar and wheat to the cities. He even agreed that the *Fideikommisse* question should be reopened and he promised to discuss this with Hugenberg. Even after the publication of the REG, the estate owners, still in contact with their old friend Hindenburg, worked to restore the *Fideikommisse*. Darré was able to resist this demand. He declared in subsequent speeches that the REG would not serve as a prelude to restoration of the entailed estates. The *Laender* authorities and the Cabinet also agreed that the process of dissolution should not be suspended; so few of the entailed properties remained.[12] Although the *Fideikommisse* were not resurrected, the intensity of the campaign by the estate owners precluded further attacks on their property. Though their ancient privileges were not restored, their land was not expropriated, as the regime

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sought to balance the interests of the peasants and estate owners.

The nationwide reaction of most peasants to the publication of the REG was no less critical, perhaps even more so. These reactions ranged from skepticism to open hostility. At the heart of this response lay the conviction that the law represented unjustifiable and impermissible governmental interference in the operations of the farm enterprise and the lives of the peasant family. The interference was most keenly felt in the strict inheritance regulations prescribed by the law and in the reduced chances of obtaining necessary credit.[13]

The hereditary custom which was most violated was the traditional regard accorded to female property rights. The district office in Altoetting reported that the order of succession was the main objection of the peasants. Discrimination against wives was also resented. Tradtionally, each partner in a marriage brought pieces of property which became joined in a single farm under the co-ownership of the spouses. This was no longer allowed under the new regulations. "The previous legal condition, that one marries into and becomes co-owner and co-heir of the farm...is so deeply rooted in the populace that the peasants cannot possibly conceive of a divergent law."[14]

Another objection concerned the fate of the children who did not inherit the family farm. As we have seen, the law severely circumscribed the ability of the peasant to

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arrange for the future of his children, which had previously been accomplished through a cash or land settlement. Under the REG, neither alternative was available any longer. To deed a portion of the farm was obviously impossible, since only personal property which was not critical to the farm enterprise could be divided among the heirs. Cash settlements, whether paid all at once or over an extended period of time, could no longer be arranged through a loan, since loans secured only by personal guarantee could hardly be of sufficient size to meet the needs of the heirs. Moreover, all debts had to be approved by a special court, which was charged with the responsibility to prevent farm over-indebtedness. Under the circumstances, the peasants asked themselves whether there was any future for their children, other than migration to the cities. They asked, too, what sort of reward their children would receive for years of unpaid labor on the family farm. Why must one child alone inherit the farm while the others were left with practically nothing, just the amount which the court ruled that the farm could afford.[15]

Sometimes the other children received a portion of the cash settlement at the time of their marriage, an event usually marking the beginning of a separate life in a new home. The marriage gift could take the form of money or land. Peasants feared that the practice would no longer be possible or that they would only be able to give an inadequate gift. The problem was that, as with the in-

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heritance settlement, land could not be given because of the REG regulations concerning farm indivisibility, cash could not be raised through land sales, and cash could not be raised through loans because of the restrictions on farm indebtedness.[16]

Complaints about anticipated difficulties abounded in the first months after the law was announced in September, 1933. Though protests began to dwindle by mid-1934, they continued to be heard up until 1939. One peasant declared that he had no wish to become an *Erbhofbauer* because he would not be able to procure money for marriage gifts. Another feared that once he became an *Erbhofbauer* he would be ineligible for a mortgage with which he could pay the 3,000 marks which would be owed to his brother when the brother married. The peasant owner of a small farm with limited resources expressed his concern that he would not receive court approval for a 4,000 mark loan with which he could purchase land for one of his children. As the peasant pointed out, even if he did get the money, the land would then become part of the *Erbhof* and he could not sell or transfer it to his child, despite his promise years earlier to furnish this gift.[17]

The problem of providing for all the children was closely connected to the amount of credit which would be available to the *Erbhofbauer*. Credit availability was the second major area of complaint over the REG, as credit was an absolute necessity for the farm. The normal peasant

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enterprise had little cash reserve available during the year; harvest time was the season when some relief came. Credit was important in order to enable the peasant to purchase the seed, fodder, and fertilizer to continue everyday farm operations. Short-term credit was not unduly affected by the REG, since it was usually advanced by the local tradesmen with the expectation that it would be paid back after the harvest. But credit was also needed for the occasional expenditures, such as replacements for animals which had died, new machinery and tools, or land purchases and costly improvements. Once the REG was published, more substantial credit was no longer available. The lending institutions refused to extend longer term loans which would have no collateral other than the personal honor of the debtor. A credit suspension was the response of the lenders in the Dachau area after the REG was announced and the peasants in the area of Bad Toelz protested at a public meeting that the financial institutions would not "lend even the smallest sum of money." A RNS official meeting with peasants in Rosenheim found that the lack of credit for _Erbhof_ peasants was the leading anxiety. As we shall see below (pages 92-96), the problem of credit for _Erbhof_ farms proved especially disastrous for one particular group of _Erbhof_ owners--the owners of mixed enterprises.[18]

The National Socialists responded to peasant fears with a barrage of reassurances and refinements on the original law. The official discussion which ensued

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stressed the flexibility of the new law. The decrees concerning inheritance rankings, the RNS press pointed out, were relatively lenient. It was possible, as we have seen, for the designated heir to be set aside in favor of another child, if proper cause could be demonstrated.[19]

The low rank accorded to women, so inconsistent with Bavarian peasant custom, was justified, the RNS asserted. Wives were excluded from the inheritance because the dangers of the farm falling into alien hands, through a subsequent remarriage, had to be avoided. The Bavarian RNS newspaper noted that if daughters were also enraged by the new _Erbhof_ regulations which concerned them, they were guilty of insulting Hitler. After all, daughters retained their right to live on the family farm and were not simply tossed into the wilderness. Even after marriage, the daughter had the right to seek shelter on the farm. Was it not preferable to a cash award which might well endanger the family farm which provided refuge? Besides, the National Socialists took pains to point out, the low rank of women in the inheritance order was not absolutely fixed. Given justifiable circumstances, it was also possible for a daughter to inherit the family farm instead.[20]

The fate of the children who did not inherit the farm was also addressed. The RNS reassured the peasants that these children were not being abandoned. The REG required that the _Erbhof_ owner provide a domicile, education, and upbringing. Some critics claimed that these obligations

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would be impossible to undertake in light of the low cash reserves of most Erbhof farms. They predicted that excessive financial burdens would result. The RNS commentators called the fears unfounded. The right of domicile was contingent upon the child providing fair compensation in the form of labor. The farm could only profit, since it would not have to pay cash to non-family laborers. Monetary compensation would therefore be kept to a bare minimum and replaced wherever possible by non-cash obligations. Thus the farm would be freed from the capitalist net of indebtedness and the capitalist mentality which looked to monetary settlements.[21]

The RNS claimed that the credit problems which would arise from the inalienability of the Erbhof were not insurmountable. Though it was true that credit could no longer be secured by the farm and would have to be personal in nature, it was only appropriate and in keeping with the aim of the National Socialist movement to create a new human type. The new credit arrangements would "reawaken the peasant's individual feeling of responsibility" and permit the creditor to grant credit "based on the trust in the personal ability of the peasant."[22] Thereby, the capitalist mentality which governed credit in the past would be eradicated. The common bonds which united the Volk would replace the cash nexus which divided it.

Concerning peasant wives, the RNS newspapers insisted that they received fair treatment under the Erbhof regula-

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tions. The law permitted pre-existing co-owned farms to become Erbhofs and for the wife to inherit the farm upon her husband's death. Though no new co-owned farms would be permitted in the future, the widow would be provided for by the traditional retirement settlement. The widow would also be allowed to administer the farm until the heir reached his 21st year, in some cases until the heir turned 25. The widow possessed these rights even if the heir was not her descendant. She would lose her rights to a retirement income and support only in the event of her remarriage. But in that case her future would be guaranteed by her new husband.[23]

The National Socialists also made a number of immediate and later revisions to the REG which facilitated acceptance of the law during the transition period. One concession concerned the peasant daughter. When no son was available to inherit the Erbhof, the daughter, rank six in the REG, could gain the farm in preference to those in the higher ranks. But the preferment was only permitted for the first farm transfer after the publication of the REG. A subsequent transition measure (Dritte Durchfuehrungsverordnung zum Reichserbhofgesetz, 26.4.39) extended the temporary preferment to cover the second farm transfer, further enabling the peasantry to adapt to the new order. In any event, the regime had now extended the transition period to such a length of time that it expired only with the collapse of the Third Reich.[24]

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A second concession concerned the co-ownership of *Erbhof* farms, involving, therefore, the peasant wife. The problem of whether to permit jointly owned farms to be enrolled as *Erbhof* farms was especially important in Bavaria, the leading region of co-owned farm property. The provisions against co-owned farms were never really tested. Transition regulations permitted pre-existing common property tenures to become *Erbhof* farms, so that, by the end of 1936, 118,890 jointly owned farms had been enrolled as *Erbhof* farms in Bavaria, 76 percent of all of the Bavarian *Erbhofs*.[25]

The Second World War brought intense pressure to bear on the regime to abolish the rules prohibiting future common tenures of *Erbhof* farms. Even before the French campaign, the war had created an atmosphere of uncertainty amongst the peasantry. They worried over the disposition of the *Erbhof* farms should the owner or male heir become a war casualty. Before the war, the peasant's anxiety had been somewhat allayed by the relatively long transition period. The prospect of an acceleration of the transition period by increasing numbers of transfers no longer permitted such complacency.

The RNS weekly in Bavaria, the heartland of co-owned farms, reflected the growing concern of peasant men and women. In 1940, the newspaper began to publish an increasing volume of letters addressing the problem, giving the RNS the opportunity to make reassuring recommendations in

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the form of specific replies. The letters were generally similar. One writer asked how he could provide for his wife in the event of his early death. Another asked how he could guarantee that his wife would inherit the Erbhof. Letters from women reflected the indignation they felt over the unequal status accorded them by the REG: "Is it just that I may only remain on the farm as a paid servant in the event that my husband does not return home?" To these and other complaints or queries, the editors could only reply with the no longer soothing formula--you may specify that your wife possesses the control of the farm until the rightful heir reaches maturity.[26]

RNS equivocations were ended in the fourth year of the war. A new law, the Verordnung zur Fortbildung des Erbhofrechts (Erbhoffortbildungsverordnung) issued on October 1, 1943, established that in all those areas where jointly owned farms had been the prevalent custom before 1933 the peasant couple would once again be permitted to establish co-ownership of their farms without losing their Erbhof status. The most important effect of the new law was that the peasant spouse could now inherit the farm when the spouse died. The peasant wife was now restored, in certain favored areas, to a substantial portion of her former status.[27]

Thus explanations and revisions helped to subdue the uproar and dismay which had greeted the REG. But the most important factor which accustomed the peasantry to the new

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state of affairs was the actual implementation of the law. A day-to-day process, which involved adjustments by both the peasantry and the RNS apparatus and which tended to ameliorate the harsh effects the REG might otherwise have had. The peasants gradually became accustomed to the vocabulary of the REG and learned to use it, especially since more dubious tactics to evade REG provisions proved unsuccessful. The authorities, in turn, learned to moderate excessive expectations that the peasants might quickly conform to Blut und Boden precepts. One other factor which mitigated the severity of the REG was the pronounced tendency among lower levels of the RNS apparatus and at all levels of the Bavarian state agricultural services to sympathize with the traditional peasant outlook.

The implementation of the REG lay primarily in the hands of the local Anerbengericht (Inheritance Court-AEG). There were 1,544 such courts in Germany, 209 in Bavaria (excluding the Bavarian Palatinate).[28] The courts were responsible for all Erbhof decisions such as credit, farm succession, peasant honor, and farming ability of the peasant. Court approval of credit and land transactions, including transfers, were required in all cases. Court determination of peasant honor or farming ability could be requested by the peasant or the KBF. A later addition to the REG permitted any interested third party to petition for such a determination (October 20, 1933, RGBl p. 749). Most importantly for the initial period of the REG, the

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courts also adjudicated the enrollment or delisting of the _Erbhof_ farms.[29]

The courts were composed of one Judge and two peasant associate Judges. Its decisions could be appealed by the peasant within two weeks. The KBF possessed the right of appeal in most cases. These appeals went to the provincial courts, of which there were three in Bavaria: Munich, Nuremberg, and Bamberg.[30] More stringent regulations governed appeals of provincial court decisions, which were brought before the _Reichserbhofgericht_ (Reich _Erbhof_ Court) in Berlin.[31] Therefore, the courts were the chief determinants of the stringency or leniency with which the REG was applied. The decisions issuing from the courts, as we shall see below, reveal a substantial degree of independence from the RNS apparatus. Yet the RNS, through its district representatives, the KBF, played a considerable role in the application of the Law. The KBF could bring complaints to the courts and, when district courts ruled in favor of the peasant, could appeal the decision. The influence which the KBF and, at the regional level, the LBF could bring to bear on court decisions was important, if not decisive. The courts found it difficult to oppose the RNS over the long run. In addition, the peasants would often be pressured to withdraw their opposition to RNS wishes or, at the least, to agree to some type of compromise. The interplay between the RNS functionaries and the court apparatus varied from district to district. But,

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overall, court rulings combined with the many transition measures to placate the peasantry and accustom them to the broader outlines of the Erbhof system. The uproar in the peasant communities subsided after the initial deafening outburst. Undoubtedly, the decline in protests was also due to the numbing effects of time as well as the obvious limits placed upon resistance in the Third Reich.

But an air of sullen resentment continued to envelop peasant Bavaria because of the REG. This attitude is only rarely mentioned in official reports or court records after 1935 but it does appear in a series of opinion surveys written by the district court presidents in the Landshut region in 1936 and 1937. Since they were closely involved with the Erbhof litigation which was brought to the Inheritance Courts attached to their jurisidction, their reports are noteworthy. The problems which the officials referred to indicate that the worries which troubled the peasants in 1933 and 1934 had not dissipated. More disconcerting, some of the negative effects predicted by sophisticated critics of the Erbhof legislation appeared to be coming true. For example, the court official in Mallersdorf blamed the peasants' dissatisfaction with the Third Reich on the REG because, "the peasant feels far more strongly that he is the independent lord of the farm than a member of a larger community," yet the Erbhof status undermines his freedom.[32] The peasants, he went on, felt especially angry over their lost testamentary freedom and

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were concerned over the future of their children. Another court official noted that the bitterness toward the REG would have been even worse except "this and that are still permitted during the transition period which would not be allowed under a strict interpretation of the law."[33]

Besides noting the antipathy felt toward the REG, the court officials were among the first to confirm the pessimistic predictions about the effects of the REG on the peasantry which were made when the law was first drawn up. They reported that the law was contributing to a growth of family strife as the "children of the *Erbhof* peasant who labor for years on the *Erbhof* bitterly complain that they must leave the farm with empty pockets while the *Erbhof* owner lives comfortably at their expense."[34] The same reporter asserted that the children were leaving the farm sooner than ever, rather than wait until it was too late to begin a new career.[35] Thus, rather than combatting the rural flight to the cities, the law was actually contributing to it. The REG also encouraged peasants to delay their marriage, since wives would lose control over the property they brought with them once their husbands died. A Vilsbiburg court official who generally believed that the peasants were satisfied with the REG subsequently reported that there was great unease because of the discrimination against wives.[36]

The court reports also contain some references to that

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apparent split between the Inheritance Courts and the RNS bureaucracy referred to above. The court officials often forwarded concrete recommendations calling for greater flexibility in credit matters than the KBF was willing to permit. And one official remarked that although many mixed enterprises asked to be stricken from the *Erbhof* rolls, "the KBF stands totally opposed," as though this were the only barrier.[37]

We shall turn now to the actual litigation which developed under the REG. The most significant court decisions were those that arose first, those that involved enrollment of the farms in the *Erbhof* lists. These decisions, stretching over the first three years of the REG, determined which farms and which families would henceforth fall under the restrictive supervision of the Inheritance Courts. The early decisions were important clues to the severity with which the courts would enforce the new law and the extent to which they would take account of local circumstances of peasant life. The court decisions would also play an important role in extending National Socialist control over the countryside, since the RNS would have a far greater say in the operations of farms which were *Erbhof* farms. They could, after all, influence ownership, credit, and farm practices by taking or threatening to take the *Erbhof* owner to court.

The procedures for the enrollment of *Erbhof* farms were

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detailed in the Erste Durchfuehrungsverordnung zum Reichserbhofgesetz (RGBl 1933 p. 749). The first step was for community officials to compile a list of all the farms in their community which were between 7.5 and 125 hectares in size. Farms which were below the minimum size were to be listed only if they possessed an Ackernaehrung. The list, entitled Directory A, was then sent to the Landrat, who added any relevant comments to enable the court to determine the Erbhof status of the farm, and thence transmitted to the court. The court was then required to place all eligible Erbhof farms in the Court Directory. The farm owners who were placed on the last list were informed of their inclusion and the directory posted. Anyone who felt that he was unjustly included in the list had one month to object. Those who believed that they had been unfairly excluded from the list had two months to appeal the exclusion. The decision was made by the Inheritance Court. Once final determination had been made, the Erbhof farms were entered into the Erbhof Rolls. Seventy-six percent of all Bavarian farms were ultimately enrolled as Erbhof farms.[38]

The vast majority of the enrollment appeals were based on the claim that the farm did not fulfill the requirement of possessing an Ackernaehrung. However, the term was a catch-all phrase which the peasants utilized because it accorded with the language of the REG regulations and was rarely the real basis for the appeal. After all, if the advantages of Erbhof status outweighed the disadvantages,

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then there would be no appeal at all; the farm owner did not care whether his farm could survive independent of market conditions. The peasants were generally shrewd enough to realize that only those appeals which were based strictly on the Erbhof regulations had any chance of success. Besides, they were permitted to seek advice from lawyers in these preceedings, and these legal experts undoubtedly counseled them to use the prerequisite of Ackernaehrung in their legal battle.[39] Hence, the majority of cases turned on technical arguments pertaining to soil quality, degree of parcellization, distance of the plots from the farm, the size of the barn, the number of animals, irrigation, and climate.

Since the peasants adapted their appeals to the requirements of the Erbhof regulations it is often difficult to discern the real motives which lay behind their wish not to be enrolled as Erbhof peasants. Occasionally, however, the true reasons for their appeals were mentioned by the peasants. These might appear as the chief grounds of the appeal or be referred to incidentally to the appeal. Of these cases, the problem of the Erbhof heirs was, as would be expected, the major issue. The courts rarely allowed appeals based on hereditary rights and they were backed in these decisions by the KBF. Typical of the courts' response was the comment in one case that "the basis of the appeal leads one to conclude that the appellant has not yet understood the meaning and spirit of the REG."[40]

Another frequent grounds for appeal of Erbhof status

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was the claim that the farm was actually only a side enterprise for the owner and that his main business was some commercial or industrial activity. When cases such as these appear, we may be sure that they represent the real reason why the farm owner did not want Erbhof status. Erbhof status for a mixed enterprise was, at the least, a considerable inconvenience and, perhaps, a business disaster. Ownership of a mixed enterprise, if the business portion outweighed the farm portion, would disqualify a farm from the Erbhof rolls. Thus, appeals based on these grounds stood a reasonable chance of success.

Mixed enterprises were quite common in rural areas and represented the fluid boundaries which existed between business and agriculture in rural society. Typically, the owner of a farm would use some surplus capital to establish a small business, such as an inn, a pub, a butcher shop, or supply store. These little enterprises would serve the local clientele of peasants and their families and were often the only such establishments within the village. The type of retail establishment which the owners set up was appropriate to their own talents and possessed a modest sort of economic efficiency, since at least part of their supplies could come directly from the farm's production. The side enterprise provided the farm with an additional outlet which helped cut costs for the retail operation. The two establishments could complement each other in their use of labor. The farm season has its own rhythms and the retail

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operations could provide supplementary employment for family members momentarily not engaged in farm labor. Capital could also be shifted back and forth between the two enterprises as needed, and loans taken out using the combined properties as security. Even in mixed enterprises of a more substantial nature, such as the quarry operations run by rural entrepreneurs, these advantages could continue to hold true. The REG, grounded in romantic images of the peasant farm, suffered from its inability to recognize that rural life was not neatly differentiated into categories of peasant, artisan, and trader. The attempted creation of a rigidly defined class of *Erbhofbauern* ran into difficulty when the potential Bauer was a *Zimmermann* or *Gastwirt*.

The court decisions in these cases were based on the weight of the individual enterprises within the whole, the extent to which these enterprises formed an indivisible unit, and the self-sufficiency of the farm enterprise. Usually, the crucial factor in determining which enterprise predominated in a mixed establishment was strictly financial. A farm couple in Hartkirchen asked that their 25 hectare farm and inn be denied *Erbhof* status because the inn was the main business activity. The court ruled against them because the farm was more valuable than the inn, whose business consisted mostly of beer sales which were insufficient to support the couple. But measurable standards like property value, profits, and business turnover were not the only ones which were applied in these decisions. A

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rural couple who owned a 7-1/2 hectare farm and supply store were granted their request to have these excluded from the Erbhof lists. A major factor in the decision was that the store, although very small, was "the only store in the village."[41]

A substantial number of these rural entrepreneurs were not originally peasants but had bought their farms as an investment, a retirement retreat, for reasons of prestige, or to complement their other businesses. But the requirement for Erbhof status included, it will be recalled, the ownership of the farm by a qualified peasant. A couple in Aidenbach--butchers, brickmakers, as well as farm owners--convinced the court that neither they nor their children were trained for the farm life.[42]

The response of the KBF to appeals was conditioned by their desire to retain as many Erbhof farms on the lists as possible. The indirect pressure which the KBF could exercise on an Erbhof was always greater than the pressure he could bring to bear on an ordinary farm, although it was quite substantial in both cases. In addition, it was always a matter of prestige, at least in the enrollment period from 1933-1936, to have as many Erbhof farms enrolled in a district as possible. Usually, the KBF endeavored to preserve the Erbhof title of a farm by splitting off the business portion of the mixed enterprise, while the farm would be enrolled as an Erbhof. If the enterprise could not be split-up, the KBF often insisted that the farm was the main

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business activity of the owner and that it provided an adequate income and provisions for the family. Whenever a court decision went against the KBF position, which was not unusual, the KBF almost invariably appealed the decision to the Higher Court.[43]

Since so much of the National Socialist rural reorganization depended on the character transformation of the German peasantry, to enable them to appreciate or rediscover their Voelkisch peasant virtues and discard all materialist values, the courts had to weed out unsuitable farm owners from the Erbhof lists. Some owners of mixed enterprises which had not been included on the original Erbhof lists appealed to have their farms listed. The owners were usually prompted by a desire to protect their businesses from debt liquidation proceedings. The courts were required to scrutinize all appeals carefully in order to prevent undesirable elements from receiving the protection of the Erbhof regulations. Over-indebted farm owners who sought Erbhof status for purely material reasons and who were not really peasants, according to the National Socialist definition of this term, were not permitted to be enrolled as Erbhof owners.[44]

The problems associated with the establishment of Erbhof farms in Bavaria which have been described thus far, and the appeals process which followed the compilation of the Erbhof lists, could be found also in the rest of Germany, with one important exception. While most of Germany, including the largest part of Bavaria, followed the custom

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of undivided inheritance of the farm property, the custom of equal division, Realteilung, prevailed in southwestern Germany. To see how the problem affected peasant attitudes to the Erbhof law and how National Socialists responded to the problem, we can examine the reception given to the REG in Lower Franconia, for here the custom of Realteilung held sway.

Lower Franconia, in the northwestern part of Bavaria, lies on the eastern edge of the Realteilung area of Germany. The practice of the farm owners in the region was to give each of their children an equal portion of the farm property upon the death or retirement of the farm owner. The REG was, of course, diametrically opposed to the custom. The advocates of an inheritance law prior to 1933 felt that equal division of the farm created dwarf farms which were unable to provide the farm family with an independent rural existence, accelerating the rural flight to the towns and cities. The possibilities for a sharp clash between the new law and farm traditions were immense in this region, minimized only by the small number of Erbhof farms which were enrolled in Lower Franconia, a direct consequence of Realteilung, which caused the proliferation of small farms. Only 12 percent of farms in Lower Franconia were enlisted as Erbhof farms, the lowest percentage in all of Bavaria, excluding the urban Palatinate district.[45]

Nevertheless, the implementation of the REG in Lower Franconia had to proceed with caution. Farms placed on the

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Erbhof lists would no longer be allowed to follow local customs. Just because the farm was of larger than average size did not mean that the owner and family had not followed the custom of partible inheritance or did not expect to do so in the future. The farm may well have prospered, with plots having been added over the years. Now, their very prosperity would be the source of hardship and disappointment to the children. Future generations would also be affected by the law, because in the normal course of property movement in Lower Franconia, the husband and wife would each bring a portion of the parental property to their marriage, thus bringing their farm to a level close to or over the minimum *Erbhof* size. Would the desire to evade *Erbhof* status lead to smaller marriage gifts? Would it delay marriages? Would it lead to a lower birthrate? Finally, hundreds of families would be immediately and adversely affected by the new law. Many families had already inherited a portion of the parental farm but had not notarized the transfer in order to avoid the required tax liability. The practice, widespread in Lower Franconia, would now backfire, because the farm which was, in reality, parcelled out among many heirs was, legally, undivided. It would consequently be large enough to become an *Erbhof* and only one child would receive title to it, while the others would be dispossessed, often after years or even decades of ownership.[46]

The National Socialists were not insensitive to the difficulties caused by the REG in Lower Franconia. One KBF,

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in Schweinfurth, even authored an extensive memo which acknowledged the justice of peasant complaints, questioned some of the key precepts underlying the REG, and recommended a number of special transition measures for the region.[47] But his sympathetic attitude went well beyond that of most of his colleagues in the middle echelons of the RNS apparatus. The records show that the most important factor which mitigated the potentially harsh effects of the REG in Lower Franconia was, as mentioned above, the small number of farms actually affected by the law. Most of the communities in Lower Franconia had fewer than 20 Erbhof farms enrolled, due to the small average size of the farms in Lower Franconia. The small farm sizes reduced the overall total of appeals of Erbhof enrollment. The farms which were enrolled were usually so clearly of sufficient size that the peasant had little hope of winning an appeal based on lack of an Ackernaehrung. Appeals were lodged on the basis of other factors, usually that plots of land listed in the land register actually belonged to one of the children. The courts were lenient as long as the land was clearly in the possession of one of the children prior to the promulgation of the REG. The courts permitted the peasant to report the transfer and have the land deleted from the Erbhof lists. A number of Erbhof farms were delisted as a result. The courts even proved willing to permit division of parental farms after the REG was announced, if clear prior intent to do so could be demonstrated. A peasant in the Gmuenden

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region was allowed to divide his farm among his children after he declared that, "he could not give his farm to only one of his children, the other four had to be considered as well. Since he had no cash, the others would have to receive a portion of the property."[48]

The only force actively fighting to prevent the complete disappearance of *Erbhof* farms in Lower Franconia was the KBFs. In cases where the local authorities failed to list many of the potential *Erbhof* farms in the rolls, their failure was appealed by the local KBF. In cases where the AEG ruled in favor of peasant appeals of *Erbhof* enrollment, the decisions were appealed by the KBF, usually resulting in a reversal by the appropriate Higher Court. For example, in Unterhohenried the KBF protested the non-inclusion of six farms in the *Erbhof* lists. The AEG subsequently included all of the farms, none of which was more than eight hectares. In Mittelsinn, eighteen farms were not included in the initial lists. They were rather large-sized farms, between twenty and forty hectares. The AEG Gmuenden turned down the KBF appeal in every single case. However, the AEG decisions were reversed by the Bamberg Higher Court, one of the clearest examples of the sympathy felt in the lower echelons of the state and RNS apparatus toward local particularities in the peasant milieu and the decreasing identification with or sympathy toward these peasants as one moves higher up the administrative and judicial apparatus.[49]

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Obviously the extent and the severity with which the REG was applied in Lower Franconia depended in large part on individuals. Some communities took a relatively tolerant stance toward peasant wishes to remain unencumbered by *Erbhof* status, other communities less so. How else can one explain the non-inclusion of fourteen middle-sized farms in the *Erbhof* lists in one area and the inclusion of eight much smaller farms in another? Certainly not by soil quality alone![50] Given local variations, the KBF emerged as the most reliable defender of the scope and intent of the REG in Lower Franconia. The sympathy for peasant wishes, of which the memo by the KBF Schweinfurth was one example, was not widely shared by most KBFs. The cooperation of the KBFs and the Higher Court in creating a clear record of strict interpretation of the REG prevented Lower Franconia from remaining outside the structure of the *Erbhof* system.

The record of *Erbhof* litigation for the Bamberg court confirms that the reception given to the REG in Lower Franconia was worse than elsewhere in Bavaria. The initial registration of farms in the directory totalled 30,380. There were 6,354 appeals entered against inclusion in the final *Erbhof* lists, or nearly 21%. Only 11% of the farms listed in the directories in the Munich region entered appeals against their *Erbhof* status and 15% of the farms in the Nuremberg region appealed their *Erbhof* status. The higher percentage of appeals in the Lower Franconian region conforms to a general pattern in Germany, where the highest

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number of appeals were in the western, urbanized _Realteilung_ regions. The statistics of the higher courts do not indicate any special leniency. The Bamberg court accepted 51% of the appeals of _Erbhof_ status by the farm owners, compared to an identical figure in the Nuremburg and Munich districts and a 55% figure recorded for Germany.[51] The figures may overstate the actual number of approvals, since the KBFs were often able to pressure or persuade the peasants to withdraw their petitions and reach an out of court settlement.[52] The reliance on persuasion is indicative of the moderation practiced by the authorities during the difficult transition period.

The enrollment of _Erbhof_ farms occupied the courts for the first two years after the REG took effect. By 1936, the task was completed. Thereafter, the courts turned to their other duties as trustees of all the _Erbhof_ farms and peasants in Germany. The courts were entrusted with the enforcement and interpretation of all regulations and disputes affecting the _Erbhof_ farm and its personnel. The transfer of any _Erbhof_ land, whether by deed or sale, all credit arrangements for the _Erbhof_ farm, and the personal lives of the _Erbhof_ family were within the competence of the courts. The courts had the authority to completely control the farm and its family. Did they use their authority to overturn rural custom? Did they punish peasants who failed to obey Nazi regulations? If so, to what extent?

As we have seen, the REG was broadly at variance with

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peasant hereditary custom and, not surprisingly, the most common form of litigation involved inheritance, including the arrangements made for the farm transfer, the provisions made for those children who would not inherit the farm, and all the cash and property transactions between the children and the parents. The REG proved to be less arbitrary and painful than the peasantry had expected. Nevertheless, the courts, lenient as they were in succession contests, made frequent adjustments concerning the final disposition of the farm property and cash assets as provided by the transfer contract. In addition, they were ever watchful for attempted violations of the spirit and content of the REG, as peasants sought to evade some of the more rigid restrictions imposed by the law in the areas of property mobility and indebtedness. The power of the courts to interfere was enhanced because all property transactions and farm transfers were required to be submitted to the courts for approval. The courts were thereby able to control property transactions much more easily than other matters supposedly covered by the REG, such as morality or farming ability. Fortunately for the smooth transition to the _Erbhof_ system, the courts usually approved the heir designated by the parents.

The leniency of the courts was possible because most farm transfers accorded with local custom (eldest rights or free designation for example) and were permitted by the REG. The real tests of the stringency with which the REG succession laws would be enforced occurred when the peasant

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wanted to name an heir who was not legally in line for the succession. Even then, the transfers were not especially difficult to arrange. There were 2,372 petitions in Germany in 1935 asking the courts to waive the legal order of succession. Only 170 were turned down and 524 were settled through negotiations. The Bavarian record between 1934 and 1936 was similar. There were 1,065 requests for approval of an heir outside the legal succession. Only 82 were refused outright and 234 cases were settled by a compromise. Over 70% of the cases were decided in favor of the petitioner. The number of approvals in Bavaria in 1937 dropped to 58%, still a relatively high figure.[53] The courts and KBF were most likely to be lenient if the preferred heir had waived his rights and had already established himself on a farmstead or had taken up a trade which he was loath to quit. The courts never tried to turn the rural populace into serfs, bound to the land at the state's whim. They never forced someone to return to soil he had left. Even the fear of the peasantry that the daughters would be unduly discriminated against turned out to be exaggerated. They, too, had no difficulty in gaining the farm, again with the caveat that none of their brothers, if any, desired to inherit the farm. The illegitimate children could also inherit the farm if the legitimate heirs did not stand in the way or none existed.[54]

The most telling court decisions involved contested successions. The fact of legal preferment might encourage

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covetousness toward the patrimony where in the past the child had had to submit to parental will. The courts were surprisingly tolerant of the wishes of the parents. Although, in theory, deviations from the rigid order of hereditary rights required exceptional mitigating circumstances, in practice, the concept of _Bauernfaehigkeit_ was sufficiently fluid to permit the judges to set aside the normal order of succession with relative frequency. The concept was especially useful if the petition to set aside the legal order of succession came from one of the _Erbhof_ parents. The courts were generally more sympathetic to parental wishes than the protests from one of the non-designated children. Thus, though the REG weakened the authority of the parents, the courts restored it in most cases.

The ease with which _Bauernfaehigkeit_ could be used to overturn the legal succession lay in the relative ambiguity of the term. A peasant in Lower Bavaria wanted to name his daughter instead of his son as his heir. An added complication was that his daughter was married to her uncle, her father's brother. The son protested the choice, but the father answered that the son had married in defiance of the father's wishes. The son claimed, it appears with some justice, that his father's petition to name the daughter as the heir was motivated by pure pique, because the son had married a "nonpropertied woman." Indeed, the marriage was cited by the courts to prefer the daughter for the farm

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inheritance, since marrying a non-peasant woman could be construed, according to the Blut und Boden ideology, as lack of Bauernfaehigkeit. The court declared that since the son had lived too long in the city, his young daughter would be unfamiliar with farm life. In contrast, the daughter and her son, raised on the Erbhof farm, would be prime material for management for an Erbhof. In an appeal, the Munich Higher Court concurred with the ruling, adding: "His marriage to a city dweller speaks for his lack of peasant sensibilities."[55] Another case involving the rights of the daughter resulted in a similar decision. A peasant woman wished to deed her farm to her daughter over the protests of her two sons. Yet the KBF agreed with her choice because one of the sons, a butcher, was suspected of coveting the farm so that it could supply livestock for his business. He was therefore declared Bauernunfaehig, and the daughter was permitted to inherit the farm.[56]

The courts and the RNS did not automatically side with the parents. They did, on occasion, force the parents to abide by the strict rules of succession if they felt that to do otherwise would represent a serious injustice. A peasant woman in Sommerau wanted to set aside the legal inheritance order and place her daughter in charge of the Erbhof. The KBF supported her wish in the courts, citing the fact that the son had left the farm and was not, therefore, a practiced farmer. He had also threatened her life, which obviously did not speak well for his Bauern-

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ehre. The son retorted that he had not voluntarily left the farm but had been kicked off the property for marrying a poor girl and for pressing his mother to adopt more modern farming methods. The OBF supported this contention. The case was a particularly open one. Each side had key officials of the RNS to support it. Each side had its key code words based upon sections of the REG. The mother could point to the violent nature of her son, his lack of honor, and his lack of attachment to the soil. The son could cite his interest in the national struggle for improved farm productivity and his lack of social prejudice, as evidenced by his choice of spouse. The court finally ruled in favor of the son. The mother had been brought to admit that her son's supposedly dishonorable threat "to be quiet or you will get a hoe in your head" was merely a commonly used figure of speech. The son received the farm, the daughter got some small plots of land and a cash settlement. The family peace was restored and the orthodox succession was maintained. After all, the daughter had no legal claim to *Erbhof* land. The courts, leniently applying the law and making a genuine effort to determine the facts, were able to function as a fair and objective tribunal adjudicating family disputes which had been exacerbated by the REG.[57]

The two cases discussed above demonstrate how the new law contributed to the growth of state intervention into the private affairs of the *Erbhof* family. Although the likeli-

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hood of increased state scrutiny of the farm had been one of the chief fears aroused by the REG, once promulgated, the law was an irresistible temptation for family members to use as a weapon in their private family quarrels. Whereas family fights might previously have been fought out behind farm doors, they could now come under the purview of the state. The ideology, as written into the REG, became a convenient cover for family jealousies. But by turning to the *Erbhof* courts and the paragraphs of the REG for support, the farm family conferred a degree of authority and legitimacy on the law. Each visit to the local RNS office to request RNS support in a family dispute, each visit to the courts to judge these disputes, raised in public matters which were formerly private. Moreover, it accustomed the peasantry to state interference and legitimized the courts and RNS officials as components of rural life. Thus, a peasant in Ingenried, angered at his son, his legal successor, for his profligacy, his laziness, his job with a non-family livestock breeder, and his planned marriage to a stranger from Berlin, a schoolteacher of all things, would, under the new law, have to apply to the court to overturn the succession and request depositions from the OBF. In the past, he would have merely changed his will.[58] The *Erbhof* laws of succession were an important element in the growing state scrutiny of the farm enterprises and the state found its chief accomplices among the peasants themselves.

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The REG order of succession was but one of many transfer questions which rankled peasants. The disposition of Erbhof property, whether land or cash, was the other chief difficulty arising at the time of the farm transfer. Nevertheless, transfers generally passed through the courts with a minimum of difficulty. The total number of transfer contacts presented to the courts in Bavaria in 1937 was 4,179. Of these, 62,3% were certified without any alteration and a further 18.7% were approved with some changes ordered. Of the remaining cases, some had not yet been decided, leaving only a small number of transfers which were rejected.[59]

The most refractory cases involved the alienation of Erbhof property to non-inheriting siblings or its retention by parents, which was, strictly speaking, no longer allowed under the terms of the REG. Yet this form of settlement retained strong roots in the countryside and it continued to appear in many transfer contracts. Peasants who had purchased property specifically for retirement purposes were allowed to keep it at the time of transfer, as long as the purchase had been made before the promulgation of the REG and had not been part of the farm for many years. A number of farms listed on the Erbhof rolls in Markt Oberdorf even explicitly excluded second homes and small plots as long as the land was not essential to the economic viability of the farm. Striking the plots from the Erbhof roll at the time of enrollment avoided needless litigation

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and assuaged fears.[60]

The courts were usually more willing than the KBF to permit parental retention of Erbhof property at the time of transfer. More often than not, when the courts approved transfer clauses, the KBF would appeal the decision to the higher court, which often reversed the decision. The retained properties consisted of second homes, as mentioned above, but also small plots of woodland, a side enterprise, or shares in a local cooperative. Retention of the property during retirement years helped the peasants to save on fuel and fencing costs or provided additional income. The land, share, or enterprise would theoretically revert to the Erbhof farm upon the death of the parent, so that, on the surface, the authorities ought to have sanctioned these arrangements. After all, it helped to support the parents without draining the Erbhof of badly needed cash resources. Yet, the KBF usually opposed such clauses. The woods, one KBF argued, might be chopped down and the Erbhof owner would inherit a vacant and worthless lot. The desire to retain cooperative shares clashed with the Blut und Boden idea of the farm as an organic and indivisible unit. One peasant was convinced that he could retain his share in a cooperative since it had been purchased as an investment with some money inherited from an uncle. It was a typical example, the court wrote, of the capitalist, liberal property notions which had to be eradicated. Attempts to retain a side enterprise could also be opposed for these reasons.[61]

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The largest number of transfer contract alterations made by the courts involved payment arrangements between siblings or for dowries. The courts were very reluctant to permit land to be alienated to siblings unless it could be proven that the arrangement predated the REG or involved land which was, in some fashion, not really a part of the *Erbhof*. Rented land or land with a farm or barn already built on it was usually allowed to be sold or transferred. One other persuasive argument in favor of alienation of *Erbhof* soil was if the plots would be used to create a new *Erbhof* without endangering the existence of the old *Erbhof*. By permitting the sale or transfer of the land, the nation would possess more *Erbhof* farms and the old *Erbhof* would be relieved of potentially destructive debts.[62] Despite exceptions, the overwhelming thrust of the court decisions was against land sales or transfers for payment of dowries or inheritance gifts. As the Higher Court in Munich wrote in one such case, if every marriage was the occasion for such sales, the farm would soon lose its *Erbhof* status.[63]

The peasants resorted to a number of stratagems to avoid the consequences of the law. One of the favorite methods used was for the peasant to purchase land in the name of one of his children. The peasant hoped that he could buy land which would be unencumbered by *Erbhof* status and that he would be able to dispose of it freely in the future, probably by having its title retained in the name of its legal (and still minor) owner. The tactic, a

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hidden form of dowry or inheritance gift, was often detected by the courts, which had to approve sales of *Erbhof* land, or by the RNS, which supervised, after 1937, all farmland transactions of two hectares or more.[64] When detected, the *Erbhof* owner was given the choice of withdrawing the purchase or transferring the title to himself. A rash of such cases occurred in Swabia in 1938. In all cases, the peasants were ultimately obliged to purchase the land in their own names and join it to the *Erbhof*.[65]

Although property transactions between non-family members were not characterized by the same emotional intensity as transactions involving family members, the RNS supervision of such transactions was another highly resented intrusion into farm life. Since all property transactions which involved *Erbhof* property had to be approved by the courts, these sales were one of the most effective methods available to the RNS to supervise and influence farm activity. Land could be withheld from inefficient and incompetent owners. Plot sales which helped the process of land, consolidation or amelioration could be approved. The courts also considered the effect of the transaction on the economic health of the farm, the purpose of the transaction, and the character of the purchaser. Thus, national policy goals concerning farm productivity could be furthered by court decisions.

The courts were lenient toward proposed property sales which fell into certain categories. Land which was only

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formally bound to the _Erbhof_ was usually permitted to be sold. If the land had been rented out and not worked from the _Erbhof_ farm, there was usually little objection to its sale. Equally so, if the size of the land to be sold was small and its loss did not endanger the _Erbhof_ status of the farm, the courts did not object to its sale. The purpose of the transactions varied and would also affect the court decision. If the sale of the land would promote the economic health of the _Erbhof_, the courts would often approve its sale--for new construction, for repairs, to purchase livestock. The courts and the KBF were especially willing to approve sales which involved land lying far from the _Erbhof_. The sales encouraged land consolidation, a major goal of the RNS. The courts would stipulate in their approval of the plot sales that the proceeds had to be used within a specified amount of time to purchase more accessible land. The authorities were even more enthusiastic if this same goal was achieved through the transfer of land, for no commercial transaction had taken place and the consolidation took place immediately. Indirect promotion of consolidation through the REG was a far less expensive way of achieving land consolidation goals than through state subsidized land purchases. Since the state did not command the resources to subsidize the program, at least some progress could be made.[66]

The limits of leniency were only breached when the courts and the KBF were convinced that land was being sold

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for profit alone and that the Erbhof was being undermined. A clear pattern of abuse of land sales was necessary before the courts reached this conclusion. A peasant in Weichshofen was found to have engaged in such practices. Over the years, he had sold many plots from his 16-1/2 hectare farm to help pay off debts. In 1941, the KBF finally registered his objections to further small sales, because the future existence of the Erbhof was in doubt: the farm would have been reduced to nine hectares. After the peasant purchased substitute plots of one hectare, the sale was permitted to take place. Three years later, the courts blocked two further proposed sales.[67]

Although the REG was intended by the RNS to be a bulwark against urbanization and the further loss of agricultural land, the courts and the KBFs had an erratic record of opposing these trends. The authorities and the courts often threw up their hands in despair when confronted with encroachments on farmland. When an Erbhof lay within city limits, they were automatically regarded as anachronisms which could not be saved. The number of such farms was quite small, so that the RNS was not dooming large amounts of farmland. Thus, although the sale of some plots belonging to an Erbhof in the city of Vilshofen between the years of 1934 and 1940 imperilled the future of the Erbhof, the sales were permitted because, the KBF concluded: "In the long run, I do not intend to preserve the Erbhof status of farms in Vilshofen."[68]

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Under the impact of rearmament and the Reichsautobahn construction, the loss of agricultural land accelerated under the National Socialists. Between 1933 and 1934, Bavaria lost 3.9 percent of its acreage.[69] Courts rarely tried to halt the sales; they claimed that the profits could be used to finance farm improvements and that the land would be used to benefit the entire nation. This argument was also used in cases other than highway or military projects. The courts used the same reasoning to justify the sale of land to BAYWA, the rural sales cooperative, for a railroad spur. High on the list of socially acceptable reasons for land sales was rural settlement. As long as the Erbhof status of the farm which sold the land was not threatened and the land was being sold for the construction of a home or homes, the courts usually regarded this as meritorious. Even if the purchaser was not a farmer or peasant, the courts might approve a sale, especially if the new owner planned to undertake or expand some small-scale farming activity. The character and profession of the proposed new owner were not entirely without importance. The courts were always ready to overrule land transactions which violated the letter and spirit of the REG by alienating land from the German peasantry. Sales to institutions such as the Church, purchases which were obviously being made for investment purposes, and sales to non-Germans were disallowed.[70]

The leniency of the Erbhof courts in property trans-

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actions is demonstrated by the figures for petitions brought through by peasants for rental, alienation or division of property. There were 84,388 such requests in 1935 in Germany. Only 3,156 were refused and 7,755 settled through compromise. Peasants were permitted to sell some plots belonging to their _Erbhof_ farms in over 63,000 cases up through 1936 in Bavaria. Division of the _Erbhof_ or the exclusion of a portion of the _Erbhof_ from the rolls was permitted in 3,363 cases by 1936 in Bavaria. However, rental of _Erbhof_ property was more carefully controlled and only a small number were rented.[71]

The REG credit forgiveness regulations were another major source of contention in rural areas. The attempts by creditors to recover some or all of their loans formed an important part of the litigation in the _Erbhof_ courts. The usual procedure for the creditor was to petition the court for a determination of _Bauernfaehigkeit_ or _Bauernehre_. If either of these two qualities could be denied, the peasant stood to lose his _Erbhof_ status and the protection of the REG against forced seizures of farm property.

Even before the halt in forced auctions and debt repayment ordered by the National Socialist regime in February 1933, the Nazi victory had led to widespread refusals by the peasants to repay their debts. The RNS officials tried to combat these attitudes, which undermined their agricultural reforms by arousing the ire of business interests. Besides, these peasant attitudes could not be tolerated

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since they represented the egoistic and materialistic mentality which the National Socialists were trying to eradicate. More practically, if peasants refused to pay back debts unless forced to do so, they would be unable to contract any more debts backed by their personal honor and how else might they borrow money now that their land was inalienable? In order to ensure that peasant debts would be honored, the RNS officials at the local and regional levels often sided with creditors in Erbhof court litigation. The position of the KBFs indicates that they were particularly sensitive to charges that the REG protected the weak and unworthy, the dishonest and inefficient, from the consequences of their failings. The RNS officials often leaned over backwards to see to it that these peasants did not evade their obligations. The charges which the KBFs levelled against many over-indebted peasants in the courts echo the complaints of the creditors.[72]

Debt recovery litigation reversed the positions taken by the contestants in the cases we have discussed so far. Here, the peasant owner vigorously defended his Erbhof status against the attempts by the RNS to have it taken away. Yet, once again, the courts seemed reluctant to expose the peasant farm to possible auction. It was the KBF and, to a lesser extent, the Higher Courts, who were more concerned with maintaining peasant honor by throwing out the "rotten eggs."

Since the ownership of a mixed enterprise was used by

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the peasantry to avoid Erbhof status, the creditors sought to strike mixed enterprises from the Erbhof rolls. The sense of outrage which the creditors generally tended to feel toward the debt forgiveness provisions of the REG were even further exacerbated when the debts had been contracted for a business enterprise and were uncollectible because the businessman had become, by an apparent sleight of hand, a peasant. The uses to which the REG could be put by clever and unscrupulous rural entrepreneurs was illustrated by a case which appeared before the Vilshofen Inheritance Court and was appealed to the Munich Higher Court. A peasant couple owned a nine hectare farm in Vilshofen which had been inscribed in the Erbhof rolls in 1935. The previous year the farm debt had risen to over 50,000 RM which was owed to three creditors in the area. One creditor, a bank, petitioned the court for denial of Erbhof status, charging that the farm was, in fact, a butcher's establishment. The owner and his wife, the charge continued, engaged in extensive property transactions and horse trading. The couple had opened a scrap-iron business and quarry in 1927 and invested 40,000 RM in the business. The farm, the bank concluded, was obviously only a side enterprise. The accusations were denied by the peasant, who claimed that the farm was the major business activity.[73]

The court decision was in favor of the peasant couple. The court pointed to the excellent soil quality and the modest animal holdings as evidence that the farm was able to

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provide for the farm family independently of economic market conditions. The court also noted that the non-farm enterprises had only recently been expanded and their large size relative to the farm was due more to a temporary and reversible business upswing in the area than the structure of the family business. Since the quarry business was notoriously cyclical, the farm had to be considered the main source of support for the family. Though it might, in fact, be the intention of the owners to turn the quarry and scrap-yard into the main enterprises, that had no bearing on the question of the present _Erbhof_ status of the farm. Since all the requirements for _Erbhof_ status continued to be met, the farm remained an _Erbhof_.

On appeal to the Higher Court in Munich, the decision was reversed. The court ruled that the farm was not self-sufficient, since only a small part of the land was under cultivation and the rest was turned over to pasture and meadow. In addition, the fodder for the animals had to be purchased. Besides, the farm enterprise was quite overshadowed by the other businesses. Though a recent development, it did not alter the present state of affairs. The owners had invested a large sum of money in these businesses and they apparently considered them to be the major activities. The growth of the businesses could not be discounted as a temporary phenomenon, as the Inheritance Court had written. Rather, it was a result of the economic measures undertaken by the National Socialist regime.

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Finally, the owner was obviously not a peasant. His life as a butcher, livestock dealer, inn-keeper, and quarry owner revealed his true nature--a tradesman and entrepreneur. The KBF attested to his lack of peasant qualities. The court rescinded the Erbhof title of the farm and the peasant title of the owner.

The course of the drama was shaped by the different interpretations given to the facts by the two courts. The lower court in Vilshofen was, perhaps, more influenced by the prevailing peasant milieu and was more inclined to extend the protection of the REG to two of the more marginal members of the peasant community, to the disadvantage of the local bank. That the peasant couple had engaged in many business transactions was not considered to be especially damning by the court, which probably recognized that this was a natural and unremarkable part of rural peasant life in Bavaria. The fact that the couple operated a mixed enterprise did not detract from the peasant status of the family either.

The Munich court viewed matters quite differently. There, far away from peasant society, the ideological constructs of the REG outweighed the complexities of a rural society. A man had to be either a peasant or not a peasant; he could not simultaneously be both. The growth of the business enterprises had so eclipsed the farm activities that the peasant could no longer be considered a peasant. Perhaps, given the National Socialist Weltanschauung, the

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business could not possibly have become so successful unless its owner lacked a peasant mentality. Certainly the Munich court could not possibly accept the argument that the success of the business was due to a temporary economic boom. The court was more sensitive to the propaganda of the regime that the upturn was a permanent and direct result of National Socialist policies. Back in the smaller cities, towns, and villages of Bavaria, the suspicion of any lasting economic improvement could surface more easily, both among the populace and in the _Erbhof_ courts. Away from this peasant environment, the court in Munich could consider the merits of the bank's case more dispassionately, keeping in mind that social equilibrium could not be preserved if too many debts remained outstanding and unrecoverable. The case presented above represents a typical example of how the RNS and the higher courts worked together to prevent the REG from becoming a fortress, behind which the farm owners of Germany could defend themselves against the consequences of ill-conceived economic practices.

As we have seen, the courts made ample use of the REG clauses concerned with _Bauernfaehigkeit_ and _Bauernehre_ in cases involving farm succession and farm debt. But the real potential for mischief which these clauses represented lay in those areas of peasant life which concerned farm operations, standards of conduct, political belief, and racial worthiness. Had the courts applied a strict standard of judgment in these areas, the REG would have led to the

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most massive invasion into the private affairs of the peasant family.

The threatened invasion never occurred. The courts would, on occasion, rescind the titles of Ability and Honor from a peasant on _Weltanschäulich_ grounds but only in exceptional cases. Criminal behavior could, for example, lead to the loss of these labels, especially if compounded by other flaws. The owners of one farm suffered this fate and lost their farm, because they had been convicted of theft and had concealed their inhuman treatment of a feeble-minded relative at the time of _Erbhof_ enrollment.[74] Political or ideological crimes rarely led to the denial of _Bauernehre._ Nevertheless, such cases might well have multiplied in the decades after the law took effect, as the courts and the regime felt more willing to apply stricter standards to the younger generation of peasants. Even during the short life of the Third Reich, notations were made in the _Erbhof_ records of such failings. Trade with Jews led to threats such as the following: "I am herewith calling to your attention that the carrying on of business transactions with Jews is an offense against _Bauernehrbarkeit_ and that you will have to reckon with the deprivation of _Bauernehre_ given a repetition of this matter."[75]

The overwhelming majority of cases concerned with Honor and Ability tended to be in areas where the courts were already heavily involved, such as succession rights or debt claims. Thus, one over-indebted peasant lost his

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Erbhof, upon the petition of his creditors, because he was a drunkard, a spendthrift, and practiced three-field rotation![76] Another peasant was not permitted to deed his farm to his adopted son because the son had been sterilized for retardation. The court wrote: "It would contradict the aim and, thereby, one of the leading principles of the REG, if the surrender of the farm to a person who has been shown to be hereditarily ill was approved."[77] Family quarrels and tension between neighbors might have contributed to some litigation concerning economic mismanagement. One son tried to have his father declared an incompetent farmer so that the son could replace him as the Erbhof owner. In another case, a peasant offered his services if a neighboring farm was ordered to be sold.[78] But, given the small number of total cases involving Bauernfaehigkeit, personal revenge hardly contributed to a huge increase in litigation. While succession struggles and creditor-debtor problems were acceptable reasons to go to court, purely "private" quarrels were not.

By 1937 a total of 511 cases of strife had been brought before the courts, just .3 percent of all Bavarian Erbhof farms. Similarly, there were only 355 petitions in 1937 for determination of Bauernfaehigkeit and some could have been brought by the peasants themselves. That same year, there were only 158 proceedings against poorly farmed Erbhof farms. The two figures total a mere .3 percent of all Bavarian Erbhof farms.[79] Thus, peasant society thwarted

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the grander ambitions of the lawmakers to remake the peasant into a Weltanschäulich pure individual. Even when cases did appear before the courts, the judges were loath to apply the most severe standards. Only one Bavarian farm was forcibly alienated from the owner and family in 1937.[80] Yet, one must consider that the mere possibility that such action could be taken represented a threat hanging over the heads of all Erbhof owners.

Despite its romantic and utopian origins, the REG was of a piece with the entire body of National Socialist agricultural reforms. These reforms, as was mentioned in Chapter I, aimed to create a solid peasant backbone within Germany which would be able to supply the nation with the agricultural products needed by its population and its industries, within the limits dictated by nature and technology. The REG furthered this goal in two ways. Its entail and debt regulations ensured that the economic viability of the farm would no longer be threatened by inheritance practices or economic conditions. It reinforced, therefore, the price supports provided by the Marktordnung. But the importance of the REG went beyond the protection which it offered to the peasant farm. The reforms of the National Socialist era were so extensive and wrenching that they engendered serious problems of obedience and implementation. The REG lent an additional weapon to the regime and the RNS in their struggle to reshape the peasant sector. Naturally, the National Socialists rationalized peasant

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resistance to laws designed, so the propaganda went, to save the peasantry, by arguing that a peasant who disobeyed these laws was imprisoned within a capitalist mentality and required re-education. Re-education was furthered, in part, by the REG. The law was an explicit articulation of the principle of Gemeinnutz geht vor Eigennutz (public need over private greed). The peasant would be guaranteed a decent existence and his progeny would be secure for all time. In return, he had to relinquish the freedom he had acquired during the liberal era of the peasant emancipation. However, this freedom had been "no blessing."[81] The German peasant would now become a new kind of serf. But, unlike the serf of a bygone era, the modern peasant would become the bondsman of the state and the nation rather than the feudal lord.

That their new enserfment was not more violently and vigorously opposed by the peasantry was, of course, due in large part to the repressive forces of the Nazi state. But the grudging acceptance of the REG by the peasantry was also a result of the leniency of the Erbhof courts. The record of the courts is an example of how peasant resistance to Nazi legislation was capable of moderating the harshest National Socialist agricultural legislation. The peasants' success in defending themselves against the wider claims of the REG was also due to the difficulties which arose in enforcing the law. Enforcement depended on peasant cooperation, since the KBFs could not possibly devote their full

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attention to uncovering and challenging every infraction of the REG. Therefore, the REG was most successfully applied to areas of peasant life which were most accessible to public observation and control. Farm credit and property transactions, since they required legal approval and notarization, were easily monitored. But matters of morality, political opinion, and farm management were not so easily penetrated by the RNS apparatus and *Erbhof* courts, so long as families and neighbors refrained from bringing them to the attention of the authorities. Reform of the countryside, whether its customs, ideology, or economic activities, required private life to be brought into the daylight of public scrutiny and public control.

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Notes to Chapter II

[1]Grundmann, pp. 15-17.

[2]Ibid., p. 15.

[3]Ibid., pp. 15-18.

[4]Haushofer, 2:106.

[5]Farquharson, p. 64; Grundmann, pp. 31-33.

[6]Grundmann, pp. 34-38.

[7]Viechtacher Tagblatt, 16 July 1933. The discussion of the REG which follows is based on the law published in the Reichsgesetzblatt I (1933), p. 685 and transition measures, Reichsgesetzblatt I (1933), pp. 749 and 1096.

[8]Hans-Dietrich Jobst, Das Reichserbhofgesetz im Vergleich mit dem aelteren deutschen Anerbenrecht (Wuerzburg: Verlag Konrad Triltsch, 1936), p. 22.

[9]Grundmann, pp. 59-60.

[10]This summary is of Max Sering, Erbhofrecht und Entschuldung unter rechtsgesichtlichen, volkswirtschaftlichen, und biologischen Gesichtspunkten (Altenburg: Piererschе Hofbuchdruckerei, 1934).

[11]Farquharson, pp. 118-19; Grundmann, pp. 60-62.

[12]BA Koblenz R43II/192, Reichsgrundbesitzer-Verband to Hitler, 27 April 1933; same to Lammers, 9 May 1933; notes from meeting between representatives of the Verband and Hitler held on 27 April 1933; Reich Justice Minister to Lammers, 17 June 1933; BA Koblenz R43II/193, minutes of Justice Ministry conference on Fideikomisse held on 27 July 1933; BA Koblenz R43I/1301, Darré to Lammers, 28 September 1933; Wochenblatt, 14 July 1938. There were only 202 Fideikomisse in Bavaria in 1909, Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 14 (1919), p. 102.

[13]BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB, 5 January 1934.

[14]BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB, 4 December 1933.

[15]Ibid.

[16]StAM Landwirtschaftsamt Ingolstadt 46, MB, 27 March 1935.

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[17]StAM Landwirtschaftsamt Ingolstadt 182, Hagau to Kaltenegger, 16 February 1935; reports on Haag, Diepold, 1 February 1935.

[18]BHSA MA 106670 MB/OB, 17 November 1933 for Dachau; MB/OB 5 January 1934 for Bad Toelz; MB/OB, 19 March 1934 for Rosenheim.

[19]Jobst, p. 22. The hostility toward the REG was so pronounced that readers of the Wochenblatt were warned not to give credence to unofficial talk concerning it. They were asked to report any criticism levelled against the law, 8 March 1934. The Wochenblatt was, of course, a major vehicle for this official discussion. Some examples of articles concerned with the REG include 5 January, 1 February, 8 February, 1 March, 8 March, 12 April 1934.

[20]Jobst, pp. 18, 20, 39-40.

[21]Ibid., pp. 39-40.

[22]Der Donaubote, 13 January 1934.

[23]Wochenblatt, 15 March 1934.

[24]Reichsgesetzblatt I (1933), p. 685. Reichsgesetzblatt I (1939), p. 843.

[25]Guetergemeinschaft statistics in Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 22 (1938), pp. 50-52. The REG amendment was published in the Reichsgesetzblatt I (1933), p. 749.

[26]Wochenblatt, 23 March, 4 May, 22 June 1940.

[27]Reichsgesetzblatt I (1943), p. 156.

[28]Karl Hopp, "Erbhofrecht in Zahlen," Deutsche Justiz, Rechtspflege und Rechtspolitik 98 (October 1936): 1565.

[29]Reichsgesetzblatt I (1933), p. 749.

[30]Hopp, p. 1565

[31]Reichsgesetzblatt I (1933), p. 749.

[32]StAL Rep. 167/2 1266, Mallersdorf Vorstand report 27 December 1935.

[33]StAL Rep. 167/2 1266, Moosburg Vorstand report, 27 December 1935.

[34]StAL Rep. 167/2 1966 Moosburg report 16 April 1936.

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[35]StAL Rep. 167/2 1266 Moosburg Vorstand report 13 June 1936.

[36]StAL Rep. 167/2 1266, Vilsbiburg Vorstand reports, 17 April, 19 June 1937.

[37]StAL Rep. 167/2 1266, Neumarkt-St. Veit Vorstand report, 13 February 1937.

[38]Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 22 (1938), pp. 48-49.

[39]Farquharson, p. 125.

[40]StAL Rep. 185 9076, 9081, AEG Dingolfing.

[41]StAL Rep. 185 9072, AEG Hartkirchen 30 April 1935; Rep. 185 8031, AEG Dingolfing, 17 June 1935.

[42]StAL Rep. 185 13325, AEG Vilshofen, 4 July 1935.

[43]StAL Rep. 185 19, AEG Deggendorf; Rep. 185 9069, AEG Dingolfing; Rep. 182A 1599, Gemeinde Neuhofen, 21 December 1934.

[44]StAND Anerbenakten AEG Markt-Oberdorf 482.

[45]Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 22 (1938), pp. 48-49.

[46]StAW LRA Mellrichstadt 1368, KBF Schweinfurt memorandum.

[47]Ibid.

[48]StAW AEG Gmünden, Aura, Karl Joseph and Maria Franz.

[49]StAW AEG Hassfurt, Unterhohenried; AEG Gmünden, Mittelsinn.

[50]StAW AEG Gmünden, Zeil, Mittelsinn.

[51]Hopp, p. 1564.

[52]See, StAND Anerbenakten Markt-Oberdorf.

[53]Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 22 (1938), pp. 50-52; Hopp, p. 1567.

[54]On daughters, see below, pp. 105-106; for illegitimate children see Jobst, pp. 16-17.

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[55]StAL Rep. 182A 1122, AEG Pfarrkirchen.

[56]StAL Rep. 185 10229, AEG Simbach

[57]StAW AEG Obernburg, Maria Anna Friess.

[58]StAND AEG Markt-Oberdorf 357.

[59]Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 22 (1938), pp. 50-52.

[60]StAND Markt-Oberdorf 38, 339, 349.

[61]StAL Rep. 185 100047, 10050, AEG Pfarrkirchen; Rep. 185 10085, AEG Simbach; StAL Rep. 182A 1596, AEG Pfarrkirchen; Rep. 185 13311, AEG Vilshofen.

[62]StAL Rep. 185 13318, AEG Vilshofen.

[63]StAL Rep. 185 5518, AEG Landshut, 20 May 1937.

[64]Ernst Klein, Geschichte der deutschen Landwirtschaft im Industriezeitalter (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1973), p. 174.

[65]For example, see StAM LRA 101289, KBS Schrobenhausen, BA Aichach, 30 August 1937, on proposed sale to Maria Stegmaier; AEG Ingolstadt 118, 20 February 1941; StAL Rep. 185 10043, AEG Pfarrkirchen; for Swabia, see StAND KBS Noerdlingen IG 100, letters KBS Noerdlingen to BA Noerdlingen, 10 11, 13, 24 January 1938 concerning various proposed land purchases by peasants.

[66]StAL Rep. 182A 1085, 1090, 1091, 1102, 1106, 1128, 1132, all from AEG Pfarrkirchen; also Rep. 185 5495, 8037, 8033, 9091, 10223, 10226, 10227, 10228, from AEG's Dingolfing, Landshut, and Simbach.

[67]StAL Rep. 185 8033, AEG Dingolfing.

[68]StAL Rep. 185 14248, AEG Vilshofen, 3 June 1939.

[69]Statistik des Deutschen Reichs n.f. 560 (1943), pp. 30, 40.

[70]On BAYWA sale see StAL Rep. 185A 1090, AEG Pfarrkirchen; for church purchases, see StAM Kreisbauernschaft Muehldorf 1940, 1 March 1938. Sales to nobility were also refused, see StAM LRA 101289, KBS Schrobenhausen—BA Aichach, 15 September 1937.

[71]Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 22 (1938), p. 52. Hopp, p. 1567.

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[72]See, for example, StAL Rep. 5504, AEG Simbach.

[73]The following is based on StAL Rep. 14249 AEG Vilshofen.

[74]StAM AEG Ingolstadt 391.

[75]StAM KBS Muehldorf 1533; see also Wochenblatt, 4 August 1938.

[76]StAM AEG Ingolstadt 496.

[77]StAM KBS Muehldorf 851.

[78]On son, see StAM; KBS Muehldorf 1400; on neighbor see StAM KBS Muehldorf 1486.

[79]Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 22 (1938), pp. 50-52.

[80]Ibid., pp 50-51.

[81]Jobst, p. 44.

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CHAPTER III

DAIRY SECTOR REFORMS

Ever since German unification, the dairy sector had been the step-child of German agriculture, languishing while the Junker estates had received artificial stimulation and protection. The National Socialists undertook to revive the dairy sector, attaining in twelve years many of the goals long advocated by agrarian technocrats and agricultural interest groups. The changes accomplished in the dairy sector during the Third Reich were paralleled in other agricultural sectors. In fact, the dairy sector reforms were a model for the rest of agriculture and a discussion of them could be generalized to the rest of peasant agriculture. For example, the prohibition or restriction of peasant processing and retailing activities, the promotion of compulsory deliveries to modern processing and marketing enterprises, and the use of price supports, all applied in the dairy sector, were also undertaken in the egg and livestock sectors. Moreover, the increasing severity and breadth of state regulatory activities and the pronounced trend toward compulsion were a fundamental facet of the <u>Marktordnung</u> in general. So too were the reasons for the increasingly rigorous enforcement of dairy sector regulation--peasant resistance

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to the dairy reforms and the failure of earlier reforms. An examination of National Socialist dairy sector policies will also put to rest the thesis that the regime reversed gears after 1935, abandoning all interest in the peasantry. Nazi dairy reform goals were consistent throughout the Third Reich and were designed to salvage the peasant enterprise, not destroy it, while guaranteeing adequate dairy products for urban consumers at reasonable prices. Finally, nowhere does the purported Nazi adhesion or subservience to social conservative interests and an ideology of backwardness appear less visible than in its treatment of the dairy sector. Twelve years of National Socialist rule left the dairy sector more productive and efficient, in a word, more modern.

The world agricultural depression had been a catastrophe for the German dairy sector and for the peasant producer, who depended on dairy and livestock sales for 67 percent of his income. The butter price on the London market stood at 1,418 marks per ton in 1932 compared to 3,530 marks per ton in 1928. Prices for all agricultural products plummeted between 1928 and 1932, but dairy and livestock prices within Germany fared far worse due to tariff structures which favored the grain producers. While the German rye and wheat quotations for 1932 dropped to 82 and 78 respectively (1925-1928=100), butter prices declined to 60 and livestock prices to 52. Bavarian peasants suffered tremendously from this collapse of

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prices. Southern Bavaria, a region devoted almost exclusively to dairy and livestock farming, suffered a loss of income of 30-35 million marks from 1929 to 1932. The solvency of the German peasant depended in large part on the income derived from milk producers. Seventeen billion liters of milk were sold each year in Germany. A difference of one pfennig represented, therefore, 170 million marks, over 10 percent of the 1.2 billion marks a year devoted to debt service. The drop in milk prices was a major precipitant of the debt defaults plaguing German agriculture after 1929.[1]

Dairy producers exacerbated the price collapse by their response to the initial market weakness. Instead of cutting back on milk production and sales, dairy producers increased it. In fact, growing numbers of peasants began to turn to milk production for the consumer market to make up for losses in other areas of farm production. The flood of milk supplies which deluged the major and minor urban markets accelerated the collapse of milk prices. The growing milk production also testifies to the extraordinary sensitivity of the dairy sector to external influences. Milk was a product which was produced on every farm; it was produced on a daily basis, it was easily transported, it required little capital investment, and it could be sold for cash.[2]

Agricultural experts such as Max Sering believed that the dairy sector could only be restored to health if

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far-reaching changes were made in the production and marketing of dairy products in Germany. They pointed out that the most important factor in dairy price formation was the butter market. Milk prices would always follow the price curve for this high quality milk derivative which could be stored far longer and sold at far greater distances than milk. Butter prices, as we have seen, had plummeted since 1928, both worldwide and domestically. Reformers agreed that the first step was to adopt higher protective tariffs and enact butter import quotas. But considerable reforms had to be undertaken in the domestic market lest trade barriers work simply to protect in-efficiency. Unless structural weaknesses in the German dairy sector were remedied, the butter price would remain depressed and the loss of foreign butter supplies could not be made good.[3]

Foreign dairy producers had surged ahead of their German competitors. The advanced dairy producers in Holland and Denmark, for example, had organized small farms into efficient dairy cooperatives. Aided by the millions of dollars earned as neutrals during the First World War, the dairy cooperatives had built large, modern dairies capable of producing uniformly high-quality butter. Quality control of the milk cows owned by the cooperative members also contributed to the high standards of the cooperative-produced butter.[4] Germany and especially Bavaria, had lagged well behind Denmark and

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Holland. Dairies remained small, inefficient, and backward. In some areas of Bavaria, the Upper Palatinate and Lower Bavaria, many peasants continued to sell their fresh milk directly to consumers. The underdeveloped dairies were unable to respond to rapid changes in demand and lost many contracts to foreign suppliers. Quality butter production also remained the exception rather than the rule. Farm produced _Landbutter_ accounted for 46% of total German butter production in 1932; in Bavaria, _Landbutter_ constituted 57% of butter production in 1931. Backwardness was exacerbated by the lack of uniform standards and quality control procedures. Only toward the end of the Weimar period did individual states begin to impose classification guidelines for butter production. However, a nationwide standard did not yet exist in 1932. Thus, the German consumer was faced with a bewildering and sometimes whimsical variety of butter labels (_Teebutter_, _Tafelbutter_) and often preferred the assured quality products from abroad.[5]

Agricultural experts believed that an intensive program of state-subsidized construction of new dairies had to be carried out in the less urbanized districts of Germany. Even in areas already served by dairies, these had to be modernized. Uniform standards had to be introduced and the latest marketing techniques learned and adopted. Advertising and such recent developments as bottled milk would encourage the German consumer to buy

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higher priced, quality products. One of the most important reforms would be the extension of milk productivity and quality tests to the cows owned by the small- and middle-sized farm owners. Testing would enable the dairies to introduce payment for raw milk according to its fat content and would encourage the peasants to apply strict eugenic principles to their livestock breeding.[6]

None of the reforms would be effective, however, as long as large amounts of milk continued to enter the market as low quality *Landbutter*, since dairies would still have to keep their prices low to compete with the lower-priced product. *Landbutter* production on the farm could lead to further deletarious results. Peasants were often unable to compensate for the large seasonal swings in demand, which forced them to convert unsold butter into cooking fat and sell it at a loss. *Landbutter* was also produced under conditions which were often quite unsanitary. The lack of technical expertise on the part of the peasant led to overly high water content in the butter. Dairies could also produce far more butter from the same amount of milk. Finally, *Landbutter* was more than a competitive drag on dairy butter prices. As long as peasants continued to process and sell their own butter, dairies would lack the supplies of milk needed for enlarged and modernized facilities.[7]

Even prior to National Socialist rule, important reforms in the dairy market had been undertaken by the

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authorities. The most important reform was the Milk Law in 1930 which gave the _Laender_ the authority to create compulsory associations of milk producers and dairies. The associations could adopt any measures necessary to regulate the dairy market within their jurisdiction. The chief purpose of the law was to create restricted access to the milk markets. The associations established a _Milcheinzugsgebiet_ (MEG) in their market area. Only those milk producers who were listed as members of a MEG were permitted to sell their milk in that area to the dairies, retailers, or consumers. Therefore, the tremendous disproportion which had arisen between supply and demand during the depression could be remedied. Oversupply of milk had been especially galling to the dairy farmers who had been selling their milk in urban centers for years and even decades. Their advantageous access to these markets had been endangered by newcomers (see above p. 134). Hence the Milk Law proved a godsend to these peasants.[8]

The developments in the Landshut area illustrate some of the interest group conflicts involved in the creation of compulsory milk associations. Landshut was one of the many urban centers which made use of the Milk Law between 1930 and 1932. The local producers and dairies founded a Milk Producers' Association in November, 1931. Originally voluntary, the association obligated its members to follow its directives aimed

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largely at stemming the flood of milk into the local market and supporting the milk prices. Its efforts were unsuccessful, and, in February 1932, it presented a draft to the regional government for the establishment of a compulsory Milchversorgungsverband (MVV). The MVV would have the power to set prices and regulate competition within the trade by setting marketing quotas. Supply of the Landshut market would be restricted to members of the MVV and infringements of MVV regulations would be punishable by fines and, in extreme cases, expulsion from the MVV. The government was slow to respond to this proposal and the Landshut market continued to suffer from excessive competition. A local official reported, in December 1932, that this situation was particularly upsetting to the traditional suppliers of the Landshut market: "The very modest price of milk in rural areas and the low price for butter is causing many farmers and dairies who never previously delivered milk to Landshut to carve a niche in the city market through constant and, in part, extensive price-cutting."[9] Finally, in April 1933, after the National Socialists had taken power in Berlin, the regional government approved the creation of a MVV, stretching over four districts. Its jurisdiction did not extend to butter, cheese, and preserved milk sales.[10]

Obviously, the Milk Law and its application benefitted only a narrow segment of the dairy sector and German society. Other interests were threatened or harmed

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by the legislation. Consumers feared that the regulated markets would lead to higher prices. Retailers, although not included in the original legislation, saw no advantage in the law, since oversupply of milk had enabled them to bid down the price for fresh milk. Among the peasants, opinion was divided, since the law helped only those dairy producers who lived close to the cities and excluded newcomers to the markets living in outlying areas. Even if the principle of a restricted market was accepted by many peasants, the precise boundaries of the MEG were a source of endless conflict.[11]

German agricultural experts insisted that regulation of the domestic dairy market was not sufficient. They also demanded protection from the perturbations of the international dairy market. Germany's freedom of action in this sphere was limited by existing trade treaties. As these expired, some progress was achieved by the new National Socialist government in 1933. Treaties concluded with foreign suppliers set butter import quotas at 55,000 tons, a sharp reduction from the previous year. But merely reducing butter imports was useless unless margarine consumption was regulated as well, for this low-priced substitute was still imported duty-free. Regulation of margarine production was a sensitive issue, because margarine was often the only solid fat which the lower classes could afford. The Deutsche Landwirtschaftsrat had earlier proposed that butter and

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margarine be mixed according to a fixed quota. Mixing was unwelcome to some sections of the agricultural population because they feared that it would destroy the image of butter as a high-quality, high-priced item. These groups preferred that a tax be levied on margarine and the revenues used to subsidize meat and fat products. The Agricultural Ministry adopted the first proposal in February 1932, but the power to order mixture quotas for butter and margarine was never used.[12]

The National Socialist triumph which brought Hugenberg to the Agricultural Ministry in January 1933 heralded an acceleration of dairy sector reforms. We have already mentioned that trade treaties between Germany and its trade partners were renegotiated. The new Minister also adopted a range of support measures for the domestic market. He permitted the compulsory butter-margarine mixture law to fall into disuse and substituted a production quota for margarine and other imported fat products. Another measure which was adopted in March 1933 authorized a tax on most fat products listed in the quota law mentioned above. The taxes from this law were used to subsidize fat purchases for the needy. Thus, the new regime enacted most of the proposals from the butter industry which had lain on the back burner in the final days of the Weimar Republic. One additional import measure adopted by the new government was to further reduce importation of animal fats or of margarine for

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consumption.[13]

The price support measures achieved a modest success. The butter price quote in Berlin rose from 90 to 126 marks between the end of 1932 and the end of 1933. During the same period, the Allgäu soft cheese price rose from 7-1/2 to 11-1/2 pfennigs and the Munich fresh milk price from 13-1/2 pfennigs to 14-3/4 pfennigs. The National Socialists boasted that autarky had been successful and pointed to the London butter price of 78-80 marks at the end of 1933. One dairy expert estimated that the severance of the German market from the world market had almost doubled German milk prices.[14]

The campaign by the agricultural experts for structural changes in the dairy sector was also supported by the new National Socialist government. These experts now argued their case under the auspices of the RNS, into which the technical and interest group organizations of German agriculture had been incorporated by the end of 1933. An article in the _Deutsche Molkerei-Zeitung_ in October 1933, "Kampf der Landbutter," continued to attack outmoded farm production methods. The article repeated the contention that _Landbutter_ production had to be discontinued, so that a healthy price structure for dairy products could be created. The familiar complaints against farm butter were repeated and the author concluded that its production should be restricted to areas where profitable dairy operations were not yet possible

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for reasons of geography:

> The dairies demand relief for their enterprises, for the benefit of the people's economy and the economic life of the peasant. The duty of the peasant is the production of the greatest variety and quantity of food and fodder supplies. The peasant's job is the production of the raw product, the dairy's job is the processing of this product into a finished quality product, the merchant's job is to bring this quality product to the consumer.[15]

Therefore, for reasons of efficiency, productivity, peasant economic viability, and national welfare, the German peasant was asked to become exclusively a primary producer of milk products, a far cry from his role until 1933.

The authorities began to implement the program exemplified by this article during the spring and summer of 1933. A law passed in May placed the compulsory milk associations under the supervision of the Food and Agriculture Ministry rather than the Laender authorities. An amendment to the Milk Law was passed in July which empowered the regime to compel milk wholesalers and retailers to join the associations. This eliminated a loophole in the restructuring of the dairy sector in Germany, since the dairy dealers had been able to defy and undermine the decisions of the milk associations. The law was also amended to discontinue the lengthy negotiations between dairy concerns and producers which had preceded the formation of the associations. The result of these changes was to centralize decision-making authority in

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Berlin, to accelerate the process of reform, and to broaden the scope of the authority of the milk associations.[16]

The new dairy administration was headed by the Reichskommissar of the German dairy sector, who was appointed by the Food and Agriculture Ministry. The Commissioner could in turn, appoint commissioners for each of the MVV. The MVV were joined into regional associations, Milchwirtschaftsverbaende (MWV). There were sixty-nine MVV and fifteen MWV by March 27, 1934. The MVV were abolished in 1936, when the MWV were placed under the authority of the Hauptvereinigung der deutsche Milchwirtschaft. There were two MWV in Bavaria--the MWV Bayern and MWV Allgäu. This latter MWV embraced parts of Württemberg and attested to the special role of the dairy sector in Allgäu. The MWV Bayern included, until their disbandment, three MVV--Sudbayern, Niederbayern-Oberpfalz, and Franken. The main tasks of the associations were to guarantee that fresh milk would be supplied from nearby farms, to narrow the price span between raw milk and fresh milk, and to lower the wholesale and retail costs, so that the milk producers could receive higher payments for their raw milk without passing on these costs to the consumers. A further important task for the dairy associations was to increase the proportion of milk and butter sold by the dairies. Only thus could Germany produce enough dairy products to make up for the loss of the foreign sources of

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supply. The regime also believed that only dairies could produce sufficient milk efficiently enough so that trade costs could be reduced. Finally, dairy production could be more easily regulated and would enable price controls to be more effective.[17]

As long as milk producers could market their milk directly to the consumers at retail prices of eighteen pfennigs per liter, they would be unlikely to sell it to the dairies. Thus, the market would continue to be oversupplied, price wars would continually threaten to break out, and the dairies would be unable to modernize and expand. The *Reichskomissar* moved to end this practice on January 1, 1934. A decree, valid in all of Bavaria, banned the direct sale of milk, other than farm sales, in all communities with populations greater than two thousand inhabitants. The community authorities could petition the MWV for an exemption from this ruling but otherwise it would become effective. The decree went substantially beyond the piecemeal market restrictions that had been so advantageous to the better placed dairies and milk producers. The RNS foresaw that the decree would evoke considerable resentment among the peasants, for it abolished, in one stroke, a long standing custom. But the RNS argued that the new regulation would actually benefit all producers. They predicted that the mass of milk producers would receive higher prices for their milk once the dairies were on a sounder

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financial basis. The dairies would now be able to expand since deliveries would be more reliably undertaken. Consumers would be guaranteed milk at a reasonable price. Even dealers, asserted the RNS, would be protected from unwelcome competition.[18]

The new law represented a departure from the Milk Law of 1930. That law had been used to guarantee a monopoly to milk suppliers of urban markets, irrespective of whether the suppliers were primary producers or dairies. It was a thoroughly traditional attempt to limit access to the marketplace. The new decree also aimed at limiting access to the market. But beyond that it was designed to alter the structure of the dairy sector by closing the primary producers off from the retail trade and by increasing the role of the dairies. Since, as we have seen, the peasant's position in the dairy sector combined aspects of production, processing, and retail activities, it was the beginning of a radical reorientation of peasant farming.

The arguments of the RNS notwithstanding, expectations of discontent were more than borne out. Protests over the new measure were heard throughout Bavaria. For example, peasants and milk purchasers disrupted meetings in the Eggenfelden region claiming that the new law threatened property rights. Elsewhere similar reactions were voiced: the law was considered an attack on the freedom to dispose of the peasant product as peasants saw

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fit, hence it was a form of creeping expropriation. That the new law seemed designed to serve dairy interests only increased peasant antipathy toward it. The protesters in the Eggenfelden region believed that the law had been made in the interests of the Pfarrkirchen dairy cooperative. Pressure was even applied on peasants in many areas of Bavaria to join dairy cooperatives or dairy delivery cooperatives, which further increased resentment and suspicion toward the decree. One especially galling aspect of the new state of affairs in the Nuremberg and Fürth region was that many peasants had recently spent large sums of money to purchase equipment to meet the health requirements for milk sales to the two cities. Now the outlays were wasted. Smaller dairies also resented the decree, since many of them were now ordered to subordinate themselves to larger enterprises. Milk retailers and purchasers were leading figures in the protests. Eggenfelden has been mentioned above. In Augusburg too they lodged over a hundred complaints over the rationalization of the retail market and they received support from angry peasants as well. Throughout Bavaria, producers were not convinced by any of the RNS arguments. They believed that the ban on direct sales would lead to a loss in income, since the price paid for raw milk sold to dairies was less than what could be gotten for fresh milk sales to consumers. But it was not a mere economic calculation which led to such intense protests against the

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regulation. Most of all, the peasants feared that, under the New Order, they would be reduced to mere suppliers to capital rich dairies, which alone would determine the price and type of dairy production. Statements by RNS officials contributed to peasant unease. At an RNS meeting in Kaufbeuren, the KBF from Kempten announced that the peasant was no longer the real owner of the land but merely administered it in the interests of the entire nation. He tried to rally the peasant audience to his viewpoint by pointing to the military advantages of economic efficiency, but could not calm the uproar caused by his remarks.[19]

The authorities were not yet ready to go so far and did not countenance such remarks. The Reichskommissar sought to allay the fears of the peasantry in a statement which he issued in March 1934. He tried to convince the peasants that a regulated market was in their own interests, since a free market meant tremendous uncertainties of supply and demand. He pointed out that transactions between consumers and producers which were arranged in advance were not prohibited by the decree, since such sales entailed no market disruption. Areas where dairies had not been built or where it was difficult to deliver to far-off dairies were also not covered by the decree. Finally, any talk about interference in the management of the farm was absurd, because the peasant remained free to determine how he would use the milk pro-

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duced on his farm. It was up to the peasant whether the milk would be used for fodder, churned into butter, consumed by the family, or sold to consumers. Only the milk which entered the market was in any way regulated--an important distinction that would, however, be increasingly blurred in the years ahead.[20]

There is a great deal of truth to the claim that the new guidelines, as long as they were honored, disrupted the traditional household economy of the peasant only moderately. Even the low price for dairy-delivered milk could be avoided by producing Landbutter and selling it. The first step of the Marktordnung in the dairy sector could be characterized as market regulation to assure a balanced supply and demand, complementing price support regulations which guaranteed a minimum price. Worries about German self-sufficiency remained in the background, since the main problem in 1933 and 1934 was an oversupply of dairy products rather than scarcity. The National Socialists continued to follow the practices of the late Weimar period, applying provisions of the Milk Law to restrict market access, channel market supplies to the private and cooperative dairies, thence to be sold to licensed dealers, whose own ranks had been thinned in the name of rationalization. The only major change was that direct access to the fresh milk market for producers had been blocked.

The reform measures continued to prove modestly

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successful as long as the price-cost ratio for dairy products remained favorable to the producers and as long as imports made up the difference between domestic production and consumption. Both conditions ceased to be met in 1935 and a new stage in the NS Marktordnung was reached, a development which was bound to occur sooner or later. As pointed out in Chapter I, economic recovery meant that buying power was increasing, hence consumer demand for dairy products rose.[21] In addition, military needs dictated a policy of strict import controls, which limited the amount of fodder available for the dairy cow herds and the amount of foreign fats which could be imported to meet domestic requirements. Finally, the 1934-1935 harvest was a disaster and the fodder scarcity reached emergency proportions. Inevitably, upward price pressures began to mount in the dairy sector.

Darré's reaction to the market scarcities was to ask Hitler for an increase in the prices of dairy products. Hitler refused the request, since he felt that farm owners had received enough support from the regime and it was now their turn to make some sacrifices for the rest of the population. Without price rises, the supply of dairy products to the urban markets began to drop even more. Peasants began to dispose of their milk in the other ways which were still permitted to them. They fed the milk to their calves and they churned it into butter, to sell directly to consumers. Augsburg, for example, reported

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an increase in door-to-door trade in May 1935. As wintertime approached, seasonal factors worsened the supply situation. The summer pasturage had ended, new calves had been born, and purchases were increasing in advance of the holidays and cold weather. Nearly all sections of Bavaria reported shortages of butter and milk by November. The supplies continued to drop in December and reports of black market activity and hoarding increased.[22]

Clearly, the mildly compulsory regulations of the *Marktordnung* had not produced the desired results. Rather than encourage the peasants to give up their production of farm butter and their direct sales to consumers, the *Marktordnung* had led them to increase these activities. One village in Lower Franconia reported that fifteen centrifuges were bought within one week to supply the lucrative Frankfurt market with black market butter.[23]

The reasons why the *Marktordnung* led to results which were opposite to those desired by the reformers are obvious. The regulations which governed milk deliveries to the dairies were perceived by the peasants as a loss in income, since the price for fresh milk sold to consumers was higher than the price of raw milk sold to dairies. Nevertheless, it was onerous and risky to sell fresh milk illegally. Rather than let the milk spoil, it was far better to centrifuge and churn it in implements already available on the farm. The skimmed milk which was pro-

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duced could be fed to the livestock and the butter could be consumed on the farm or sold to consumers or butter purchasers. Butter weighed less than milk, took up less space, was more easily hidden from controls, spoiled slowly, and fetched a much higher price. Whether picked up at the farm or sent to nearby or distant markets, the illegal butter trade was almost impossible to detect and halt, since Landbutter production for home comsumption or sales to the immediate environs was not prohibited.

The necessary police measures, such as the surveillance of roads and railroad stations, helped to produce a temporary improvement in the supply situation by early 1936. But more far-reaching reforms were still needed and the contours of the German wartime economy now began to emerge. Within the dairy sector, the structure was based, ironically, on the protective laws which had been espoused by many agricultural interest organizations in the late Weimar years. The Milk Law and its subsequent amendments proved to be the best, most convenient method for restructuring the dairy market. Once again, as in the initial period of the Milk Law, the milk delivery zones were the chief means used to regulate the dairy markets. But the zones were now turned on their heads. They had been created to prevent urban markets from being flooded with milk, in order to buttress the milk price. Now the supply situation had been reversed. Not too much, but too little milk and butter were being supplied to ur-

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ban areas. Low prices no longer threatened the milk producers; high prices threatened the wage-earning consumer. The only way to guarantee that enough milk was supplied to urban markets was to widen the borders of the milk delivery zones to include more communities and more producers. Instead of excluding producers from the market, increasing numbers of them were now compelled to deliver their milk to the urban markets. This solution was applied to Coburg in December 1935. Deliveries to the Coburg Milchhof increased almost immediately, as did fresh milk and butter production from the city dairies.[24] The MEG were now being used to promote goals for which they were not originally intended. Under Weimar, they were purely restricted access zones, designed to protect favored milk producers. Under the Nazis, the function of the zones initially remained the same but the Nazis hoped to use protection to promote expansion of dairy production. Now the zones were being expanded, since rearmament, harvest setbacks, and the initial market regulation had undermined dairy deliveries.

Although deliveries to the urban market were now required from a wider circle of producers, still nothing prevented the peasants from processing their milk and selling it as Landbutter, since the regulation of January 1934 only prohibited direct sales of fresh milk. The regime, in the autumn of 1935, empowered the MWV to issue licenses for the sale of Landbutter. Acting on this new

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authority, the Bavarian MWV issued a decree on February 1936 which banned the direct sale of Landbutter except by licensed dealers. Only a few areas of Bavaria still permitted Landbutter sales by peasants, areas which were remote and difficult for dairies to reach. Since Landbutter could no longer be sold in most cases, black market sales could be more easily detected. In addition, peasants would now have to sell their milk to the dairies, if they were not to lose the income.[25]

The new measure was greatly resented. Allgäu alone stands out for its ready acceptance of the decree; Allgäu peasants had long since been accustomed to delivering their milk to the cheese processors and rarely retained any for home consumption or direct sales. Elsewhere, resistance to the decree was commonplace. Some peasants responded by decreasing milk production and reducing their herds. Other peasants simply refused to deliver their milk to the collection stations or dairies. One Franconian village reported that only eleven out of seventy farms delivered their milk to the dairy, as required. The regime and RNS responded with a barrage of propaganda, stressing the ultimate advantages of dairy deliveries, coupled with exemplary arrests to break the passive resistance. Leading agitators were jailed in the Franconian village just mentioned and in other villages peasants were fined for non-delivery of the raw milk to the dairies.[26]

Peasant reaction to the new measure can be explained by

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a variety of factors. The compulsory aspects of the decree were particularly frightening. Market regulation was a sensitive issue for the peasant, who had experienced the postwar controls of the Socialists and had heard all too many horror stories emanating from Russia. It will be recalled that, prior to 1930, the peasants had been suspicious of Nazi proposals which seemed to presage some form of socialism.[27] Now these fears seemed to be borne out. Another source of concern about the measure was the price paid for dairy-delivered raw milk, which was lower than the price which could be obtained through self-marketing of milk and much lower than the price for self-marketed butter. The dairies in Regensburg, for example, were paying nine to twelve pfennigs per liter and charging their customers twenty-four to twenty-six pfennigs. Dairies in parts of Lower Franconia were paying peasants as little as seven pfennigs. Complaints by peasants over raw milk prices were exacerbated by the regional price variations set by the regime. Price variations due to free market activity were an accepted part of life, but price variations set by the authorities seemed arbitrary, especially to peasants on the lower end of the price sale. Communities in Streutal, for instance, protested vigorously at their reassignment to the Neustadt dairy milk delivery zone. The dairy paid only ten pfennigs a liter compared to the fourteen to fifteen pfennigs they had received from the Thuringian dairy to which they had previously de-

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livered their milk.[28] The tremendous increase in dairy influence over the peasant farm was yet another factor in peasant reactions (see pages 146-148). The income for milk production was now effectively controlled by a stranger and peasants suspected that they were being shortchanged, that the dairies were falsifying the weighing results or misrepresenting the fat content.[29]

Certain sections of rural society were particularly opposed to the changes in dairy marketing decreed by the regime. The peasant woman, for example, was a major opponent of the dairy marketing reforms. She had been the one to sell the milk and "the peasant wife receives the profits which she then uses for the household. She is, therefore, a conscious opponent of any other method of milk disposal (dairies) which would turn over the control of the money to her husband, so that she would no longer be able to manage it at her own discretion."[30] What this might lead to is illustrated by an incident which occurred in 1940 in the town of Bollstadt. The accounts between the dairy and the peasants were settled once a month. The site which was chosen for the disbursement of money was a local pub. The farm women were outraged at this choice, complaining that their husbands were taking advantage of this fortunate circumstance to drink away a sizable portion of the milk money. The women's loss of physical control over the cash was now compounded by the loss of the money altogether. The Burgomaster promptly ordered

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the practice to cease and substituted the more austere surroundings of the local schoolhouse for this important task.

One can well imagine the howls of rage from the menfolk as they received the news. Fortunately for the peasant men, the KBF was sympathetic to their plight and protested to the Nordlingen Landrat. He pointed out that the milk payments were only one of the activities accomplished at these meetings. Announcements were read, new regulations circulated, and educational tasks carried out. The pub was particularly well suited for these purposes since "one gets a much larger group of producers together" and "the peasants and farmers are far more receptive on these occasions."[31]

The uproar in Bollstadt also illustrates the advantages of the dairy market reforms for the regime, which went well beyond the need to improve dairy productivity. Market reforms were not only a matter of production and supply but also enabled the regime to fuse a closer relationship with the mass of isolated rural producers. Thus, control or influence over farm activities could be further enhanced.

The increasing interference into farm practices went well beyond the marketing arrangements of the peasant farmsteads. Thus, the regime converted the previously voluntary Milchleistungsprüfung (MLP) into a compulsory test in late 1935. This enactment, the Verordnung ueber

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die Milchleistungsprüfungen of November 22, 1935, was part of the continuing attempt to raise milk production and close the "fats gap" in Germany. It had long been recognized that milk differed widely in its properties from one cow to another and that these differences could considerably affect butter and cheese processing. In the late nineteenth century, methods were perfected which made it possible to measure these properties. The creameries were able to implement payments for raw milk according to its fat content. Although matters were somewhat more complex for cheese processors, advances in this field at the Bavarian state agricultural laboratories at Weihenstephan permitted cheese processors to initiate payment according to milk quality. The regime was equally interested in raising milk productivity as well as improving milk quality. It had been demonstrated that the milk productivity of an individual cow was not particularly connected to fodder, but was a genetic characteristic. Already by 1933, the Zuchtverbaende (livestock breeding societies) which supplied the high quality livestock to the peasantry had introduced milk productivity tests to enable their members to select the more productive cows for further breeding. The new regulations issued in 1935 authorized the RNS to order all cow owners, not just those belonging to the breeding societies to submit their cows to ongoing tests. The extent and timing of the new requirement was left to the individual Landesbauernschaften to determine.

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The tests would be carried out by the RNS, which also had the power to set the cost, and by the officials responsible for livestock breeding. Infractions against the measure were punishable by fines up to one thousand marks.[32]

Opposition against the new measure was widespread in Bavaria. Many peasants resisted the enforcement of the testing requirements; some of them even resorted to physical attacks on the intrusive milk inspectors. After an educational meeting with peasants in a Lower Bavarian district one milk inspector found that his car had been damaged. In a Lower Franconian village, the peasants attacked the tester with pitchforks and the police were called in.[33]

An article in the Bavarian RNS weekly discussed the motives for peasant resistance to the MLP. It describes how one farm couple in Lower Bavaria reacted to the MLP. The peasant wife, upon hearing of the regulation, returned home, eager to comply with the new law, only to be told by her husband: "As soon as the milk boy comes, I'll throw him out the door." The MLP, because it required the actual visits of the farm by a stranger, seemed even more reprehensible than the marketing regulations, which operated through indirect compulsion exercised outside the boundaries of the farm. Indeed, it seemed a grievous trick to force the peasant to submit to outside inspection and then to charge him twenty pfennigs for the indignity, this, on

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top of mounting expenses in other areas.[34]

A subsequent article in the weekly listed additional reasons for the reaction against the MLP and tried to counter these objections. Peasants claimed that the tests would not themselves raise milk production. They pointed out that the most important cow owners were already members of the breeding societies and submitted their cows to the tests. Therefore, no great purpose would be served by extending the tests to all owners. Another complaint was that only the members of the breeding societies could afford to pay the costs for higher quality livestock. Finally, small farm owners who used their cows for ploughing could not possibly achieve the productivity levels of the larger and wealthier landowners who owned milk cows.

The Wochenblatt article answered these arguments by pointing out that the tests were merely a means to an end, a tool to aid selective breeding. The tests would not in themselves raise milk productivity; it would enable the peasant to improve the productivity of his cows through careful selective breeding or purchase of better quality livestock. It was true that the major cow owners were already members of the breeding societies but they owned only 10 percent of the cows in Bavaria; the others should be included as well. Obviously, the authorities did not expect that the average cow owner would achieve the productivity levels of the wealthier society members, but each member of the community should contribute his share

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to the common effort.[35]

What the article echoes, by implication, is the traditional complex of peasant conservatism which was hostile to so many of the National Socialist reforms in the agricultural sector. There was the desire for immediate and practical results, the oft-heard anxiety over higher costs, and the understandable resentment of the poor peasants toward the better organized and wealthier Standesgenossen (corporate comrades).

The introduction of the MLP was so intrusive that the law was opposed by officials within the RNS, most visibly at the lowest levels of the bureaucracy. One OBF, in the Marktoffingen region, obviously misunderstood the practical effects of the MLP and complained, in 1940, that he had not seen any improvements in milk productivity as a result of the tests; he had even seen a decrease in 1938 and 1939. The livestock inspector responded sternly that it would be years before noticeable improvements would take effect.[36]

The numbers of cows undergoing productivity tests increased tremendously during the Third Reich. Only 3.2% of all Bavarian cows were tested in 1933 and this figure rose to 6.4% by 1935. After the LBS Bayern ordered all breeding society cows to be tested in 1936, the percentage rose to 25%. With the extension of testing to all farms which possessed 3 or more cows in 1936 and 1937 this rose to nearly 75% by 1938.[37]

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Despite the institution of such measures as compulsory MLP and stricter market regulation through price fixing and extended milk delivery zones, the "Battle of Production" in the dairy sector was an equivocal success at best in the years before the outbreak of the Second World War. The same deficiencies which led the regime to broaden its market regulation in 1935 continued to plague the dairy sector. The fixed prices for milk and other dairy products were still too low in relation to production costs and this produced its inevitable counterpart--a thriving black market.

Short of a sharp escalation of police supervision and farm site inspection, illegal Landbutter sales were almost impossible to suppress. The advantages to the peasant have already been mentioned--as long as fodder was scarce and expensive and dairy prices artifically low, it paid to sell on the black market or cut back on dairy production. Additional factors were at work as well. In some cases, the personal relationships between consumers and farm producers stretched back for decades. Personal buying relationships were an integral part of Bavarian buying habits which the Nazi reforms failed to take into account. Now these had been abolished by the "stroke of a pen."[38] The mutual feelings of loyalty between the customer and peasant fueled the black market and made it difficult to smash. Even when arrested for infringements of market regulations, customers and peasants could not believe that

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these traditional activities were illegal, an attitude which was further heightened if the trade partners were related, as they so often were. The personal trade relationship was difficult to disrupt for another reason. At a time of endemic shortages and market disruptions, personal trade relationships were a guarantee of more assured supplies which would be laid away for that "special customer."[39]

Advertising and propaganda could only partially correct this problem. Genuine improvement in the supply of dairy-produced milk and butter would not come about until raw milk prices paid to the peasant by the dairies were increased. The RNS continued to campaign for higher milk prices, ordering its KBS to prepare reports on raw milk and dairy milk prices in January 1937, to support its case for higher prices. The LBS Bayern argued that raw milk prices could be raised without compromising dairy profits or at consumer expense. The trade span could be narrowed to cover the increased costs. Without this increase in raw milk prices, farmers would be unwilling and unable to increase production.[40]

Possible price increases were a topic of discussion at the highest levels. A meeting in May 1938, presided over by the Four Year Plan Plenipotentiary, Hermann Goering, revealed the conflicts over this issue in the ruling hierarchy. Goering agreed that some changes in pricing policy in the entire animal husbandry sector were

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needed. The Price Commissioner, Wagner, suggested that subventions and tax measures be adopted. Darré, who seriously agonized over the bind into which the peasants had been placed, called for a real increase in raw milk prices. The most that Hitler would agree to, one month later, was a subvention of two pfennigs per liter for raw milk sold to the dairies, to become effective in October 1938. Consumer prices remained stable.[41]

The administrator in charge of the agricultural section of the Four Year Plan, Hermann Backe, argued that this was not nearly enough to help the peasant and encourage increased milk production. He drafted a memorandum in 1939 which outlined the conditions in the peasant sector in the starkest terms. Their labor force had disappeared as a result of rearmament and public works program. Agricultural prices were artificially low while costs continued to rise. Without incentives and without labor, it was no wonder that there were permanent shortages of butter, bacon, eggs, and lard. He suggested that butter prices be increased from 1.60 marks to two marks and the price for fresh milk increased by two marks. Meanwhile, the peasantry was becoming more impatient with RNS and Four Year Plan pricing policies. This was certainly a factor in Darré's attack on Party policy at the 1938 _Reichsbauerntag_, leading Hitler to label him a _frondeur_. There was even a demonstration of fifty peasants in Munich in February 1939, where the threat was made to reduce

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livestock holdings and let land lie fallow. But no additional price increases were decreed before the war.[42]

Nevertheless, the dairy program had achieved important structural reforms. The percentage of dairy-delivered milk had increased dramatically in Bavaria, with a concurrent drop in fresh milk sales. Although the percentage of milk production devoted to *Landbutter* production in Bavaria had barely changed from 1930 to 1939, the growing role of dairy-produced butter eclipsed the importance of *Landbutter* production. For Germany as a whole, *Landbutter* production declined from 195,000 tons in 1933 to only 100,000 tons in 1937, with the chief decline coming after 1934. Dairy-produced butter rose in this same period from 253,445 tons to 415,998 tons. However, due to increased consumption, Germany was still producing only 85.6% of its butter requirements in 1937, actually a decline from 1933 (88.3%).[43] The growth of dairy production and deliveries are indicated in Tables 4, 5, 6 and 7, as shown on pages 166 and 167.

The final stages of the National Socialist command economy was reached during the Second World War. There was no major break with the regulation which preceded the war; wartime policy simply marked the culmination of a steady evolution which began, as we have tried to indicate, in the latter days of the Weimar period. The existing compulsory measures were strengthened and the geographical extent of these measures were broadened.

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Table 4

Allocation of Farm Milk Production

in Bavaria

(percentages)

	Landbutter	Sold Fresh	Dairy Delivery
1930	17.7		22.7
1936/1937	18.3	7	41.3
7/1937-6/1938	17.5	6.6	43.6
8/1939	17.4	7.3	45.3

Source: For 1930, Die Produktions und Absatzverhaeltnisse p. 47. For 1936/1937 and for 7/1937-6/1938, Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 22 (1938) p. 105. For 8/1939, "Milcherzeugung und Milchverwendung" bearbeitet im Statistischen Reichsamt.

Table 5

Dairy-Produced Butter

in Bavaria

(kilograms)

1932	21,522,500
1933	24,231,050
1934	25,805,050
1935	25,311,400
1936	31,120,977
1937	36,703,429

Source: 1932, 1933, Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 18 (1934) p. 90; 1934-1936, Statistiches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 22 (1938) p. 108.

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Table 6

Dairy Deliveries

		1920	1934	1935	1936	1937
Cows	Bavaria	426,456	842,209	873,753	954,728	1,071,973
	Germany		3,567,549	6,335,872	7,126,647	7,528,970
Farms	Bavaria	93,276	166,496	176,369	198,590	233,709
	Germany		730,128	1,247,443	1,570,098	1,568,237

Source: For Bavaria, 1920, Producktions- und Absatz-verhaeltnisse, p. 47; 1934-1937, Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 22 (1938), p. 107. For Germany, Statistisches Jahr-buch fuer das Deutsche Reich 54 (1935), pp. 105 and 57; (1938), p. 128.

Table 7

Dairy-Delivered Milk

in Bavaria

(kilograms)

1929	1933	1936	1937
1,019,010,172	1,227,345,039	1,383,707,715	1,579,211,277

Source: Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 18 (1934), p. 90; and Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 22 (1938), p. 106.

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Table 8

Milk Production

	1928	1932	1936/1937	1937/1938
Bavaria (billion hectaliters)	31.1		36.8	38.2
Germany (million kilograms)	22,000	24,226	25,400[a]	25,444[b]

a. 1936. b. 1937.

Source: Bavaria: Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 18 (1934) p. 90; Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 22 (1938) p. 105. Germany: Wirtschaft und Statistik 19 (1938) p. 346, Produktions- und Absatzverhaeltnisse, p. 47.

The dairy sector faced three major problems as a result of the war. None of them were entirely new but all were exacerbated by the war. The labor scarcity continued to plague the peasant proprietor. As increasing numbers of men were drafted into the military services, women had to undertake the management of the entire farm enterprise, leaving less time for stall work and a consequent decline in the amount of milk produced. National Socialist dairy reforms magnified the effect of the military draft. The regime's attempt to modernize farm work and to adopt a scientific approach to dairy production meant that more of the stall work was being done by specially trained milkers, using modern equipment. Thus, milking activity was more vulnerable to disruption due to the draft.

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The fodder scarcity was a permanent feature of the National Socialist agricultural sector. This was a consequence of the stringent import regulations imposed by the regime and of the price structure which prevailed for bread and fodder grains. Military needs also decreased the amount of fodder available to the peasant. The army began to requisition hay and straw for their horses and delivery quotas were eventually set for fodder products. Prodigious efforts were made by the National Socialists to raise fodder supplies by turning to other fodder sources which could be grown on German soil: lupine, alfalfa, and sugar beets. Nevertheless, as fertilizer shortages and declining field work took their toll, soil fertility began to decline. Although it did not become disastrous until 1944, it put a brake on all attempts to improve fodder supplies. Yet all along the peasant was asked to maintain and even increase his production of milk.[44]

The often arbitrary or ill-considered dictates of a regulated economy also produced imbalances which disrupted dairy supplies. Beer prices, for example, were raised in August 1939 and the summer of 1940, to preserve grain supplies. But this created increased demand for milk to comepnsate for the loss of this "peasant's porridge."[45]

To overcome the lack of progress in the dairy sector, a program known as the Milcherzeugungsschlacht (Dairy Battle of Production) was announced in May 1940. Under the program, milk producers were offered premiums for higher

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than average milk production and dairy deliveries, the price of milk was raised, finally, by two pfennigs per liter and that for butter, by twenty pfennigs per pound. Special supervisory agencies were established to oversee milk production, deliveries, and distribution. These agencies, the Milchleistungsausschüsse (Milk Production Committees, hereafter abbreviated as MLA), were set up at each level of the RNS organization from the office of the RBF down to the KBF. But the most important and the most numerous of the MLA were those which were created for each dairy enterprise in Germany. A total of 7,780 were thereby organized.[46]

The members of the MLA were supposed to be the most experienced and knowledgeable dairy experts in Germany. The ones named to the local dairy committees were also supposed to be local figures of importance in the dairy industry. The formation of the MLA marked a further step toward the establishment of centralized control over the private sector and the individual farmstead. The creation of the MLA indicates how important dairy-delivered raw milk was to the RNS reform program for the dairy sector. Once the peasant delivered his raw milk to the dairy, he came into direct personal contact with an institution which could report on his productivity and his deliveries without great effort, since they would likely keep such records in any case. For this reason, cooperative dairies had always possessed some advantages over privately owned

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dairies, since they were already a part of the RNS apparatus. With the creation of the MLA, all dairies were placed under the administrative supervision of the RNS, regardless of the form of ownership. The dairies could now become even more efficient gatherers of information and transmission belts of public policy to the dairy farmers. "Since all cow owners come into daily contact with a dairy, the best guarantee that the new Milk Battle of Production will actually involve every last cow owner is through the intervention of these dairies."[47]

The main task of the MLA was to increase butter production, decrease the use of milk at the farmstead, and to increase the yield of milk from each farm. The MLA compiled lists concerning the dairy activities of each peasant. The lists contained information concerning the number of people fed on the farm, the number of nursing calves, and the results of the milk samples taken from each cow. These figures could then be extrapolated to produce an accurate estimate of how much milk would be left over to be delivered to the dairy. From time to time, the lists were compared with other statistical information--population, livestock counts, MLP results, to determine whether they were accurate. Finally, the actual milk deliveries to the dairies were compared to the lists, and the names of peasants whose deliveries did not meet the expected quotas were sent to the KBF for further action.[48]

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The difficulties facing the MLA and the RNS in the dairy sector were really two separate problems, reflecting the general distinction between the modern and primitive regions of the dairy sector in Bavaria. The peasants in the regions of more advanced dairy farming in Bavaria had been delivering their surplus milk to dairies for many years, even decades. Further increases in the amount of milk delivered to the dairies could only be realized by decreasing the proportion of milk retained by the farm owner for on-site consumption, whether human or animal. The decrease could only occur through the most far-reaching intrusion into the household economy, which neither the ideology of the regime nor the repressive capabilities of the state would have permitted. It could also have been achieved through a combination of exhortation and propaganda, which would try to convince the peasants to reduce farm consumption, to conserve every last possible drop of milk, and send the remainder to the dairies. This last method was adopted and, in tandem with the relatively high milk prices after March 1940, it did lead to minor increases in dairy deliveries from the advanced dairy regions. But the upper limits of these deliveries had long since been approached, if not actually reached, and the growing food and fodder shortages made much further progress almost impossible. Nördlingen, which was typical of this type of modern dairy sector, increased its milk deliveries by only 7.35 percent

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between 1940 and 1941.[49]

The most pressing problem within the Bavarian dairy sector was in the more backward regions of Bavaria, where the peasant continued to resent compulsory deliveries to dairies. It remained a relatively easy task to evade these delivery obligations even though they had been broadened to include most peasants in Bavaria.
The ease of defying the delivery obligations was actually increasing in the early period of the war, since the milk delivery zones were being extended at an accelerated pace to include communities which were unprepared to undertake dairy deliveries. As more peasants were included in the net of compulsory deliveries, the lack of proper educational or technological preparation grew. The new regions included in compulsory deliveries were usually more remote from the dairies and possessed poor transportation facilities. The only solution in the face of the unwillingness and inability of the peasants in these areas to participate in the new marketing structure was to increase police surveillance of the rails, roads, towns, and cities. But this could only discourage illegal sales, not eliminate them.

A possible response to this difficulty was the one undertaken in Feuchtwangen in March 1940, as a reaction to declining milk deliveries in the district. Three communities in the district announced that all farm centrifuges would be seized by the authorities. Without these imple-

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ments, home butter production would be impossible. Moreover, the peasant would be unable to separate his raw milk into skimmed milk and cream, which would force him to wastefully consume or feed his raw milk or (and this was the hope of the authorities) to bring it to the dairies or collection sites and receive back an agreed-upon quantity of skimmed milk for farm use. Subsequently, milk deliveries increased dramatically.[50] It is not clear whether this decree was issued at the instigation of the local officials alone; RNS officials must certainly have participated in the discussions preceding the measures. It is also conceivable that the seizure was a trial balloon to determine its effectiveness and the extent of peasant reaction.

In either case, until late 1940, the centrifuge seizure in Feuchtwangen remained an isolated example of the lengths to which the regime would go to force compliance with the milk delivery obligations. Nevertheless, by November 1940, the authorities had decided to extend similar measure to other areas, upon the petition of the local authorities. News of the intended compulsory sealing of butter tubs leaked out at that time in the Wasserberg area, causing a sharp decline in the morale of the peasantry, a harbinger of the opposition to centrifuge seizures which would erupt in the coming months, when voluntary local measures were replaced by a nationwide decree in April 1941. Until then, the centrifuge seizures

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remained a local responsibility, a response to local circumstances of daily supply and delivery. The seizures were carried out by the MLA of the KBS, which were required to petition the Landrat for permission to seize the implements.[51]

The nationwide law in April 1941 ordered all farms in Germany which were members of milk delivery zones or did not possess a permit to produce Landbutter to deliver their centrifuges and butter tubs to local officials. The execution of the planned seizures was assigned to the Milch- und Fettwirtschaftsverbaende. They would, in consultation with the KBS, determine the extent and pace of the operation, which affected the vast majority of farms in Bavaria.[52]

It would be no exaggeration to describe the measure as the most universally disliked rural regulation ever issued by the regime, save the REG.[53] No other law aroused such widespread and persistent anger, resentment, and disobedience among the Bavarian peasantry. In all of Bavaria, only two regions stand out from the general uproar: Allgäu, and, once again, Ries, two areas in which the vast majority of farms had long since abandoned domestic dairy processing and come to rely on the numerous and easily reached dairies for their fresh milk, skimmed milk, and butter consumed on the farm.[54]

The Ries region, which lay within the jurisdiction of the KBS Nördlingen, indicates the limits growing market and production regulations had in the more advanced areas of

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dairy production. The KBF Nördlingen met with representatives of the MFWV Bayern and the manager of the Nördlingen MLA in April 1941, just after the new law was published. They decided that all centrifuges and butter tubs in the KBS should be handed in by June 1. The operation on the local level was placed under the responsibility of the Burgomasters. Results up until June 1 were available for nearly one-half of the forty-eight communities in the region. Two hundred and ninety-nine butter tubs and two hundred eighty centrifuges had been turned in, of which the vast majority were old and no longer used. The KBF reported that the measure was proceeding "without complaints" and even "welcomed" by peasants who appreciated that the decree was directed at farm owners who "wanted to produce butter for the black market." By August, the MLA Nördlingen reported that 378 tubs and 427 centrifuges had been turned over and by October, with only one community not reporting, these numbers had risen to 427 and 454 respectively. If we assume that peasants who turned in tubs possessed a centrifuge as well, the statistics indicate that no more than 7 percent of the nearly 5,600 peasant farms in the region (those under one hundred hectares) still owned these implements from the bygone era of self-marketing and self-processing. Little wonder that the measure aroused such little reaction in Nördlingen.[55]

But since home production was only a minor problem in Nördlingen, the seizure of the implements was only a

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qualified success. One month after the operation commenced, deliveries to the dairies were actually lower than the month before. The January 1942 report of the MLA Nördlingen pointed out that lower milk deliveries were due not to home butter production, but to wasteful farm practices--peasants fed raw milk to piglets and weaned their calves too slowly, undoubtedly because of fodder shortages. A month later, the MLA noted that delivery results for the Nördlingen district were only satisfactory in the outlying Jura region which had been the most backward dairy delivery region prior to the centrifuge seizures. Clearly, the limits of milk deliveries to dairies in the more progressive dairy regions had long since been reached and only minor improvements could be expected from administrative measures and propaganda.[56]

The rest of Bavaria, excluding Allgäu, reacted to the centrifuge seizures with tremendous anger. Even so, some variations existed. The least affected areas were in Lower Franconia, the most affected in Lower Bavaria, northern Upper Bavaria, and the Upper Palatinate. The reasons for this variation can be traced to the marketing and production practices described earlier in this chapter. The peasants in Franconia marketed much of their raw milk as fresh milk or sold it to the dairies. A similar pattern existed in the regions of Upper Bavaria close to Munich. The rest of Upper Bavaria, Lower Bavaria, and the Upper Palatinate could not sell their raw milk as fresh milk since it would

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spoil before reaching the large urban centers of Munich, Nuremberg and Frankfurt, due to greater distances and a primitive road network. The peasants in these regions overcame this disadvantage by producing butter and selling it locally or over longer distances. Lower Bavaria was the typical stronghold of farm butter; the proliferation of centrifuges was the most advanced in all Bavaria.[57]

Now the National Socialists proposed to disturb and abolish this pattern of farm production and marketing, a trend implicit in all the market reforms initiated under the _Marktordnung_. But the dairy _Marktordnung_ had, until 1941, not yet eliminated farm butter production in the more remote regions of Bavaria, nor had it outlawed home production for home consumption. The centrifuge seizure was, therefore, a quantum leap in state interference in farm practices. It was forced upon the Nazis by the growing contradictions between the marketing reforms of the regime and the lack of infrastructure and ideological preparation which were necessary to make the reforms work. The regime had tried to raise milk deliveries to the dairies by extending the borders of milk delivery zones to ever more remote districts of milk production. Peasants in backward districts were loath to deliver their milk, since they were unaccustomed to the practice. In addition, the poor roads, the lack of trucks, and, after the war began, the increasing shortages of fuel, made milk deliveries to the far-off dairies even more difficult. Complaints by the

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peasants that they received back too little skimmed milk (they were entitled to a certain percentage), that they were short-changed by the dairies, or that the skimmed milk had spoiled, reflect the real problems which arose due to the lack of preparedness on the part of the dairies and the suspicions of the peasants toward a new way of life. In either case, these factors, as well as the low prices paid for raw milk until 1940, meant that many peasants continued to churn their butter with the implements which they were still permitted to retain for home use. The National Socialists now proposed to abolish this one remaining avenue of resistance to the milk deliveries.

The areas affected by RNS fiat had the lowest dairy and creamery density in all Bavaria. Without the centrifuges and tubs, the peasant would be totally dependent on the dairies for his farm milk and butter needs, unless he wastefully fed raw milk to the livestock. But delivering the raw milk to the dairies under the primitive circumstances prevailing in these regions meant that much of it was likely to arrive or return spoiled. Nevertheless, the National Socialists went ahead with the planned seizures because dislocations in the household economy were less disturbing than the market dislocations which continued to plague Germany because of the still powerful role exercised by the peasant proprietor in the day-to-day farm operations. Thus, the death knell sounded for the farm as the traditional center of farm production, processing, and distribution.

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Poor weather conditions exacerbated the difficulties of dairy deliveries, increased resentment and disobedience, and created havoc. During the typical Bavarian spring, which could easily last well into July, the rain often turned the dirt roads into mud. In the autumn and winter, roads were once again impassable. As a result, raw milk could not be delivered and the raw milk began to spoil, so that local officials had to return the implements to the peasants to avoid a catastrophe. In other cases, the centrifuges were returned because the dairies were unprepared for the sudden influx of large quantities of milk. One official doubted whether the peasants would allow the authorities to confiscate the centrifuges a second time. Resistance, though hardly violent, was nevertheless noteworthy in some areas. Peasants in one village threatened to "give a thrashing" to anyone who voluntarily complied with the order. Two hundred peasants in the district of Pfaffenhofen/Ilm, a region of low dairy deliveries, refused to deliver their centrifuges. This represents at least 4 percent of peasant households in the district, assuming that every farm possessed a centrifuge and that all cases of resistance were uncovered. Undoubtedly the real percentage of defiance was higher.[58]

Peasants objected to the decree for many reasons. They feared the loss of control over farm operations and over the product. They did not trust the dairy operators or the personnel who delivered the milk to the dairies. They disbelieved the technological innovations promised by the

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RNS. They mistrusted the higher bureaucrats, who, they believed, were perverting the will of the *Fuehrer*. In some areas, there was a tinge of antipathy for the urban areas, evidenced by references to the size of farm families--a common theme of anti-urban propaganda. Peasant resistance was abetted by the attitudes common among the lower echelons of the state or RNS bureaucracy. The Burgomaster, especially, was often a peasant or of peasant stock in these small rural towns, who had to associate with the peasants on a daily basis. Some OBFs complained about the measures. In Aichach, the LBF had to appeal to local officials for more cooperation in carrying out the measure.[59]

Despite the problems which were associated with the centrifuge and butter tub confiscation, there can be no doubt that the measure was a qualified success. Certainly no police operation of this kind, carried out in the face of overt and covert opposition spread over a vast area, can be entirely successful. A large number of machines continued to remain in private hands. This is attested to by the thriving black market trade in *Landbutter* which continued after the confiscations. Often the machines had to be re-distributed due to severe weather conditions. The measure was never executed in those areas which lacked any access to a dairy. But in those areas where dairy production had been impeded by farm butter processing, the confiscation of the centrifuges certainly tipped the balance against *Landbutter* once and for all.

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The limits which were placed on National Socialist efforts to raise milk production under the Micherzeugungsschlacht are evident if we compare the results which were achieved in Swabia, the Upper Palatinate, and Lower Bavaria. We have pointed out that there were only a few areas of Swabia in which there was any room for improvement in dairy production. Only one of the nineteen rural districts delivered less than 70% of its milk to dairies. There were only two rural districts in which dairy deliveries fell below 80% of the raw milk yield. Only a miniscule quantity of the remaining milk was sold directly to consumers or milk purchasing agents, usually less than 5% of the total production. Home processing of butter was almost unknown. The MLA's in Swabia could only increase the dairy production of milk and butter by reducing farm consumption. But this was almost impossible to control, especially since rationing of other food products led to increased use for home production. Since the milk consumed at the source never left the farm, never passed through the hands of middlemen or outside consumers, it was not possible to control its allocation The best that the MLA's could hope for was voluntary compliance.[60]

Nördlingen is a good example of the difficulties in the modern dairy regions. Excluding the city of Nördlingen, the rural district delivered 84% of its raw milk to dairies in May 1940, while only 2% was sold by the peasants as fresh farm milk, 2.2% consumed by the farm family, 1.9% turned

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into farm butter, and 9% used for fodder. After all the strenuous efforts mounted by the MLA, dairy deliveries climbed a bare .25% from 1940 to 1941. More disconcerting still, in the final two months of 1941, milk deliveries to dairies declined from the same period the previous year. Compared to 1939, the results were a bit more encouraging, a 6.16% increase for the full year. Here too, the last two months of the year indicated a fractional decline compared to the final two months of 1939. Worse still, the impression of small progress in the district of Nördlingen was misleading, because the 1939 milk deliveries had been disappointingly low due to hoof and mouth disease. When the 1941 total are compared to those for 1938, there was actually a decline in dairy deliveries of a little over one million kilograms or 5%.[61]

The December report of the Nördlingen MLA admitted that the lower deliveries should be blamed on the declining "willingness to deliver" in a number of communities. The number of delinquent farms was growing, despite the intense propaganda, the MLA's more careful surveillance of all farm operations, and broadening the MLP to include all farms. More careful compilation of statistics was also suggested, to enable the MLA to pick up discrepancies between production and deliveries. Despite this, it is evident that the Dairy Battle of Production in Nördlingen was headed nowhere. Given the inevitable disruptions as the war continued, the prospects were for further stagnation or

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even deterioration.[62]

The situation in Lower Bavaria and the Upper Palatinate was quite different. There, the administrative controls introduced by the regime and the RNS could have some positive effects, since the percentages for dairy deliveries in this region were the lowest in all Bavaria and the percentage of direct sales of farm butter and fresh milk was the highest. Marketing restrictions and delivery obligations could, therefore, produce dramatic results. Indeed, the growing state controls, which culminated in the centrifuge confiscation but which had begun with the imposition of milk delivery zones, did lead to a significant growth of dairy deliveries in eastern Bavaria. Nevertheless, as the following tables indicate (see tables 9 and 10 on pages 185-186), dairy deliveries did not increase uniformly. Undoubtedly, the major factor in increased deliveries was the existence of a dairy, whether in the immediate vicinity or not. In these districts, the milk delivery zones could be extended and the tubs and centrifuges confiscated. Hence, the dramatic rise of dairy deliveries and the equally dramatic decline in farm butter production in Eggenfelden, Landshut, and Mallersdorf, to mention three districts. In those districts which possessed no dairies in 1938, farm butter production continued to thrive almost everywhere.

The figures for milk deliveries within the LBS Bayern confirm the observations concerning the success of the centrifuge seizure and the Dairy Battle of Production.

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Chart 9

Allocation of Farm Milk

Lower Bavaria and Upper Palatinate

Districts Without Dairies

in 1938

(percentages)

District	Sold Fresh 1938	Sold Fresh 12/1942	Farm Butter 1938	Farm Butter 12/1942	Dairy-Delivered 1932	Dairy-Delivered 12/1942
Dingolfing	3.6	1.6	42.2	52.6	5.2	11.7
Bogen	1.0	1.0	40.3	52.0	0	0
Grafenau	1.5	1.0	32.1	48.0	0	0
Regen	1.5	1.0	43.4	48.0	0	6
Viechtach	2.5	1.0	33.2	79.0	0	0
Kötzting (2/39)	1.5	1.0	42.0	49.0	0	0
Beilngries	4.7	4.8	51.9	15.5	0.7	58.9
Parsberg	2.7	2.6	44.2	23.4	12.2	52.9
Sulzbach-Rosenberg	2.1	1.4	48.2	25.8	11.6	35.3
Nabburg	0.9	1.9	42.2	48.7	1.7	6.3
Roding	4.3	6.1	54.7	53.2	0.5	6.9
Neunburg vorm Wald	4.2	6.4	59.8	55.1	0.7	5.4
Waldmünchen	1.4	4.3	76.7	72.4	0	6.1
Oberviechtach	0.5	1.7	43.7	50.3	0	3.7
Vohenstrauss	0.9	1.6	35.9	52.4	1.3	6.7
Neustadt a.d. Waldnaab	1.5	1.7	39.9	23.1	10.6	44.2

Source: StAL Rep. 185 6005, Statistiches Reichsamt "Verwendung der Kuhmilch, Milchertrag der Ziegen und Ziegenmilchverfütterung" 1938 and December 1942.

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Chart 10

Allocation of Farm Milk

Lower Bavaria and Upper Palatinate

Districts with Dairies

in 1938

(percentages)

District	Sold Fresh 1938	Sold Fresh 12/1942	Farm Butter 1938	Farm Butter 12/1942	Dairy-Delivered 1938	Dairy-Delivered 12/1942
Pfarrkirchen	.9	1.6	27.1	22.6	18.4	49.2
Eggenfelden	3.1	3.4	34.2	26.7	12.9	42.0
Vilsbiburg	6.4	1.7	38.4	28.6	3.3	38.6
Landshut	9.7	1.7	28.1	17.3	17.0	42.5
Mallersdorf	7.1	1.3	44.4	29.5	17.4	38.8
Landau a.d. Isar	4.1	2.3	35.1	28.4	16.3	41.0
Deggendorf	10.0	10.0	29.8	24.0	11.5	27.0
Riedenburg	5.8	3.6	52.4	39.5	10.8	34.7
Regensburg	8.4	3.3	51.9	37.6	28.2	41.9
Neumarkt i.d. Opf.	7.2	6.7	23.4	20.9	9.2	31.1
Amberg	2.8	1.3	41.9	27.6	11.3	40.5
Burglengenfeld	18.2	12.2	35.5	29.1	12.6	39.8
Tirschenreuth	2.7	1.8	32.4	6.6	5.1	58.8

Source: StAL Rep. 185 6005, Statistiches Reichsamt, "Verwendung der Kuhmilch...." 1938 and December 1942.

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The increase in milk deliveries in Allgäu was a mere 3% between 1940 and 1942. However, elsewhere in Bavaria, milk deliveries rose almost 9% over this period. The difference is even more striking if the Upper Bavarian region is considered separately. There, the increase in deliveries amounted to 19%. Franconia, as was mentioned, was not a major stronghold of Landbutter production and, in fact, the centrifuge seizure had no positive effects here. There was even a drop in dairy deliveries during this period.[63]

The role of the dairy sector in the overall farm economy increased rapidly as a consequence of the encouragement it was given by a combination of pressure and incentives. The number of cows barely rose in Bavaria between 1938 and 1942, but the number of milk cows rose tremendously:

Table 11

Cow Holdings in Bavaria

	All Cows		Milk Cows		Percentages Milk Cows	
Year	1938	1942	1938	1942	1938	1942
Bavaria	1,362,560	1,395,905	610,164	1,047,461	44.8	75.39
Germany	9,962,416	10,669,712	7,714,576	9,441,412	77.4	88.50

Source: Karl Lindner, Geschichte der Allgäuer Milchwirtschaft pp. 490-491.

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Meanwhile, dairy deliveries also grew:

Table 12

Dairy-Delivered Milk

in Bavaria

(million kilograms)

1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944
1,361	1,531	1,539	1,617	1,689	1,649

Source: StAND BA Memmingen 7713, "Milchablieferung im Jahre 1944 gegenüber den Jahren 1943, 1942, 1941, 1940 and 1939."

As tables 11 and 12 indicate, the German dairy sector had made enormous advances in production, modernization, and quality control. In 1933 the dairy sector lay poised between two worlds, both of them farm economies oriented toward the marketplace and the consumer. But in the one world, the peasant household still held pride of place as production center for raw materials, processing site for these products, and distribution center for the finished goods. In the other world, into which many peasants had already stepped, the peasant farm was primarily the producer of raw agricultural products and all remaining tasks were carried out by more or less modern facilities and businesses.

Under the National Socialists, this duality was irreparably, if not completely, undermined, and it was the second, more "modern" world which emerged triumphant. The

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peasants were initially encouraged, then pressured, and finally compelled to bring their milk to the dairies. The dairies, in turn, supplied the peasants with the necessities which they had previously produced for themselves--butter, milk for the household, skimmed milk for the barnyard. Undoubtedly, this program produced its greatest successes in areas which were best suited to modern production and marketing. In a large part of remote Lower Bavaria and the Upper Palatinate, the same traditional methods were practiced right up to the end of the war. But where new dairies could be built, and this occurred less often after the war began, and where old ones lay not too far distant, the coercive police methods of the RNS and the Four Year Plan administration were largely able to restructure peasant economic relations. One historian has judged that the impressive gains registered by the National Socialists in dairy milk production were essentially illusory, since these gains simply replaced the milk which had previously been sold by peasants.[64] The judgment not only overlooks the greater efficiency of mechanized dairy production, in which more butter can be produced from less milk, but it ignores the main rationale which lay behind the dairy program of the regime--to increase the production and availability of fat products. It is true that the overall production of dairy products increased only a little, especially after the war began. The important achievement of the regime lay, however, in the fact that a vastly increased proportion of the milk was delivered to

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dairies for final processing. Under National Socialism, control over the final production and distribution of the dairy product had passed out of the hands of millions of small producers and into those of the dairies, whether cooperatively or privately owned. Dairy enterprises could be, and were, far more easily supervised by the RNS or other state controlled agencies. Decisions about what quantities of milk or butter should be produced, what quality, the prices to be paid for the raw milk and fresh milk, wholesale costs, how much milk or butter should be sold and where it should be sold, all could now be made at the highest levels and be certain of enforcement.

The reform program realized the fondest hopes of the agricultural experts, themselves often the children of peasants, who had long advocated measures such as these as a solution to agricultural poverty. They saw in the growing centralization and modernization of the dairy sector a means or ironing out the gigantic swings in supply and demand, with consequent price swings which were so harmful to the capital-poor peasantry. They saw, as well, in the increased quality production and the control over distribution a means of driving out cheap domestic products and foreign competitors, thus freeing the German market from the London butter price quotation. The reform program was, to a varying degree, welcomed or accepted by the advanced dairy producers, who had been selling their milk to dairies for many years or decades. Often, the

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dairies were cooperatively owned by these pioneer producers and the compulsory deliveries decreed by and extended by the National Socialists saved many a dairy from extinction. Consequently, as well as because of an aversion to state control and innovation, traditional peasant dairy producers resented the dairy reforms. They believed that these were enacted to increase the wealth of big businesses and cooperative dairies. The state involvement only heightened their belief that the measures represented a form of socialism. The revolution which the Nazis were attempting to carry out in the countryside involved more than just the relegation of the peasant producers to the role of processors. It also substantially rearranged the work roles on the farm and in the farm community, shifting the trained men into the stalls and eliminating much of the traditional women's work. Such an upheaval added to the resentment.

But the peasants had only limited means to resist the dairy reforms, especially after the centrifuges and butter tubs were seized. Milk spoils rapidly and easily; even butter will not last forever. To provide the household and farm animals with milk, without waste, required that the milk be separated into cream, whole milk, or skimmed milk. By 1941 or 1942 only the dairies could perform the task. However, balancing out the disadvantages was the ease with which black market milk and butter could be hidden, transported, and sold. No amount of surveillance

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could prevent the black market trade from flourishing.

The reforms met the wishes of Party and RNS functionaries. The greater degree of control of production and distribution enabled the regime to maintain assured supplies for the urban consumer during wartime. It enabled them to control demand more than before, for peasants supplying their own needs are not susceptible to rationing. The ability of the dairy sector to meet German nutritional needs during the Second World War is testimony to the success of their vision.

For all the advantages of dairy reforms to the regime, agronomists, and many farm owners, the Nazis hardly intended to upend the dairy sector at the outset. Rather, the dairy sector reforms were a typical example of bureaucratic goals which took on a certain life of their own. Once launched, it proved impossible to rethink both the aims of and methods used in the dairy sector reforms. The growing coercion and increasing scope of the reforms was less the result of conscious policy than of haphazard responses to early setbacks.

Nevertheless, the dairy reforms exemplify the revolutionary aspect of National Socialism which has been all too often downplayed, denied, or ignored. The structural changes in the German dairy sector benefitted the most modern and efficient peasant producers and found the least favor in the more traditional peasant households. The reforms upended customary household roles. They were

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advocated by the agricultural technocracy and leading representatives of industry. They reinvigorated an agricultural sector which played only a minor role on the eastern estates. National Socialism had broken a deadlock of fifty years and reversed a policy pursued from Bismarck through Weimar.

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Notes to Chapter III

[1]In 1926/29, Bavarian peasant farms devoted to grain cultivation earned, respectively (from livestock:dairy:arable, in marks), 155:48:145. Fodder cultivators earned 179:109:70. Pasture farmers earned 179:145:14; from Bayerische Landesbauernkammer, Die Produktions- und Absatzverhaeltnisse der Bayerischen Landwirtschaft im Rahmen der deutschen und auslaendischen Wirtschaftsverhaeltnisse (Munich, Kommissionsverlag J. Schweizer, 1931), p. 36; Wochenblatt, 23 March 1935; Abrahams, pp. 86 and 94; Sering, Deutsche Landwirtschaft, pp. 503-504.

[2]See the discussion of the Landshut dairy market below on pp. 138-139. Peasants will often respond to lower agricultural prices by increasing production; Abraham, pp. 61-63.

[3]Sering, Deutsche Landwirtschaft, pp. 504-05, 890-902.

[4]Ibid., pp. 502, 891-92.

[5]For a history of the Bavarian dairy sector, see Franz Krieger, Allgaeuer Alpwirtschaft einst und jetzt (Kempten: Volkswirtschaft Verlag, 1950); Karl Lindner, Geschichte der Allgaeuer Milchwirtschaft (Kempten: Milchwirtschaftlicher Verein im Allgaeu, 1955); Alois Schlögl, Bayerische Agrargeschichte (Munich: Bayerischer Landwirtschaftsverlag, 1954), pp. 637-651; Produktions- und Absatzverhaeltnisse, pp. 49, 83-87; On Landbutter production, see Deutsche Molkerei-Zeitung, 12 October 1933 in StAM Landwirtschaftsamt Aichach 170 for Bavaria and Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer das Deutsche Reich (1941), p. 151 for Germany. On butter types see Wochenblatt, 18 January 1934.

[6]Sering, Deutsche Landwirtschaft, pp. 505-506.

[7]Produktions- und Absatzverhaeltnisse, pp. 57-58; Deutsche Molkerei Zeitung, 12 October 1933.

[8]Reichsgesetzblatt I (1930), p. 421.

[9]StAL Rep. 168/1 Verz. 2538 5125, Milk Producers' Association Landshut and environs, 8 November 1931; Milk Supply Association Landshut, draft statutes, 15 February 1932: MB Landwirtschaftsstelle Landshut, December 1932; Milk Producers' Association Landshut and environs to District Administration Lower Bavaria and Upper Palatinate, 1 March 1933.

[10]StAL Rep. 168/1 Verz. 2538 5125, Staatsanzeiger, 27 April 1933.

[11]See the files in StAL Rep. 168/1 Verz. 2538 5126 and 5128; also Rep. 168/1 Verz. 2539 5153.

[12]Mehrens, Marktordnung, pp. 233-35.

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[13]Ibid., pp. 235-36.

[14]Wochenblatt, 18 January 1934.

[15]Deutsche Molkerei-Zeitung, 12 October 1933.

[16]Reichsgesetzblatt, I (1933), p. 527.

[17]Mehrens, pp. 23-24.

[18]Wochenblatt, 21 December 1933.

[19]BHSA MA 106672, MB/NB 12 December 1933, 19 March, 3 April 1934, 8 April 1935; MA 106677, MB/OF 4 February 1933, 5 January, 19 January 1934, 9 December 1935; MA 106682, MB/Sch 16 February, 3 March, 19 March, 17 April, 4 June 1934.

[20]Nationalsozialistische Landpost, 16 March 1934.

[21]See Chapter I, pp. 43-44.

[22]BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 9 December 1935; MA 106672, MB/NB 7 November, 9 December 1935; MA 106677, MB/OF 10 October, 9 December 1935; MA 106682, MB/Sch 7 May, 7 December 1935; MA 106680 MB/UF 8 December 1935.

[23]BHSA MA 106680, MB/UF 8 December 1935.

[24]BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 10 January 1936; MA 106677, MB/OF 9 January 1936; MA 106682, MB/Sch 7 December 1935; StAM Landwirtschaftsamt Ingolstadt 46, MB Landwirtschaftsstelle Ingolstadt, 30 December 1935.

[25]BHSA MA 106677, MB/OF 7 April 1936; Wochenblatt, 12 March 1936.

[26]BHSA MA 106677, MB/OF 7 April, 8 July 1936, StAM NSDAP 365, Kreisleiter Dr. Ager (Laufen) to Kreisleitung Laufen-Berchtesgaden, 28 October 1936.

[27]See Chapter I, p. 7.

[28]BHSA MA 106680, MB/UF 8 December 1936.

[29]BHSA MA 106672, MB/NB 7 July, 7 November 1936; MA 106680, MB/UF 7 July, 8 December 1936.

[30]StAL Rep. 168/1 Fasz. 2539 5153, BA to District Administration Lower Bavaria and Upper Palatinate, 8 August 1935.

[31]StAND KBS Noerdlingen III300, KBS Noerdlingen to Landrat Noerdlingen, 30 October 1940.

[32]Reichsgesetzblatt, I (1935), p. 1354.

[33]BHSA MA 106680, MB/UF 6 August 1937; MA 106672, MB/NB 8 December 1937.

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[34]Wochenblatt, 11 March 1937; see, also, BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 10 March 1937; MA 106672, MB/NB 7 July 1936; MA 106682, MB/Sch 7 September 1936.

[35]Wochenblatt, 9 January 1936.

[36]StAND KBS Noerdlingen II D500, Tierzuchtinspektion Donauwörth to OBF Marktoffingen, 24 January 1940.

[37]Wochenblatt, 20 August 1936; Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 22 (1938), p. 105.

[38]BHSA MA 106677, MB/OF 8 July 1936.

[39]StAM LRA 101195, Gendarmerie Post Altomuenster to Landrat Aichach, 9 June 1939.

[40]StAND KBS Noerdlingen II B100, LBS Bayern to all the KBS, 19 January 1937.

[41]Berichte 24 (1939): 322-23; BA Koblenz R43II/213b, Darré memorandum to Hitler, January 1939; Grundmann, pp. 112-13.

[42]BA R2/18072 Backe memorandum, 20 January 1934, cited in Grundmann, p. 113.

[43]Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer das Deutsche Reich (1941), p. 151.

[44]Farquharson, 22. 223-27; StAND KBS Noerdlingen MB/KBS February 1940.

[45]BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 10 August 1939, 9 January 1941; StAND KBS Noerdlingen, MB Landwirtschaftsstelle Noerdlingen April 1940.

[46]Berichte 26 (1941): 172.

[47]Ibid.

[48]StAND KBS Noerdlingen, MB/MLA for KBS, December 1941.

[49]StAND KBS Noerdlingen, MB Landwirtschaftsstelle Noerdlingen, November, December 1940, January 1941.

[50]BHSA MA 106678, MB/OF 6 March, 7 April 1940.

[51]BHSA ML 3988, MB Landwirtschaftsstelle Wasserberg, November 1940; MA 106673, MB/NB 8 March 1941.

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[52] Verkuendungsblatt des Reichsnaehrstandes, Anordnung Nummer 28 der Hauptvereinigung des deutschen Milch- und Fettwirtschaftsverbandes, 9 April 1941; Wochenblatt, 3 May 1941.

[53] See, among others, BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 10 May 1941; ML 3274, Wehrkreis Lagebericht 8 May 1941.

[54] BHSA MA 106683, MB/Sch 10 June, 10 August, 8 September 1941.

[55] StAND KBS Noerdlingen, MB/MLA for KBS, April, June, August 1941.

[56] StAND KBS Noerdlingen, MB/MLA for KBS, June 1941, January, February 1942.

[57] BHSA ML 3939, MB Landwirtschaftsstellen Landshut, Passau, Kemnath March 1941; MB Landwirtschaftsstellen Erding, Traunstein, Landshut April 1941; MA 106670, MB/OB 10 June, 9 September, 9 October 1941; MA 106674, MB/NB 8 April 1941; MA 106678, MB/OF 8 June 1941; MA 106681, MB/UF 12 May, 11 June, 13 August, 11 November 1941.

[58] BHSA ML 3939, MB Landwirtschaftsstellen Neustadt/Saal July 1939, Landshut October 1941; MA 106674, MB/NB 8 April, 18 May, 8 June, 8 July 1941, 8 March 1942, and 9 January 1942; ML 3939, MB Landwirtschaftsstellen Landsberg/Lech and Traunstein May 1941; For Pfaffenhofen, see StAM Landwirtschaftsamt Ingolstadt 46, MB May, June, July 1941 and Statistik des Deutschen Reichs 549.

[59] StAM Landwirtschaftsamt Aichach 170, presentation LBF Deininger, 15 November 1941; StAND BA Fuessen 3926, Gendarmerie Post Buching to Landrat Fuessen, 8 January 1941; MLA Markt-Oberdorf to Landrat Fuessen, 9 June, 25 June, 10 August 1941, 14 January 1942; KBF Markt-Oberdorf to Landrat Fuessen, 1 September 1941; Burgomaster Trauchgau to Landrat Fuessen, 27 September 1941; Landrat Fuessen to Burgomasters Trauchgau and Buching; 27 September 1941; MFWV Allgaeu, 16 September 1941; Landrat Fuessen to KBF Markt-Oberdorf, 1 October 1941; StAND BA Fuessen 3926, Frau Anna Meahrherr to Landrat Fuessen 8 December 1941; Landrat Fuessen to Frau Anna Meahrherr 10 December 1941.

[60] StAND BA Memmingen 10884, Statistisches Reichsamt, "Hauptergebnisse der Jahresmolkereierhebung 1938, Schwaben."

[61] StAND KBS Noerdlingen, MLA for KBS Noerdlingen, "Zusammenstellung der gesamten Milchablieferung im Landkreis Noerdlingen in den Jahren 1939-1941;" KBS Noerdlingen, MB/MLA for KBS Noerdlingen, December 1941.

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[62]StAND KBS Noerdlingen, MB/MLA for KBS Noerdlingen, December 1941.

[63]StAND BA Memmingen 7713, "Milchabliefering in LBS Bayern."

[64]Farquharson, p. 78. But Farquharson later admits that the greater efficiency of dairy versus farm butter production meant that Nazi reforms were beneficial for Germany as far as supplies were concerned, p. 228.

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CHAPTER IV

COMMUNAL COOPERATION IN RURAL NAZI GERMANY

The National Socialist agricultural reforms entailed more than a revolution within the individual farm. They also involved the entire peasant community. The preceding chapter concerned reforms that accelerated the transformation of the peasant farm into a purely productive unit situated at the beginning of the production and marketing chain. It described and analyzed the clash between the older pattern of peasant production and more modern standards based upon the division of labor between primary producer, processor, and distributor. The present chapter focuses on the peasant community, a community that had long ago worked out an intricate web of cooperation, based on communal rights and obligations. This had met the needs of peasants who produced for self-consumption or for local markets. The modernization of agricultural life during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries had initiated a long process of dissolution and commutation of common rights and common compulsion in favor of absolute property rights for rural land. Though the process had travelled much of the distance toward final commutation and dissolution of medieval rights by 1933, it was not yet completed.

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Pressure for complete and final dissolution of the common rights continued in the Third Reich and emanated from many quarters. The Agricultural Ministry and the RNS wished to see these rights abolished for they saw them as an encumbrance on agricultural progress and productivity. The rural communities which owned the commons were eager to put them to more lucrative uses during a period of economic recovery and expansion. The state agencies responsible for military and road construction were interested in procuring the land but were often unable to do so because of the common rights attached to it.

The pressure to dissolve all remaining common rights did not presage the end to all forms of rural cooperation in Nazi Germany. Even as the regime accelerated the dissolution of these vestiges of medieval cooperation, it promoted modern forms of cooperation which had developed in the rural milieu of the nineteenth century--modern agricultural cooperatives. These cooperatives had sprung up in the preceding century to meet the needs of those peasants who produced for a broad and distant market. The National Socialists found that these cooperatives could play a very useful role in furthering policy objectives set by the regime and agricultural authorities. The rural cooperatives could overcome many of the technical barriers to agricultural progress. They had been merged into the RNS organization (as described above, pages 22-23) and provided the authorities with a vast apparatus, deeply

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embedded in the rural milieu, with considerable prestige among the peasants, possessing sizable assets, and controlling strategic positions within peasant society. A further advantage of supporting the rural cooperatives was that the policy objectives of the cooperatives and the National Socialist agricultural reformers frequently coincided. Shared goals not only rendered the National Socialists more favorable to the rural cooperatives, they also made the cooperative leadership more willing to serve as agents of National Socialist policies--a considerable step forward in solving the basic problem of supervision and control of peasant society at a time of rapid change.

The encouragement of cooperatives and discouragement of traditional common rights is a further example of the social revolution which was engineered in rural Nazi Germany and demonstrates how the reactionary _Blut und Boden_ ideology could be placed at the service of the most modern agricultural reforms. The _Blut und Boden_ movement yearned for a selfless national community. Rural cooperatives pooled the resources of individual farm owners together in organizations easily manipulated by the national leadership. Adding to the attractiveness of cooperatives was the similarity of language between the rural cooperative and _Blut und Boden_ movements: cooperation, sacrifice, selflessness, and anti-capitalism. Support for the rural cooperatives and other rural associations would have been

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even greater had it not been for the suspicion, jealousy, rivalry, and hostility of certain groups within the private sector. These groups had their own spokesmen within the broadly based NSDAP. Their influence, and the stated policy of the NSDAP to balance competing social and economic interests as much as possible (or, at least, to appear to do so), placed an important brake on the advance of cooperatives in rural Germany. Nevertheless, important progress was made during the Third Reich.

The cooperative movement could only spread once the dead weight of common rights had been cleared from rural society. The advantage of cooperatives was that meager resources could be pooled efficiently and intelligently. Common rights were an impediment to this because they laid down exact prescriptions for land use which could not be changed without the agreement of the rights' holders. The number and variety of common rights which existed in Bavaria were enormous. Among these were wood rights, pasture rights, and passage rights. Many villages still practiced Flurzwang, compulsory crop rotation. In addition, plots were often delineated by obligatory fallow strips. Common rights could be owned by an individual or attached to a particular piece of land or farm. The rights could be alienable or inalienable, divisible or indivisiblle.[1]

After the introduction of the Erzeugungsschlacht and, subsequently, the Four Year Plan, common rights became less

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supportable from the point of view of the authorities. The policy objectives of the regime could only be realized if every last acre of available and worthwhile agricultural land was cultivated or open to pasturage, an impossibility as long as the land was open to dozens of peasant families and used according to ancient custom. Moreover, control over the commons remained vested in the organizations of common rights' holders or the individual rights' holders. Although their organizations, where they existed, had been placed under the authority of the RNS, custom still governed land use and the RNS could not arbitrarily overrule it. Thus, more efficient use of the land was barred by the remaining common rights.

The problem of the forest rights in Nazi Germany is typical of the clash between tradition and productivity and of the solutions adopted by the government. The forest rights were among the most important surviving rights in Bavaria in 1933. Though rights of this kind were found throughout Germany, they were concentrated in Bavaria and Austria for obvious geographic reasons. The LBS Bavaria reported in 1941 that 302,000 of 556,000 agricultural enterprises in Bavaria possessed a variety of forest rights. There were 125,000 farms with rights on state-owned forest land, 145,000 with rights for community forest land, and 32,000 with rights on privately owned forests. The amount of wood taken from the forests under these rights was con-

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siderable: the state forests supplied 84,000 m^3 timber and 260,000 m^3 firewood, the community forests 20,000 m^3 timber and 60,000 m^3 firewood, the private forests 1,000 m^3 timber and 20,000 m^3 firewood. The value of the rights to the state forests was even greater than the figures indicate, since they often included the rights to pasture and to forest refuse. The LBS estimated that the total worth of the rights was nearly 5.5 million marks.[2]

The drive for more productive use of resources under the Erzeugungsschlacht and the Four Year Plan led to pressure to dissolve or subvert the wood rights. A ban on the use of timber as firewood was issued in 1937. The RNS asserted, in an article in the Bavarian Wochenblatt, that the wood rights had often exceeded the needs of the rights' holders. The forest owners or administrators had frequently been forced to chop wood for firewood which would be more properly used for construction. The rights were hindering appropriate forestry management. One way to solve some of these problems was to substitute deciduous wood for conifer wood. The value of the substitution would be equal to the original wood. This substitution would not proceed without the agreement of the rights' holders. If, for some reason, this solution could not be adopted, then the rights should be dissolved and compensation in the form of cash, land, or woods paid to the former rights' holders.[3]

The decree was greatly resented by the Rechtler (rights' holder) community, even though the regime stressed

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that the lost rights would be adequately compensated. Peasants in the mountain regions of Bavaria, where the rights were most extensive, were the most vociferous in their protests. The peasants in Altoetting complained that their ancient rights had simply been expropriated. The authorities pointed out that the rights had been commuted, not stolen, but the Altoetting district office predicted that even after the terms of compensation had been settled and announced, the peasants would continue to claim "that their property values would depreciate because of the loss of the forest rights." Some local officials went beyond the decree, which made matters even more tense. The OBF in Traunstein issued a prohibition on the removal of forest waste in the winter of 1938, which greatly upset the peasants throughout the winter. There were reports of mass protests in the alpine regions in early February. One of the protest took the form of a petition which demanded the restoration of the wood rights; there were over 270 signatures. The leading centers of protests continued to be the alpine regions, where wood rights had always been greatest. The forests were the most extensive in Bavaria. The importance of the wood rights to the poorly endowed alpine farms was greater than elsewhere. The wood rights had been in existence longer in these regions than anywhere else--in Berchtesgaden they dated from the fourteenth century. Five months later, the redemption of firewood rights remained the leading complaint mentioned at peasant meetings

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in the Traunstein area.[4]

Common rights on community-owned land also came under increasing attack during the Third Reich. Despite the alienation of these rights during the preceding one hundred years, many of them survived in law, if not in practice. The rights continued to be exercised, above all, in the Upper Palatinate. They were especially important to the poorer peasants in the region, who let their geese and other farm animals run loose on the land. The community-owned land was the least productive land in Germany. The authorities exhorted the communities to make more appropriate use of the often fallow soil. But since the soil was burdened with obligations owned by residents of the communities, the community officials were unable to accomplish very much.[5]

In November 1937, the Bavarian Interior Ministry recommended some possible alternatives to promote more efficient use of community land. They suggested that the common rights be commuted or circumvented. But, seventeen months later, the Ministry found that very little had been achieved and suggested that more strenuous methods be adopted to rid the community soil of the encumbrances. A new directive held that "decisive and lasting improvement in the cultivation of community soil burdened with common rights can only be achieved if these rights are commuted and the plots transferred to the former rights' holders, with due consideration being given to the needs of the

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community."[6] The ideal solution would be for the community to reach an agreement with a majority of the rights' holders for the commutation of their rights. Compensation should, if possible, be in the form of a portion of the land. Monetary compensation should only be paid if the division of the commons would result in uneconomic dwarf plots. As payment for the loss of its land, the community should also receive a share, no longer burdened with common rights, equal to one-third of the total acreage. If a majority of the rights' holders could not reach an agreement or if the transfer of the land to private ownership was contrary to the public interest, the rights could be dissolved in return for a cash payment. The compensation should total about fifteen times the yearly value of the rights, calculated for the previous ten years. Community land which was not suited for cultivation should not be divided among the rights' holders. Rather, it should be deeded to them as cooperatively held property. One problem in reaching a final agreement on the dissolution of the commons was that many of the rights' holders were performing military service. Their absence made it difficult to get majority approval for dissolution of the rights. The Ministry recommended that, in this case, the community should undertake responsibility for cultivation of the land, temporarily subdividing it until the final settlement could be reached.[7]

It was not easy to reach agreement among the Rechtler

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community. For example, the common rights held in the Upper Palatinate were most useful to the poorer peasants, while they were an impediment to further aggrandizement of property by the larger peasant owners. A dispute broke out in the village of Untermauerbach over this issue. The village possessed a little less than three hectares of communal land. A poor retired peasant in the village went so far as to write a letter to the office of the *Reichskanzlei* in Berlin. He accused the communal authorities and the richer peasants of conspiring to steal the commons, which had already

> for the most part, vanished, because the peasants have attached it to their fields....When three poor farm families with many children tried to clear the remaining wasteland, they were asked to pay for it....Is one really behaving in an honorable and Christian way if he cedes communal land free of charge and with full property rights to peasants who own seventy hectares, while heads of families with many children who possess only a little land have to look on as others exploit the communal land?[8]

Although possibly exaggerated, such complaints were typical of the divisions within the *Rechtler* community which impeded commutation of the common rights.

But barriers to soil division were raised not only by the factions within the *Rechtler* community. Communal authorities, on occasion, also prevented the communal land from being divided. The village of Kulz bei Neuburg in the rural commune of Waldmuenchen had rights to over one hundred hectares of communal land. The rights'

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holders agreed unanimously in 1937 to divide the land among themselves and cultivate it. The Burgomaster of Waldmuenchen objected to the plan, since he wished to retain a portion of it for the commune. The Bavarian Economics Ministry supported the peasants, since they wanted to put fallow or underutilized land to more productive use. The Ministry finally proposed a compromise solution which would provide for a commonly owned livestock pasture, privately owned arable, and enough land given to poorer peasants to enable them to achieve Erbhof status.[9]

The communal jealousy toward its commons was, more often than not, a source of increased pressure to subdivide the land and dissolve the common rights, the previously cited example notwithstanding. The common rights were a financial loss to the communes, which could increase their revenues if they possessed outright title to the land, or at least to part of it. The economic recovery of the 1930's increased the value of the land, as did construction programs, military programs, and certain agricultural policies pursued by the regime, such as sheep raising subsidies.

The communes had, in fact, gained additional commons as a result of the Deutsche Gemeindeordnung (German Municipal Code) issued in 1935. The law had dissolved the legal character of the Ortschaft (rural village) and placed them entirely under the authority of the commune or municipality. The communes attempted to use their new authority to lay claim

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to the valuable village commons now incorporated into their community. But they were often thwarted by the traditional rights attached to the land, as was the case in the municipality of Schwangau in southern Swabia. Two villages had been incorporated into Schwangau: Forggen and Brunnen. The owners of five farms in Forggen had the rights to use two pasturages, totalling 122 hectares, which lay between the two villages. Since 1920, Brunnen had rented a part of these pastures as it possessed insufficient pasture of its own. But, in 1939, Brunnen ceased to pay the twenty-five marks per year rental which had been agreed upon. The village claimed that since the land was now municipal land, it was available to the residents of the entire municipality. The village of Forggen had a payment order issued to Brunnen. At this point, the Burgomaster of Schwangau entered the conflict, laying claim to the land under the clauses of the new Municipal Code. He demanded that the payment order be withdrawn. His position was that the rental was actually a private agreement between the two villages which he was empowered to approve or overturn. The residents of Forggen claimed that the rights to the land were not contractual in nature but stemmed from "time immemorial," and hence not subject to the control of the Burgomaster under the Municipal Code. The Burgomaster stated that Schwangau controlled the land and its use: "Indeed, the interests of the community are represented,

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not by the democratic, bourgeois principles of a former epoch, but by the National Socialist principle of 'public need over private greed."[10] Ultimately, the RNS sided with the Burgomaster, probably because it was concerned that the land be put to the most efficient use possible. But a final decision was delayed until after the war.[11]

The preceding case illustrates the extent to which the communes subverted age-old village rights in order to lay claim to a potentially valuable resource. The incentive was even more pronounced when the surviving commons proved financially burdensome to the municipality. The commune of Boos, in the district of Memmingen, owned 250 hectares of woodland which had been parcelled into one hundred shares of forest rights in 1848, one share for each of the one hundred farms in Boos at the time. Since then, some of the shares had been purchased so that, by 1938, ninety-three remained outstanding. Each share entitled its owner to a small amount of firewood each year. In 1900, the commune decided to pay each shareholder an equivalent cash sum each year, rather than have good timber used for fuel. However, the inhabitants of Boos who did not possess wood rights objected and initiated a suit and the proposal was abandoned. When the Four Year Plan prohibited the use of lumber for fuel, the problems resurfaced. The shareholders began to receive a yearly cash payment in lieu of the wood, moving the other residents to begin a suit once again.[12] The conflict indicates how communal rights, parcelled out

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when a commune was nearly coequal to the peasant community, were no longer supportable once the commune had outgrown its peasant origins. Communal attempts to place these rights on a businesslike cash basis were obstructed by non-peasant inhabitants who would rather have done away with the rights altogether.

Wehrmacht programs also contributed to pressure to dissolve the common rights. The forest rights in the Mittenwald area, for example, were an obstacle to military needs and discussions were begun in 1936 to have them commuted. As in Boos, the Mittenwald residents owned no private woods or pasture. Instead, they had pasture rights on eight thousand tagewerks (a little more than an acre) of state-owned forests. During the heyday of liberal reforms in the nineteenth century, the pasture rights had been strictly delineated, shared among 384 individuals. The regulations governing the rights stipulated that only as many animals as the shareholder could maintain over the winter could be pastured on the state land. Any animals which caused damage to the forests were excluded from it and pasturing was forbidden among young trees. The live-stock had to be tended by a shepherd. These arrangements were supervised by three loosely organized Weidegenossenschaften (pasture cooperatives), organized by the shareholders. However, these cooperatives possessed no legally recognized authority and therefore

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were not authorized to represent the peasants of Mittenwald.

When the Wehrmacht decided to purchase land in the Mittenwald forests in 1937, the absence of a legally constituted organization of peasants made a final disposition of the land exceedingly difficult to achieve. The major obstacle was the nature of the compensation to be paid to the shareholders. They were divided over this question. Some of them had abandoned farming and wanted to take a cash settlement. Others still practiced farming and also wanted cash. The remaining peasants wanted cash only if it would be applied to improvements on the surviving pasturage, the solution advocated by the KBF and the Burgomaster. Since the legal ownership of the land remained so ill-defined, a final solution would require years of prolonged negotiations. So, as in similar cases, the KBF and the Burgomaster proposed that a mandatory cooperative be formed which would be empowered to negotiate a settlement. A law was even drafted in the Bavarian Interior Ministry to facilitate this goal, but was superseded by a Reich Law issued in 1937.[13]

The road construction program begun by the National Socialists was yet another incentive to a final dissolution of the common rights. Public construction was one of the more lucrative sources of revenue available to the municipalities. But the revenue would never materialize

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as long as claims to common lands by common rights' holders blocked free disposal of the property. A dispute between the community of Mitterschau and a formerly unincorporated village broke out over this question. A part of the former village land, with common rights attached to it, was sold to the state so that a road could be built on it. The rights were declared to be dissolved. The shareholders, with the support of the Bavarian LBF, protested this arbitrary and unilateral dissolution of their rights. They claimed that the agreement of a majority of the shareholders was required before the rights could be dissolved. An agreement should stipulate the form and the amount of the compensation for the lost rights. The municipal and district authorities claimed that only an alteration in property ownership required prior agreement and that rights could be suspended by administrative fiat. The bind in which the regime now found itself was aptly summarized by the Regierungspraesident for Lower Bavaria and the Upper Palatinate. He admitted that the claims of both parties had merit. The municipality was cheating the shareholders, yet the shareholders were subverting the self-administration of the municipality. The LBF, concerned that the land be properly used, nevertheless was unwilling to see his rural wards unjustly deprived of their property rights.[14]

Though there are no exact statistics available concerning the dissolution of commons during the Third Reich,

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it is obvious from the archival sources and from the announced policy directives of the Reich and Laender authorities that the remaining commons came under accelerated pressure for their final dissolution. One statistic, cited by Frieda Wunderlich for Baden, claims 21.9 percent of the farms in Baden had their rights abolished by 1938.[15] The figure for heavily forested Bavaria could not have been lower. The abolition of commons was often linked, as we saw in the case of Mittenwald, with recommendations by the Bavarian state agricultural officials and RNS officials that some form of cooperative substitute for the dissolved commons. Sometimes the cooperative might even be a compulsory organization. Thereby, the restrictive commons would be replaced by modern cooperatives under the control of the RNS. Instead of dividing the commons into uneconomically small plots of land, the land could be put to agricultural use in the most efficient way possible.

The cooperatives represented, in general, the most progressive and efficient elements in rural Germany. The cooperative movement had emerged from the peasant milieu during the crisis which overtook German agriculture in successive waves beginning in the 1840's. The most famous name in German cooperative history was undoubtedly Friedrich Wilhelm Raiffeisen, a Burgomaster in the Rhineland, who founded a series of agricultural self-help

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organizations in the 1850's. The founding principles of one of the early Raiffeisen cooperatives set the pattern for later groups influenced by Raiffeisen and his successors: credit to be made available to cooperative members only; credit limits to be set by a General Assembly; long-term and low interest credit; cooperative purchases and sales of agricultural products, tools, and the like; administrative posts to have no salary or other compensation.[16]

The growth of intensive market agriculture in Bavaria in the nineteenth century began to make demands on the peasantry which, many agricultural reformers insisted, could only be alleviated through cooperation. The need for higher quality seed, for fertilizer, and for modern machinery required large sums of money or credit. At the time, the peasants relied on their rural supplier for their credit. Their supplier would keep a running account of peasant purchases and sales which would be settled once a year. Therefore, the peasant would keep his surplus invested through his supplier and his debts would represent a primitive type of credit. Unfortunately, the monopoly position held by the supplier was often used to exploit the peasant. In any case, such credit as the supplier could make available to the peasant would barely suffice to meet his growing need for capital. Peasants began to feel an increasing need for a peasant-owned and peasant-controlled credit organization. The first rural cooperatives in Bavaria were founded in 1866 and were usually credit

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cooperatives. The first Raiffeisen-affiliated cooperative in Bavaria was founded in 1877. The number of credit cooperatives in Bavaria totalled 438 by 1891. Their growth was encouraged by the Bavarian kingdom and the semi-public agricultural associations, the Landwirtschaftliche Verein des Bayerns. It was at the urging of these two that a unified cooperative organization for Bavaria was founded in 1894--the Bayerische Landesverband landwirtschaftliche Genossenschaften ev.[17]

Numerous other agricultural cooperatives had been created in Bavaria by the end of the nineteenth century. Among these were the threshing, electricity, seed, warehouse, pasture, arable, breeding, and meadow cooperatives. The credit cooperatives also expanded their activities to include the sale of agricultural implements. A livestock agency under cooperative control was also active in Munich, Nuremberg, and Augsburg by 1908. One of the most important Bavarian cooperatives was BAYWA--Bayerische Warenvermittlung, the purchaser and supplier of agricultural goods. BAYWA was founded in 1923, when the commercial activities of the Bayerische Landwirtschaftsbund were separated to form an independent organization. BAYWA had 173 main branch offices and 241 smaller offices. Another cooperative group was that of the Landwirtschaftliche Zentralgenossenschaft des Bayerischen Bauernvereins, eGmbH, a Regensburg-based group unaffiliated with the Raiffeisen groups. It had been set up by the Christliche

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Bauernvereine and it carried on a lively trade in agricultural products. Another Bavarian cooperative was GEWA, created in 1926 under the auspices of the Bayerische Bauernverein. It too brought and sold agricultural products.[18]

Both the nationwide and regional rural cooperatives began to move toward unification in the troubled decade following the First World War, leading to the formation of the Reichsverband der Deutschen Landwirtschaftlichen Genossenschaften in 1929. After the National Socialists took power, unification was completed. The Bavarian cooperative movement was finally unified when a single organization was created by the fusion of the two surviving groups in February 1934. The new organization included 320,000 members, or 90 percent of the Bavarian peasant population.[19]

Rural cooperatives were an integral part of any hopes to increase agricultural productivity. During the Weimar period, they had figured in the plans of the "dynamic sector" in industry to create a more modern agricultural sector capable of supplying German industry with raw materials and of consuming their products. The reform proposals of the agricultural experts echoed these plans, since they too hoped that an alliance could be forged between German industry and German agriculture, especially its peasant wing.[20] The attitude of the National Socialist regime toward the cooperative movement was not immediately

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apparent. The radical wing of the movement had advocated compulsory rural cooperatives as early as 1925 (see page 7). Since the NSDAP was a broad coalition of diverse social groups, there were some Nazis who viewed the cooperatives with favor and others who wanted to limit or eliminate their influence. Nevertheless, the overall growth of rural cooperatives during the Third Reich indicates that those who favored the movement were able to carry the day, if not entirely. The number of Raiffeisen cooperatives in Bavaria rose steadily between 1933 and 1936, then declined slightly due to the consolidation campaign ordered by the regime. There were 6,102 cooperatives by 1945, compared to 6,338 in 1933. A more accurate reflection of cooperative strength and growth in the Third Reich are the membership totals. Membership continued to climb until 1942, rising from 477,950 members in 1934 to 576,791 in 1942.[21]

National Socialist support for the cooperatives was based on their undoubted contribution to agricultural modernization. For example, the regime realized that one of the only effective antidotes to rural migration was the substitution of machine power for human power. But a report in 1939 pointed out that tractors were suitable only on farms of over twenty hectares, which accounted for less than 15 percent of German farms.[22] One way of solving the problem was to promote compulsory land consolidation, which could be done on a private basis, such as through expropriation and grants of land to better situated farm owners.

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We shall discuss this alternative at greater length below (see pages 249-254). Another alternative was for the land to be turned over to cooperatives, whether through actual property sales or through transfer of jurisdiction. The so-called Ackerbauvereine (arable cooperatives) could undertake the common cultivation of the former dwarf plots. There were 22,000 members of such associations in Middle Franconia alone.[23]

The tasks which the cooperatives could accomplish went well beyond this one example. Even when expensive equipment was suitable for small- or medium-sized farms, it was often too expensive for one farm owner to purchase. Besides, many types of tools or machines were not needed that often and their use could not possibly justify the expense. One solution was for the peasants to form loose associations which would share the costs of machinery and tools purchases. Cooperatives were an even better solution. They could dispose over more capital, which would enable them to hire a technician to care for the machinery and to teach members how to use it. Greater resources would also permit more machine and tool purchases.[24]

Flax cultivation was another area where cooperatives offered special advantages. The cultivation of flax was a major goal of the National Socialists, since it would enable them to supply more of their clothing needs from domestic sources. Under plans developed by the regime, each village was required to undertake communal flax culti-

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vation. Since the amount of land which was needed for flax cultivation was relatively small, the plots devoted to flax could be rotated each year among the village peasants, who would receive a small rent in return for the land which was set aside. The plough and field work would be shared by all the village residents.[25]

One of the main functions of the rural cooperatives would be educational. Cooperatives could pioneer in the use of new farm machinery and techniques. A credit cooperative near Dillingen, for example, had purchased a seed cleaner in 1934, but even the cooperative members refused to see any advantages offered by the apparatus. The cooperative officials then set up a demonstration field which was planted with the cleaned seed. They arranged inspection tours to demonstrate the value of the cleaning--fewer weeds and higher yields. By 1936, many of the cooperative members and even non-members were using the machine. Bavarian cooperatives possessed over 2,400 such devices by 1936.[26]

National Socialist reforms of agricultural production and marketing were especially advantageous to many cooperative organizations for reasons which go beyond those mentioned above, as may be seen in the dairy sector. As the discussion in Chapter III demonstrated, the National Socialists wanted to gain more control over the production, use, and distribution of dairy products. They could only achieve their goal by having the farm-produced raw milk delivered to modern dairies. The transfer of control over the

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raw milk from the farm to the dairy meant that production and distribution could be more efficient and controllable and led, ultimately, to the creation of MLA attached to each dairy in Germany. The MLA further tightened the links between the marketing associations and the dairies. The National Socialists hoped that the dairies, beside being more efficient producers and more amenable to market regulation, would act as watchdogs over the circle of peasant producers who had been assigned to them. The dairies, acting in their own interests, would report cases of non-delivery of milk by peasants. No additional costs were necessary to ensure effective, though hardly disinterested, supervision.

The authorities also considered the relative worth of privately owned versus cooperatively owned dairies. To a certain extent, the RNS found little to recommend one form of ownership over another. The tendency of the National Socialists to freeze, or at least appear to freeze, social relationships at their 1933 level also discouraged favoritism toward either group. The steady creation and expansion of the dairy delivery zones tended to provide each dairy with the market share which it already possessed. To be sure, many a floundering dairy cooperative was saved by the compulsory dairy delivery zones allotted to it. One dairy, founded in 1924, was going bankrupt, since peasants continued to deliver their milk to private tradesmen who

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picked up the raw milk from the farm. No amount of persuasion could change their habits, not even higher raw milk prices. Only after the creation of a milk delivery zone, with no farm lying further than eleven kilometers from the cooperative dairy, did the number of peasants delivering milk to the dairy increase beyond the break even point. Similar tales could just as easily be cited for private dairies on the verge of collapse, although there had been a rash of cooperative ventures during the 1920's, many of which were failing.[27]

The beginning of the dairy consolidation campaign in 1936 finally tipped the balance of policy in the direction of dairy cooperatives. Since it was up to the dairy marketing associations to decide which dairies would survive and which would be compelled to cease operations, and since it was the state which provided the funds for new construction, the question of ownership was inevitably a subject for policy consideration.

A memorandum prepared by the MFWV Bayern in October, 1938 concerned one such decision and gives some indication of the motives involved in the decision to promote cooperative over private dairies. The report concerned the projected construction of a new dairy in the southern Bavarian spa of Bad Reichenhall. The growth of tourism in the area had led to rising milk consumption already before 1933. A private dairy owner in the city, Herr Spieldiener,

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sensing an opportunity, began to purchase milk from a widening circle of peasants and was able to meet the needs of the expanding market. But peasants from a nearby village, who had been selling their milk directly to consumers in the resort, were slowly being excluded from the market. With the financial support of the District Office, the peasants founded their own dairy cooperative in 1927. They could not have chosen a less auspicious moment, since the Great Depression was about to occur. Compounding their difficulties, the private dairy sought, with some success, to woo desperate peasants away from cooperative raw milk deliveries by paying prices which the newly founded cooperative was unable to match. After 1933, the MFWV saw no reason to intervene too vigorously in this competition. The compulsory dairy delivery zones which were created for the two dairies apportioned the market between them based upon their previous shares.[28]

Market regulation was no solution. The cooperative continued to languish, while the private dairy was unable to adjust its production to satisfy the still expanding market, since it was not permitted to expand its deliveries. Everyone now urged the construction of a new dairy, equipped with the most modern techniques. Since both existing enterprises would be closed, the real decision concerned the question of ownership of the new dairy--would it be the cooperative or the private dairy owner?

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The MFMV report admitted that the business acumen of Spieldiener was not open to question. His initiative and expertise were of the highest order. But, in argument against his preferment, it was pointed out that he had been an active leader of the local BVP. The SA had undertaken a house search, in the expectation of finding suspicious material, but had turned up nothing. Nevertheless, the incident, said the report, had left Spieldiener embittered toward the new regime so that "he is no longer able to unconditionally and actively do his utmost for the state." And it concluded that while his talents were undoubted they did not seem appropriate to an enterprise which served community needs, since they were directed more toward personal profit.

The report then discussed the possibility of placing the new dairy under cooperative management. It conceded that the cooperative had been through some exceedingly difficult times. Perhaps, though it could not be proven, the cooperative's difficulties could be laid at the feet of Spieldiener. It was a wonder that it had survived at all, despite the very low payments it made for the raw milk deliveries. Its survival was a convincing demonstration that the cooperative had done as well as could be expected under the arduous circumstances. The report asserted that the cooperative form of ownership possessed many advantages: "Only the cooperative is

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suitable as the operator of the new enterprise, in order that the peasantry may exercise a proper influence on it. In particular, it should be pointed out that in ten years the enterprise will have been depreciated and the peasantry would then own a business whose profits would go entirely to them." Should Spieldiener be given control of the dairy: "The concern will be forever lost to the producers and sold to the private capitalist interests of a single individual." There were other advantages to cooperative management. The leadership of a cooperative could easily be changed, in contrast to a privately owned dairy, whose owners could neither be selected nor removed.

Two final points were made in favor of cooperative management. The Nazi _Kreisleiter_ firmly believed that the dubious political past of Spieldiener rendered him unsuitable as owner of the new dairy. Also, the Agricultural Office stated unequivocably that the greatest difficulties would ensue if the peasants all had to deliver to Spieldiener. "The peasants will not be coerced to fulfill their delivery quotas, even with police measure. On the other hand, no peasant will have cause to hold back on milk deliveries if he delivers to a cooperative enterprise which peasants themselves own."

The memorandum offers an excellent example of the advantages of cooperatives to the National Socialist state. The semi-public status (they were part of the RNS) meant that the regime had much greater control over their opera-

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tions. The prestige of cooperatives among the peasants also contributed to social peace and lessened the need for police measures. These considerations were of undoubted importance as the consolidation accelerated between 1936 and 1944. Although the consolidation involved both privately and cooperatively owned dairies, it contributed, as the figures from 1930 to 1945 indicate, to a growing preponderence of cooperative dairies (see Table 13 on page 228).

There were other reasons why cooperatives were encouraged under the Third Reich. Many of the agricultural policies of the National Socialists coincided with policy goals long advocated by the cooperative movement, which generally represented the most modern and progressive sector of peasant agriculture. For example, the _Koerordnung_ (Selective Breeding Law), a measure which placed strict limits on the types of livestock which could be used for breeding (see Chapter I, page 47), was supported by the regime and progressive farm owners. In the past, the task of breeding had been, to a large extent, a group activity, since the costs of owning a bull or boar were far too prohibitive for the small- or middle-sized peasant farms. In the Middle Ages, the breeding animals had been procured by the parsonage or tithe agent, but their declining role led the commune or village residents to transfer the duties to one of its members, who would bear the costs in return for a use fee or share the expenses with all the members of the

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Table 13

Comparative Importance of Private and Cooperative Dairies in Bavaria

	1930	1933	1934	1937	1944	1945
Private Dairies	742	808	856	755		
Cooperative Dairies	674	811	1,360	1,835	1,595	1,591
Milk deliveries to Cooperatives (kiliograms, 000)		250,000 (est.)		517,088*	813,427	
Milk deliveries to Private Dairies		640,000 (est.)		770,296		
Book Value of Cooperatives (million RM)		7.2	8.2	11.7°	22.4	
Cooperative Dairy Membership			52,618	93,440	125,489	127,148

* 1935 °1936

Source: Statistiches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 18 (1934) p. 90. Statistiches Jahrbuch Bayern 22 (1938) p. 109. Rid und Hohenegg, pp. 50-51, 68-69.

village. The peasant retained the option of buying his own breedstock, although some villages had laws requiring all the residents to pay for the upkeep of the animal.[30]

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The *Koerordnung* replaced the loose and haphazard system of local responsibility with the strict dictates of a centralized administration. To be sure, a form of *Koerordnung* had long existed in Bavaria, which had been one of the leading *Laender* in this regard. But such laws as did exist had been only loosely applied until 1933. The new regulations encouraged cooperation in two ways. The first of these was the actual ownership of the animal. Prior to the new law, the peasant had had a choice between three means of raising his farm animals. He could purchase the livestock at one of the markets and raise it on the farm. He could own his own bull or boar and breed his own livestock. Or he could use the services of a local breeding animal. From a purely economic point of view, the last alternative had a lot to recommend it, since it avoided unnecessary duplication of breeding stock and enabled the community to share in the expenses of such animals. Nevertheless, prior to 1933, the predominance of privately owned select breeding stock was overwhelming, as shown by Table 14.

With the advent of the *Koerordnung*, all choice, in essence, disappeared. The first possibility had become increasingly unpalatable, since the cost-price ratio between young animals and slaughter-age animals made it hardly worthwhile to buy livestock to raise for slaughter. The *Koerordnung* actually exacerbated the unfavorable differen-

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Table 14

Ownership of Select Breeding Stock in 1931

	Private	Community	Cooperative
Bulls	36,343	7,333	2,558
Boars	5,547	1,525	338

Source: Statistiches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 18 (1934), p. 82.

tial, since the livestock bought for eventual slaughter at the markets were becoming increasingly expensive due to more stringent selection rules. The second choice, to purchase one's own breedstock, was also more difficult as a result of the new regulation. The permits for breeding required the peasants to procure higher quality livestock, which were, in the main, far too expensive for the average farm owner. That left the peasant community with only one alternative: to undertake the responsibility for supplying breeding material, the animals, directly, organizing a cooperative, or contracting with a farm owner to maintain the animal. In any case, the overall result was to transfer responsibility for breeding from the many individual owners, who had continued to dominate breeding activities, to the peasant community,[31] a goal acknowled by the regime.[32]

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A second way in which the *Koerordnung* encouraged rural association was in the area of breedstock supplies. The high quality breedstock could only be raised by the numerous *Zuchtverbaende* or *Herdebuchgesellschaften* (two types of breeding societies) which had sprung up in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The societies generally concentrated on a single type of livestock, usually a single breed of livestock, and were organized into regional associations. They had been the most active proponents of selective breeding laws, had long agitated for stricter regulation of breeding activities, and stood to gain a great deal from such regulations, since the livestock bought for breeding would have to be purchased from one of its members. In addition, the societies were given an important role in the selection procedures. Just as the cooperative dairies, representing the most progressive dairy-producing peasants, had a vested interest in supporting National Socialist dairy sector reforms, the breeding associations, representing an elite section of rural livestock owners, had every reason to support National Socialist breeding regulations. In both cases, the associations or cooperatives would stand to gain for themselves and at the same time assist the regime in policing the implementation of its laws.

The enactment of the new legislation for selective breeding met with considerable resistance from the peasantry, making the need for supervision all the greater. There

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were a number of factors at work in the peasants' response. From a purely physical point of view, the requirement that all breeding animals be certified at selection sites was a severe hardship on many peasants. The regime's preference for collective certification was based on the belief that it would enable peasants to compare livestock. Aside from any educational value, it must be noted that collective certification was a perfect opportunity for displaying the wares of the breeding associations and those of agriculture suppliers. Thus, collective certification performed an undoubted business function as well. But the peasants resented the relatively long distances which they had to travel to the certification sites, even more so in remote or geographically disadvantaged regions such as the Jura, Allgäu, Lower Bavaria, and Upper Palatinate. Here the distances from the farms to the certification sites were greater, the road networks were less developed, and the settlements were generally dispersed. In Vilsbiburg (Lower Bavaria), for example, there were one thousand separate settlements organized into thirty-nine communes. Some of its communes had twenty-five or more settlements, often numbering no more than a single farmstead. The selective breeding laws were even more exacting for such regions, since areas of dispersed settlement patterns could not possibly satisfy breeding requirements with a small number of animals concentrated in a few villages. Some Allgäu communes estimated that they would need about fifty to sixty

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bulls. It would be all but impossible for these communes to afford so many first-class bulls. Finally, the remote regions of Bavaria were most resistant to the Koerordnung for one additional reason. The settlement pattern meant that privately owned breeding animals were much more widespread in such areas. Since it was the private breeder who had most to lose from the new regulation, resentment against it was far greater there than elsewhere.[33]

As always, there was a psychological element to the resistance which greeted the new law. Many peasants, once again especially those in the more remote regions of Bavaria, were attached to their customary livestock-mating procedures and felt an understandable anger toward outsiders interfering in the breeding practices on their farm. In addition, there was a widespread belief that the new laws were contributing to a higher number of barren matings and that the breeding association livestock were not suitable material for their private herds.[34]

The measures were even more opposed for their social content. The average peasant felt a special resentment toward the law because it seemed to be written entirely for the benefit of the breeding associations. At the height of the Great Depression, before the National Socialists took power, many Bauernkammern in Bavaria had petitioned the district offices to temporarily suspend the expensive and burdensome collective selections.[35]

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Their campaign was opposed, as one would expect, by the breeding associations, who were convinced that the Bauernkammern were using the crisis to put an end to collective selection for all time. One of the breeding associations even perceived that the campaign was being inspired and organized by individual private bull owners, "who cannot keep pace with others in the quality of their livestock."[36] The division between the body of the peasantry and the elite breeding associations continued well into the National Socialist era and was accentuated by the regime's encouragement of collective selection procedures. The peasants in the Kempton area, a part of Allgäu, believed that the Koerordnung "has been enacted purely in the interests of the Herdebuchgesellschaften, to enable them to sell their young bulls at higher prices."[37] A farmer, writing to the Food and Agriculture Ministry, was equally explicit: "I am the owner of a farm, yet I was not permitted to use my own bull for breeding with my own livestock, although he is a first-class bull...the Herdebuchgesellschaft requires that all of us purchase one of their bulls. But their own material is not suited to this region. We will all be ruined with their livestock if another solution is not found."[38]

Of course, the attitude of the breeding associations was shaped by factors other than mere economic interest. They were also long-standing advocates of the application of eugenic principles to animal husbandry. The quickest,

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surest, and most efficient method of extending the lessons of selective breeding learned in the breeding associations to the bulk of the peasantry was through compulsory collective selection of breeding stock. As with the cooperative organizations and similar agricultural self-help groups in other branches of agricultural activity, the interests of the elite agriculturalists and of the National Socialist agricultural administration, if not completely congruent, were at least complementary. The National Socialists needed increased productivity, which necessitated growing control over farm operations. The breeding associations, delighted that the reforms which they had long urged were now being implemented, could be counted on to encourage and help to organize the breedstock selections. Just as importantly, the breeding associations could also serve as an adjacent, supervisory administration, reporting on the results of the collective selections and on problems which arose from resistance and disobedience. Since, as with so many other areas of agricultural reform, the regions most likely to reject the new methods were precisely those where supervision by the police was most difficult, the aid of the breeding associations was a most welcome addition.

The regime did not merely promote programs which redounded to the benefit of agricultural cooperatives and associations; it also found it necessary to promote compulsory cooperatives in certain areas of agricultural reform, such as the _Berglandaktion_, a special program for

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the revitalization of mountain farm communities which was announced in 1941. A blueprint drawn up in the Reich Agriculture Ministry called for new machines, drainage, water regulation, improved livestock, and the construction of farm, pasturage, and processing facilities. The first community chosen to receive special attention was Schleching in Upper Bavaria. The plans for Schleching were described at length in the Bavarian RNS weekly. Even one community required huge sums of money, although no precise figures were mentioned in the article. In addition to capital investment, the program envisioned increasing and continuing cooperation among the peasants of the commune, since so many of the new facilities would be shared by all the residents. Indeed, a _Wasser- und Bodenverband_ (Water and Soil Association) was supposed to be created and placed in charge of the entire undertaking. The _Bodenverband_ Schleching would be headed by an expert named by the Bavarian Economics Ministry and all peasants in the region would be members. They would pay for the project through delivery of materials, handwork, and harness animals. It was almost as if, just as the old corporate associations were finally being dissolved, the peasants were being forcibly inscribed in new public associations controlled by state agencies. And, though the obligations to the ancient feudal lord had disappeared, they had only been transformed into obligations to the omnipotent National Socialist state.[39]

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The coincidence between the dissolution of older forms of association and the creation of newer forms of cooperation was most clearly in evidence in forestry. Just as the regime was trying to remove the encumbrances which existed on the public and private woodlands (see pages 203-206 and 211-213), in order to promote scientific forestry, the RNS began to promote reforms on the small plots of woods owned by the peasants. Bavaria was a stronghold of private plots of woodlands--42 percent of all of Bavarian farms possessed some private woods.[40] The small wooded plots had been formed during the liberal epoch of German agriculture, when the communal woods had been parcelled out to the individual peasants during the nineteenth century. In the eyes of National Socialist agricultural experts, the division of the woods had severely damaged the German forestry industry, for it led to uneconomic holdings of woodlands. The peasant usually used his woods rather wastefully, using it to meet some immediate cash need; if he needed money, he cut down and sold some wood. The result of peasant mistreatment was wooded land of inappropriately aged trees, which harmed the growth potential of the woods. The woods could not be properly cared for, the RNS asserted, because the peasants lacked the expertise which came with training and experience. The peasant had too little time to learn about what amounted to a side enterprise of the farm and old-age custom could hardly suffice: "No one still believes that the fallow is a worthwhile practice, yet all

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too often the customs of yore are still applied to the woods."[41]

Only communal cooperation could raise the private woods to their potential level of productivity. Cooperatives were one alternative and had been founded in some places for this purpose. Though it found cooperatives useful, the RNS preferred that Waldwirtschaftsgemeinschaften (Woodlands Associations) be established. The associations would include all the peasants in the community who owned woodlands. They would pay only a small yearly charge and would be obliged to follow the guidelines drawn up by the Forestry Section of the RNS. The woodlands would be mapped out and plans for their management and for a cutting schedule would be issued. The association would hold regular educational sessions which all members could attend. At meetings, questions would be answered and forestry measures explained. Each district would have a designated Forest Expert placed in charge of the woods in the district. He would designate the trees ready for chopping and supervise the general care and upkeep of the wooded areas. The association was a tentative step in the direction of communal woods under corporate supervision. The article in the RNS weekly foresaw that the measure was a first step, a loose association sufficient for the present period (although the peasants might have viewed it rather differently). The association would encourage the peasants to realize the value of association. "In this association every single

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peasant who owns woodlands will come to appreciate that unification of the woods is not only a Voelkisch goal for forestry but serves the best interests of the peasant farm."[42]

The RNS could hardly go much further at this time. The private woods were deemed an integral part of the peasant farm, unlike the common rights. The voluntary associations were an introduction to and preparation for stronger communal management of the private forests. Even the announcement of the voluntary measure may have contributed to the growing conviction of the German peasantry that property rights would not long survive a German victory in the Second World War, of which more below.

As well placed as the cooperatives often were to assist in the reorganization and reform of rural society, any support given to cooperative organizations was bound to arouse the jealousy and protests of private rural interests--businessmen, artisans, and, as we saw above, even peasants. Their opposition hindered the advance of rural cooperation in a society deeply sensitive, as the Third Reich was, to imbalances between pre-existing interest groups. Nevertheless, the overall record left by the Third Reich was of increasing responsibilities given to rural cooperatives in the name of agricultural efficiency, reform, and control of rural society. The decisions to favor either private or cooperative rural groups, or to give preference to

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neither, involved the regime in an intense debate between opposing interest groups, though certainly not a reprise of the free-for-all interest group conflict which so marred the final years of the Weimar Republic. During the Weimar era, each interest group tended to identify closely with particular political parties and as the crisis of parliamentary democracy deepened with the onset of the Depression, interest groups even began to spawn their own political mini-parties, which made no pretense of representing any but the most narrow economic interests. The National Socialist dictatorship had abolished the political conflicts which had prevailed before 1933, but it could not abolish interest group conflict, even though it receded from its highly politicized heyday. The enormous increase in the power and prestige of the state as it emerged triumphant from the period of Gleichschaltung only increased the temptations for interest group organizations, though "linked" to the Nazi state, to appeal directly to the authorities to restore an ailing branch of the economy through state fiat. Of course, their most profound fear was that they might suffer even greater setbacks as a result of such fiat.

Within the agricultural sector, the already existing conflict between private enterprises which served the peasantry and the cooperative organizations which had emerged from the peasant milieu was in no way dampened by the advent of the National Socialist dictatorship in 1933.

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Almost from the birth of the Third Reich, representatives of private industry and trade beseeched the regime to remove or diminish the threat of cooperative competition. As one complaint suggests, the communal ideology of the new regime aroused growing anxieties among private tradesmen that the future of private enterprise in the Third Reich was not especially secure. Their fears were exacerbated by the ease with which the cooperative movement was able to adapt its language of anti-capitalism to the language of the National Socialists. The complaint, directed to the Bavarian Interior Ministry in March 1933, asserted that a private dairy owner in Lower Bavaria was being abused by a recently founded co-operative dairy, which was bidding up the milk price, "since money was no object" to the cooperative. More galling, the cooperative of 150 members was receiving state aid. A similar complaint a half-year later accused a threshing cooperative in southern Bavaria of selling its services to non-members, to the dismay of a private threshing operation.[43]

Complaints such as these were answered by the bäuerliche Selbstverwaltung in Bayern, the predecessor to the Landesbauernschaft Bayern. Coming to the defense of the cooperative movement, it responded to an attack made against the cooperative retail trade by Stoecker, the State Secretary for Business, Trade, and Industry in Munich. It labelled his charges an attack on the entire rural cooperative movement and an attack on agriculture as well. Agriculture needed the full range of cooperative institu-

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tions more than ever before. The State Secretary's claim that the rural cooperatives had not initially included retail trade among their activities was simply not true--the first Raiffeisen groups had sold seed, fertilizer, and other agricultural wares. Cooperative sales and purchases saved the peasant money and guaranteed the quality of the wares. Cooperatives could also be counted on in times of need; they did not close their doors in peasant faces after an overabundant harvest.[44]

The response of the Nazi-controlled peasant corporation reflects the general support given to the rural co-ops within the agricultural wing of the National Socialist movement. Nazi agronomists sensed that sections of the Party were agitating in the early days after the Nazi victory for an end to the rural cooperatives. One Party activist, an agronomist, wrote to the future LBF in Bavaria, Luber, about his concern:

> Recalling the sharp, but totally undocumented criticisms of the credit cooperatives and the sales cooperatives, I would like to caution against a wholesale condemnation of these organizations. They were not, for example, National Socialist in a liberal capitalist era, but, in comparison to the retailers or those banks not controlled by agriculture, they were, so far as I can judge, very fair and honest.[45]

However, the regime hardly intended to support one side at the expense of another so early in its career. Rather, its pretensions to restoring social peace under firm dictatorial control led it to work for compromises

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based on a division of labor and markets. In the case of the conflict between dairies cited above, the authorities attempted to negotiate a settlement in which each dairy would receive an adequate compulsory dairy delivery zone. The state aid which had been promised to the cooperative dairy would be contingent on reaching an agreement.[46] The competition between the private and cooperative threshing enterprises was also solved by a restoration of the status quo ante, with the Bavarian Economics Ministry requesting the LBS Bayern, "to bring pressure to bear on the threshing cooperative to see to it that it adheres to its cooperative tasks and limits its activities to its membership."[47]

The tension between the two sectors continued to erupt into open conflict throughout the Third Reich. The private sector, in particular, reacted with extreme sensitivity to the slightest suggestion of cooperative invasion of its domain. But the very nature of cooperative activity made such conflict almost impossible to prevent. BAYWA, for example, planned to build a repair workshop at its warehouse in Ansbach in 1934, a reasonable outgrowth of its machine and tool sales to peasants: the cooperative already provided informational services regarding the equipment, and the new facilities would provide a badly needed repair center for these implements and machines. The local Artisan Chamber protested the plans and claimed that they threatened the economic livelihood of the local tradesmen. BAYWA rejected these charges, as did the RNS, which

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answered: "Care must be taken to assure that the agricultural machinery which has been sold can also be repaired. Where there are sufficient numbers of repair shops on hand to fulfill these needs, it goes without saying, new ones would be unnecessary."[48]

The past turmoil between the private sector and the peasantry was often recalled when attempts were made to restrict cooperative activities. The cooperative organization which procured lubricants for the peasants came under attack in 1933-1934 by the German association of private dealers in lubricants. In reply, the cooperative noted that "the peasant was often delivered oil which was not suitable and was charged excessive prices for it...while the cooperatives have procured worthwhile lubricants of uniform quality at reasonable prices."[49]

The precarious market balance between private enterprises and the cooperatives was also subjected to growing stress during the economic recovery. Probably under pressure from the private retail associations, the section of the Bavarian Economics Ministry responsible for industry, trade, and business requested the administrative district presidents in Bavaria to report on the extent of cooperative commercial activities in May 1939. The responses affirmed the extent and breadth of cooperative involvement in commercial life. Credit cooperatives, the most numerous branch of the rural cooperative movement, rarely, if ever, confined their activities to credit services. The credit

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cooperative in Aichach procured and distributed fertilizer to its members; the credit cooperatives in the Aidling region sold fodder, coal, fertilizer, and seed. BAYWA, of course, sold a wide range of products. But cooperative commercial activity was not merely an attempt to squeeze private trade out of the rural market. In part, it arose from the crying needs of the peasantry which were not met by the private sector. Aichach had only two stores selling agricultural supplies; the peasants in Poettmes complained that the single private retailer selling flour, fodder, and fertilizer in town did not suffice. The cooperatives also possessed undoubted advantages over private retailers. The peasants in Obernberg preferred buying from their cooperative, wrote the local police inspector, because they received credit and could pay for their purchases with their own produce. Similarly, the single private coal dealer in Poettmes could not compete effectively with the local cooperative because the cooperative was backed by its own credit operations.[50]

The cooperatives' position in rural society was, at times, so advantageous, that they possessed enormous leverage in the competition with private trade. The BAYWA cooperative in Obernberg, the private dealers complained, had threatened the peasants that it would not purchase their produce unless the peasants bought from BAYWA. A BAYWA grain and potato purchaser in Thalmassing paid his peasant suppliers a premium if they bought machines from BAYWA rather than

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from local private tradesmen. A credit cooperative in Loepingen announced, in 1938, that it would give one pound of sugar to anyone who purchased one hundred pounds of potassium salt fertilizer, a perfect illustration of the advantages of a varied business activity, since the range of available goods could be used to encourage purchases. Besides these business methods, the mere existence of credit facilities or purchasing agencies for agricultural products gave the cooperatives, as mentioned above, an advantage in prices and purchase terms over private retailers.[51]

The RNS remained officially neutral in the cooperative-private sector conflict. Whenever possible, market balance was maintained or restored, shady business practices prohibited. Yet though one RNS official, the KBF in Nordlingen, claimed that

> healthy private commerce as well as the activities of the cooperatives are supported and promoted...

a note of advocacy will occasionally creep in:

> BAYWA leads all others in grain sales in this district and works in the interests of Agriculture, which cannot always be said for the private dealers...As regards the Market Order, we possess a better pillar of support in the cooperatives than in the private sector...The majority of the peasantry is pro-cooperative and regards the cooperative as a peasant association which works in the interests of the peasantry as well as the entire German Volk.[52]

Who can be surprised that some partisanship existed? The RNS was, after all, an outgrowth, however deformed, of the rural self-help movement. It was created by a segment of the agricultural experts and peasant children who had,

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in earlier decades, been the leading advocates of rural cooperation. It advocated agricultural improvements and reforms which the cooperative movement had long supported and which could, in many cases, only be achieved through cooperative activity. The RNS also directly controlled and operated the cooperatives after the completion of the Gleichschaltung. The leader of the Raiffeisen organization in Bavaria was also the LBF for Bavaria. The leader of the cooperative movement in Germany was the German RBF. The wonder is that the authorities continued to balance the conflicting interests as much as they did. Without such pressures from the private sector as we have described, the cooperative movement might well have expanded even more rapidly.

The National Socialist reforms which we have discussed in this chapter--the dissolution of the remaining common rights and the promotion of cooperatives, often by compulsion--were, at heart, matters of property rights. In fact, these reforms and those discussed in Chapters I and II (the Erbhof Law and the Dairy Market Order), were, taken as a whole, a massive invasion by the state into the personal property rights of the individual peasant and his household enterprises. However welcome the initial reforms may have been, they were soon regarded by peasants as burdensome and, even, "socialistic." The most fre-

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quently voiced complaint among the peasants was that the National Socialist reforms represented a return to the forced economy of the First World War and the immediate aftermath. Occasionally, even in the early days of the Third Reich, comparisons were drawn between the National Socialist state and the Soviet Union or Mexico (a major target of Catholic criticism in the 1930's as a result of the anti-clerical measures). Such comparisons were even more likely to be heard from peasants and the priests in Catholic Bavaria, since measures against the Church were also greatly resented.[53] Whatever the validity or accuracy of the charges, the German peasant had not experienced such an intensive intrusion into his private affairs since the Middle Ages. He had become the nation's vassal, or worse, its serf, in the new corporate state.

The *Erbhof* peasants, in particular, had reason to feel themselves thus, for they were, indeed, literally bound to their farms as the serfs of old. Many peasants regarded their position as a prelude to expropriation and forcible removal to collective farms, no doubt casting a wary eye toward Russia in the East.[54] The non-*Erbhof* peasants represented an even more oppressed section of the peasant population. They could not even hope to rely on the protections and guarantees which were available to the *Erbhof* owners. Without the normal reservoir of land which was now part of the *Erbhof* entail, there was little expectation of timely purchases for the poorer peasants, so that

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they were doomed to a marginal status in German rural society. The removal of so much land from the commercial market was further exacerbated by the construction programs of the Third Reich, so that scarce land became even more expensive, despite price controls. Commutation or suspension of common rights put additional pressure on the small landowner, while the expansion of cooperative or communally directed activities placed the small landowner under the control of his more powerful and wealthier neighbors. Insecurity and resentment were pervasive emotions throughout rural Germany but among the small landowning peasantry these were magnified tenfold.

In an atmosphere of suspicion, the growing attention to postwar rural reconstruction (Dorfaufrüstung) and resettlement programs in the newly conquered territories gave rise to profoundly pessimistic rumors and half-truths about the future. The impact of the discussions concerning land amelioration, village reconstruction, and resettlement surfaced in the spring of 1940. To some extent, the public media poured oil on the fire of peasant anxieties. The Stuttgart radio announced that the small farm owner would be allowed, in the future, to retain his vegetable garden but that all else would be placed under cooperative control or attached to enlarged Erbhof farms.[55] RNS officials, by their arrogant threats, would also, on occasion, threaten poor, inefficient, non-cooperative farm owners with eviction

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and expropriation, heightening the belief that the peasant was a mere tenant. The common gossip at almost every agricultural gathering after the Battle of France was the future shape of German rural society, with "communal labor, break up of small farms, and the enlargement of Erbhofs." The main effect of the rumors was that "the peasant has the feeling that he is only a second class human being and that if his independence is taken away from him, then all would be lost."[56]

The period from the autumn of 1940 to the winter of 1941 was the heyday of the utopian plans and propaganda meetings concerned with postwar resettlement. There were some positive responses to the resettlement propaganda--one meeting in Forchheim to advertise the program was attended by eighty-five peasants and in the regions of smaller farms in that area about 15 percent of the owners expressed an interest in resettlement.[57] But most everywhere else in Bavaria, the reaction was negative. One Agricultural Office wrote:

> Rumors are circulating about supposed forced expropriations of the small rural farms and the consolidation of the land which is thereby gained into larger peasant properties. This is causing great unease. Peasants see little point in ploughing their profits back into the land since they will lose it anyway after the war. The announcement of settlement possibilities in the East strengthens the farmers' belief that they will be resettled so that their land may be used to create Erbhof farms.[58]

In Ansbach, the reports claimed that the unrest over the

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rumors was far greater than it appeared on the surface. In Neustadt and Friedberg, complaints over the resettlement were heard. In some cases, such as in northern Ries, anxieties over the resettlement program overshadowed the war, even major military operations.[59]

During that crucial year between November 1940 and December 1941, the rumors mounted and became more detailed, lending them greater credibility. The main theme continued to be that the smaller landowners would be expropriated to the advantage of the Erbhof owners immediately after the war ended. But in some regions, such as Viechtach, the rumors held that all privately owned forests were candidates for expropriation, a natural consequence of the National Socialist policies toward the private wood rights and forests, which were discussed above.[60] By mid-spring, the rumors were becoming even more exact, referring to actual figures. Fifty acres was the minimum farm size which would be permitted after the war, went the rumors in Upper Bavaria; in the Rothenburg district in Franconia, the minimum farm size was rumored to be thirty acres. Perhaps the most exaggerated fears about resettlement were those expressed in the Bad Aibling region as late as 1943. Hitler, it was said, had promised to cede Bavaria to Prussia after the war. All Bavarians would supposedly be resettled in the Ukraine. In fact, evacuees from northern Germany to Bavaria were said to be astonished that Bavaria had not yet been emptied of its population. Thus, on top of the

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anxieties concerning private property rights, the old sectional rivalries and antagonisms began to surface in Germany, especially Bavaria. The resettlement rumors were, one might say, appropriated in the service of sectional rivalries.[61] Confrontations between northern refugees and native southerners were reported on the rise in 1944.[62]

The rumors were always strongest in the less prosperous regions, especially in those regions with large numbers of small farms. The anxieties in Nördlingen were greater in the more backward northern villages of the district. The Jura was especially rife with rumors. Franconia suffered more than Upper Bavaria and, in Lower Bavaria, the forest districts were more prone to rumor than the valleys and flatlands of the Bavarian corn chamber.

The fears concerning future resettlement continued for as long as the German armies remained victorious. Quite naturally, they began to subside in the winter of 1941-1942. There was an isolated reference in November 1943, by the Bad Aibling District Office, to "the gossip in the rural areas, which has not yet died out, that after the war the small agricultural enterprises under ten hectares will disappear and their owners settled in the East."[63] However, for the most part, where reference was made to resettlement, it had become transformed, as we noted with the rumors about Bavaria and Prussia above, into a more explicitly political rejection of the regime and, even, German unity, reflecting the more desperate concerns of the latter part

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of the war.

The profoundly pessimistic attitude taken toward resettlement demonstrated the special attachment of large parts of the Bavarian peasantry to their home and soil. As one Army report commented:

> For anyone who knows how the peasants cling to their soil it is understandable that such plans awaken mistrust and anger in the broadest circles of the rural populace. The feeling that they are not even secure in the possession of their hereditary soil and land undermines the will to work, prejudices the Erzeugungsschlacht,, and, not least of all, the fighting spirit of the soldier. And it encourages rural migration to the cities.[64]

A remark which went the rounds in Augsburg expressed the close attachment to the home soil as well as the undoubted fear of a strange and possibly hostile East: "Rather a Steinklopfer (Stonebreaker--a lowly occupation) at home, than a Grossbauer (larger farm owner) there."[65]

Attitudes concerning resettlement contributed to a growing sense of despair and helped to undermine popular enthusiasm for a war which had never been welcome. The negative effects of the war mentioned by the Army report cited above are but one example of a general trend. The Aichach District Office claimed that "many cowards believed that they had no real stake in total victory."[66] The Günzburg area reported similar sentiments.[67] Undoubtedly, the resettlement plans helped to disengage an already exhausted and alienated rural populace from the National Socialist regime. Years of deteriorating economic and social status, increasing demands on labor time, and

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diminution of self-esteem and independence seemed now to be pointing to the ultimate indignity--complete expropriation and reduction to the status of laborer or city worker. Feelings of despair were most pronounced in the lower ranks of the peasantry but the *Erbhof* owner could hardly have felt much more secure if property rights could be so lightly tampered with. The war had never been popular. The fear of defeat or, at the least, physical suffering, had been present from its beginning. Even in the heady days of victory, the fears of price declines for agricultural products due to increased competition from the newly conquered lands were expressed by the peasants.[68] The resettlement program further alienated the peasantry and, in the final years of the war, they passively awaited the certain defeat of the National Socialists. The emotional disengagement prior to the final collapse was already evident in late 1943. Once more, as in previous moments of German political bankruptcy, the old separatist and anti-national prejudices surfaced in the rural villages of southern Germany. Rumors of the evacuation of southern Germans to the East exacerbated the sectional hatred. Talk began to be heard once again of the Wittelsbach dynasty returning to rule over a unified Bavaria and Austria, while the Tyrolese began to wish that they had never been joined to *Grossdeutschland*.[69]

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For an allegedly conservative social movement dedicated to the brutal preservation of the status-quo or the revival of a mythic past, the National Socialists demonstrated a remarkable facility to construct new rural institutions which undermined the ancient peasant community and traditional rural property relations. Under National Socialist tutelege, rural cooperatives were created, common rights dissolved, and the position of the middle-sized peasant farm buttressed. Further transformation of the peasant village was planned after the war ended, with millions projected to be spent on new buildings and land improvements. Although popular attitudes ought not to be the ultimate guide to what actually occurred in rural Nazi Germany, it is a provocative commentary on National Socialist policy that so many peasants regarded the regime as equivalent to the Soviet Union. The rumors of expropriation and resettlement were further expressions of the peasant appraisal of National Socialism as a revolutionary rural agent. Indeed the content and geographic distribution of the rumors indicate that NS rural policy favored the more modern farms and rural regions, hardly the stuff of romantic reaction.

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Notes to Chapter IV

[1]For discussion of some of these common rights, see the Wochenblatt, 5 December 1935 and 26 March 1936; also StAND KBS Noerdlingen I G400, KBS Noerdlingen to LBS Bayern, 3 January 1939; in addition, the files ML 3275, 3328, 3623, 3627 in BHSA contain quite a bit of correlated and uncorrelated information about the common rights in Bavaria.

[2]BHSA ML 3275, LBS Bayern to Reichs Minister of Finance and Reichs Minister of Interior, 20 August 1941.

[3]Wochenblatt, 12 August 1937.

[4]BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 9 December 1937, 10 December 1938, 8 February, 10 July 1939.

[5]Reichsministerialblatt (1936), p. 1701.

[6]Wochenblatt, 12 November 1937.

[7]Wochenblatt, 7 June, 11 November 1939.

[8]BHSA ML 3328, Austragsbauer Birkmeier (Untermauerbach) to Reichskanzlei, 27 June 1939.

[9]BHSA ML 3328, SMW, L Schuberth to State Secretary Koeglmeier, Bavarian Interior Ministry, 11 August 1939; Wochenblatt, 12 April 1939.

[10]Reichsgesetzblatt I (1935), pp. 180, 393; StAND BA Fuessen 3976, Burgomaster Schwangau to Amtsgericht Fuessen, 30 November 1941; Burgomaster Schwangau to Landrat Fuessen, 8 January 1942.

[11]StAND BA Fuessen 3976, LBS Bayern, 27 October 1943.

[12]StAND BA Memmingen 9823, Burgomaster Boos to Bavarian Staatskanzlei, 25 November 1938.

[13]On the Mittenwald situation, see BHSA ML 3623, Deininger to SMW,L, 20 October 1936; Bavarian Interior Ministry to SMW,L,1 September 1937; SMW,L to District Administration Upper Bavaria, 28 December 1937; Deininger to SMW,L, 18 February 1937; Draft of Gesetz ueber die Bildung oeffentlicher Weidegenossenschaften, 17 July 1937; on the Reich law, see Reichsgesetzblatt, I (1937), p. 188.

[14]BHSA ML 3328, District Administration President Lower Bavaria and Upper Palatinate to Bavarian Interior Ministry, 15 February 1938.

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[15]Frieda Wunderlich, "The National Socialist Agrarian Program," Social Research 13 (March 1946):45.

[16]Heinrich Rid and Ernst Hohenegg, Die Landwirtschaftlichen Genossenschaften und ihre Organisation in Bayern (Munich: Bayerische Raiffeisen Zentralkasse, 1951), p. 3.

[17]Rid and Hohenegg, pp. 21-22; Werner Bader, Die Entwicklung und Aufgaben der landwirtschaftlichen Genossenschaften in Bayern unter besonderer Beruecksichtigung von Nachfrage und Angebotsmacht (Innsbruck: Rechts- und Staatswissenschaftliche Fakultaet der Leopold-Franzens-Universitaet, 1964), p. 10.

[18]Rid und Hohenegg, pp. 35-37, 72-82, 344-46, 400-415, 454.

[19]BA Koblenz R43I/1297, Berliner Tageblatt, 20 July 1929; Wochenblatt, 18 January 1934; Nationalsozialistische Landpost, 17 February 1934.

[20]Abraham, pp. 84-85, 99-103.

[21]Rid und Hohenegg, pp. 50-51.

[22]Wochenbericht 22 (1939), p. 142 in Wunderlich, "Agrarian Policies," pp. 41-42.

[23]Wochenblatt, 27 June 1935.

[24]Ibid., 11 March 1939.

[25]Ibid., 6 August 1936.

[26]Ibid., 17 December 1936.

[27]Ibid., 13 January 1938.

[28]StAM NSDAP 367, MFWV Bayern, "Vermerk ueber die Tagfahrt vom 21. Oktober 1938, betreff Molkereiprojekt Reichenhall, 24 Oktober 1938."

[29]Ibid.

[30]Reichsgesetzblatt I (1936), pp. 175, 470; for some background to history of selective breeding, see Wochenblatt, 12 April and 9 August 1934, 4 April 1935.

[31]Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer Bayern 18 (1934), p. 82. By 1936, the figures for select bull ownership were, respectively (Communal:Cooperative:Private) 6,120:3,371:23,478. For

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boars they were 949:248:3,859; Zeitschrift des Bayerischen Statistischen Landesamtes 69 (1937), p. 384. So, already by 1936 there was a marked decline (38%) in private select breed stock ownership.

[32]Wochenblatt, 3 July 1934.

[33]BHSA MA 106672, MB/NB 7 January 1936; MA 106677, MB/OF 6 June 1936; MA 106682, MB/Sch 6 April 1937; ML 4781, Zuchtverband fuer Fleckvieh in NB to LBS Bayern, 24 April 1936.

[34]BHSA ML 4786, Landwirt Amberg to Reich Agriculture Ministry, 10 January 1936; ML 4781, Zuchtverband fuer Fleckvieh in NB to LBS Bayern, 24 April 1936.

[35]BHSA ML 4784, Bavarian Peasant Chamber Muehldorf to BA Muehldorf, 25 February 1932; Bavarian Peasant Chamber Dinkelsbuehl to BA Dinkelsbuehl, 30 March 1933; Kreisleitung Schwabmuenchen to Luber, 24 April 1933.

[36]BHSA ML 4784, Zuchtverband fuer das schwaebische Fleckvieh Donauwoerth-Günzburg, resolution 24 March 1933.

[37]BHSA MA 106682, MB/Sch 6 March 1936.

[38]BHSA ML 4786, Landwirt Amberg to Reich Agriculture Ministry, 10 January 1936.

[39]Wochenblatt, 1 October 1941.

[40]Ibid., 3 February 1940.

[41]Ibid.

[42]Ibid.

[43]BHSA ML 4429, Verband Bayerischer Molkerei- und Kaesereibesitzer und Pächter e.V. to Bavarian Interior Ministry, Agricultural Section, 21 March 1933; StAW LRA Obernburg/ Main, Gruppe X Nr. 6, SMW,L to LBS Bayern, 30 October 1933.

[44]BHSA ML 3857, Section III of baeuerlichen Selbstverwaltung in Bayern to SMW,L 4 September 1933.

[45]BHSA ML 3655, letter Saatzuchtwirtschaft W. Lang (Niedertraubling) to Luber, 19 March 1933.

[46]BHSA ML 4429, Kreismolkereirat fuer Niederbayern to SMW,L 8 May 1933.

[47]StAW LRA Obernburg/Main Gruppe X Nr. 6, SMW,L to LBS Bayern, 30 October 1933.

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[48]BHSA ML 3855, BAYWA to Handwerkskammer, 24 February 1934; LBS Bayern to SMW,L 7 May 1934.

[49]BHSA ML 3855, LBS Bayern to SMW, section for Trade, Industry, and Business, 22 May 1934.

[50]StAW LRA Obernburg/Main Gruppe X Nr. 6, SMW, Section for Trade, Industry, and Business to District Administration President Lower Franconia, 16 May 1939; StAM LRA 101195, Gendarmerie Post reports Aichach 17 June, Aindling 9 June, Pöttmes 9 June 1939.

[51]BHSA ML 3863, Johann Kötterl to Luber, 20 March 1933; StAND KBS Noerdlingen III C200, LBS Bayern to KBF Noerdlingen 12 August 1938; StAW LRA Obernburg/Main Gruppe X Nr. 6, Gendarmerie Inspektion Obernburg to Landrat Obernburg, 20 June 1939.

[52]StAND KBS Noerdlingen III B100, KBS Noerdlingen to Landrat Noerdlingen, 16 June 1934.

[53]BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 17 November 1933.

[54]Wochenblatt, 11 August 1938.

[55]Wochenblatt, 23 March and 21 December 1940; BHSA ML 3938, MB Landwirtschaftsstelle Pfarrkirchen, November 1940.

[56]BHSA ML 3938, MB Landwirtschaftsstelle Pfarrkirchen, November 1940.

[57]BHSA ML 3938, MB Landwirtschaftsstelle Forchheim, November 1940.

[58]BHSA ML 3938, MB Landwirtschaftsstelle Gunzburg, December 1940; MA 106683, MB/Sch 8 January 1941.

[59]BHSA ML 3939, MB Landwirtschaftsstelle Ansbach, January 1941; Noerdlingen, April 1941; Neustadt, February 1941; Friedberg, February 1941; ML 3938, MB Landwirtschaftsstelle Munchberg, November 1940; MA 106670, MB/OF 6 November 1940.

[60]BHSA ML 3939, MB Landwirtschaftsstelle Viechtach, April 1941; MA 106683, MB/Sch 10 December 1941.

[61]BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 10 May 1941; MA 106679, MB/OF 6 May 1941; StAM LRA 113813, MB Landrat Bad Aibling, 31 August 1943.

[62]StAM LRA 113813, SD office Bad Aibling, 23 October 1944.

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[63] StAM LRA 113813, Landrat report Bad Aibling, 1 November 1943.

[64] BHSA ML 3274, Wehrkreis XIII, Lagebericht, 8 May 1941.

[65] BHSA MA 106683, MB/Sch 10 December 1941.

[66] StAM LRA 113813, Landrat Bad Aibling report, 1 November 1943.

[67] BHSA ML 3938, MB Landwirtschaftsstelle Günzburg, December 1940.

[68] BHSA ML 3938, MB Landwirtschaftsstelle Thalmässig, June 1940; MA 106683, MB/Sch 10 December 1941.

[69] StAM 113813, Landrat Bad Aibling reports, 24 November 1943, 1 December 1943.

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CHAPTER V

CONTROLLING THE COUNTRYSIDE

The National Socialist regime had intended a radical transformation of peasant Germany--its family, farm, and village life. As we have seen, a peasantry which adhered to its traditional beliefs and practices would continually frustrate the National Socialist program for agriculture. The regime would naturally draw the conclusion that the peasantry had proved unworthy of the special protection and honor accorded it by the National Socialist *Volksgemeinschaft* and, perhaps, impose more onerous measures. Therefore, ideological re-education of the peasantry was an important component of rural reform. Yet, re-education remained an elusive goal for the authorities during the twelve years they ruled Germany. Part of the difficulty could be traced to the excessive expectations which they held for most Germans, peasants included. An honorable member of the national community was expected to be an active participant in *Weltanschäulich*-approved activities and organizations, a degree of commitment which was never attained. Efforts by the National Socialists to raise the political consciousness of the peasant population were, in fact, bound to backfire, as the peasants resented the constant exhortations to join

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political activity and back to their families, their fields, and their villages, while they waited for the aid and relief promised by the new regime. Aside from a spontaneous refusal to pay back their debts or public payments, in expectation of a law forgiving all debts, the new mood of the peasantry could best be described as silent, apathetic, and disengaged. As one official in the Administrative District of Upper Palatinate and Lower Bavaria observed: "The rural populace reacts rather indifferently to the change of regime. The mood of the peasants, in light of their debts and the low prices for livestock, grain, and wood, is so despairing, that every political event is all the same to them."[1]

Even the upheavals associated with political *Gleichschaltung*, when district councils and town councils were "Nazified" by government fiat, provoked little direct opposition. The lack of overt criticism may have been due to the distribution of the repression. The most severe measures of the government were reserved for the Communists and Socialists, who had very little support in rural regions. The formerly powerful Bauernbund had collapsed, many of its members joining the NSDAP, so that repression directed against this party was hardly that disturbing. The BVP, whose support had remained stable between 1930 and 1933, was the last remaining political rival to Nazism. Its electoral mandates were, in fact, overturned or cancelled by the Nazis and rural tensions arising from its suppression

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National Socialist campaigns and activities. A further difficulty for the regime was its inability to distinguish between the relatively innocent indifference of the majority of the peasants and the various acts of passive or active resistance which greeted many of its measures. The tendency of some rural Party members to lump both responses together merely exacerbated the already pronounced political disengagement of the peasantry, only heightening the suspicions of the Party activists. One further problem for the regime was the very real influence that non-Nazis and non-Nazi (or pre-Nazi) tradition continued to wield in rural society. Though never an acute danger to the regime, it was a challenge to its totalitarian pretensions. But, here too, the attempts by the authorities to eradicate non-Nazi influence often produced the contrary result. The reason was the bulk of the population did not necessarily regard these figures or traditions as dangerous or subversive. Many peasants assumed that some sort of coexistence or accomodation between the National Socialist present and the pre-National Socialist past could be worked out. Thus, in a sense, the vestiges of the past became a threat or a rallying point for opposition only because the Nazi insisted on attacking them. The totalitarian pretensions of the Nazis proved, perhaps, their own worst enemy.

Since re-education was a failure, the National Socialists had to be content with controlling the countryside through surveillance, coercion, and firm persuasion.

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But control was difficult to achieve. One reason was the physical isolation and the relative technological backwardness of much of rural Bavaria. Another reason was that the institutions of control were inadequate to the task. The personnel was either blundering or corrupt or, what may have been worse, prone to the same doubts and anxieties concerning Nazi agricultural policy as the peasants they were supposed to lead.

The first task which faced the National Socialist regime in its efforts to remold peasant custom was to stamp out dissent and, if possible, mobilize the peasantry in the organizations of the Third Reich. But to stamp out dissent, they first had to identify it. Uncovering dissent was rendered more difficult by the dramatic transformation of behavior and, more specifically, dissent, in the Bavarian countryside. Until 1933, a growing number of Germans had become politically engaged--taking part in the demonstrations, parades, meetings, and elections which highlighted the final years of the Weimar system. All this tumult came to an end after the National Socialists gained power in Germany, replaced the elected government in Bavaria, threw the leading representatives of the opposition parties into prisons and concentration camps, and banned all political dissent. Although the peasantry had remained rather aloof from the more active forms of political participation, there was still a marked withdrawal from political life. The rural residents turned their attentions away from almost any

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continued to linger in some towns and villages for a substantial period of time.[2] Heightened tensions were avoided by various acts of compromise on the part of the NSDAP, such as the leniency shown to BVP members who made timely switches of allegiance to the NSDAP. In many cases, especially in smaller, rural areas, former opposition members were permitted to retain their positions for a number of years, which aroused the ire of many "old fighters" in the NSDAP.[3]

Even the rapid pace of agricultural reform in the early days of the regime was unable to engage the peasant in political life. Peasants showed little inclination to attend meetings held by the Nazis and, by 1934, whatever curiosity they had possessed had all but faded. Attempts by the Nazis to combat rural apathy only exacerbated the problem. Official after official reported that the peasants were weary and critical of the many celebrations organized by the NSDAP and that they did not attend the numerous speaking evenings. One official described the low attendance at the 1936 Erntedankfest and another complained "that the peasantry is absent from the meetings, propaganda marches, and similar activities held by the local Ortsgruppen of the NSDAP and its members."[4] Contributions to National Socialist causes, another important measure of support and engagement, were also low. Even the speeches on the radio by important National Socialists were often ignored, as in one village, where only four people listened to a speech by

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Goering, in 1937, leading the OBF to comment: "It looks as if the rural populace no longer takes any interest in political events."[5]

The peasants' lack of interest and their political silence were a source of great unease for the Nazis. To them, the peasants' disengagement seemed a symptom of loyalty to the prohibited parties of the Weimar era, the so-called Systemsparteien, or to former, non-Nazi elites. Since the National Socialists never entirely shed their reputation as upstarts and outsiders, particularly in districts where the former opinion makers had not yet joined the Party, they were even more convinced that the old village leaders retained their followings.[6]

Although recent research has failed to establish any significant correlation between previous party loyalties and opposition to the Nazi regime,[7] the National Socialists themselves believed that a correlation existed, although they ascribed their problems to a range of factors, such as village friction, economic difficulties, and even Jewish influence.[8] But, more often than not, one reads, for example, of peasants in one region in Middle Franconia: "One can readily perceive in their outer conduct that they will not have anything to do with the National Socialists and are still very attached to the System Parties. The reason is that it was precisely the Rhon region which was considered, so to speak, the stronghold of the former BVP."[9] Sometimes, even years after the "seizure of power,"

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the National Socialists claimed to detect a remarkable degree of political continuity with the Weimar system, such as in Mallersdorf, a village in Lower Bavaria, at the time of the Munich Agreement in 1938:

> Before the NSDAP takeover, the Mallersdorf peasants were under the influence of the leader of the Bauernbund, Karl Gandorfer in Pfaffenberg. This town has been described as the birthplace of the [1918] Revolution. The decisive influences from this period continue to be felt to this day. It should come as no surprise if they should surface especially at a time of crisis. While, to be sure, the vast majority of the population calmly bear up under the political events of the last few weeks, malcontents regard it as propitious to indulge in criticisms of Adolf Hitler. Here are some examples which have come to my attention: "The Revolution was also good, it must come again!" "If Hitler had declared war, no SS man would have responded!" "War would have cost Hitler his head!" "What do we need Bohemian rabble for?" "Hitler should not have opened his big mouth so much at the Party convention!" "The Sudeten Germans are as loathsome as the Czechs...!" To conclude, let me offer the comment that a discontented, uninformed residue from the Revolutionary epoch will continue to survive in this district until the individual carriers of this opinion die out.[10]

Between the two extremes--that the former political parties retained a major influence in village life or that they were no longer a factor--lies the probable truth, depending, as one might expect, on local conditions which would have to be investigated in detail. Certainly, when the Gleichschaltung period had led to major tension a long period of resentment might ensue. To offer but two examples: In one report it was stated that the tensions and and bitterness arising from the dismissal of popular Burgomasters in the Achdorf area continued to plague the

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authorities, since the Burgomasters retained their followings and remained antagonistic toward the regime. A similar situation prevailed in Kirchheim, a town in Swabia. The less than gentle treatment of former Gemeinderat officials and continuing village factionalism reinforced attachments to former loyalties. The second Burgomaster, a BVP member, had been dismissed from his post in March, 1933.[11]

The most influential opinion makers in rural southern Bavaria were, undoubtedly, the clergy. Even before 1933, their support or rejection of the BVP was the key determinant of BVP electoral strength in rural areas.[12] After the National Socialist government was formed and all opposition crushed, the role of the clergy became even more critical, since they remained relatively free to express their opinions, if they did so cautiously. The Nazis were quick to trace their difficulties with the populace to clerical influence--when election results were disappointing, when propaganda meetings were poorly attended, when contributions to National Socialist charities lagged. The regime blamed the clergy for acts of vandalism and held them responsible for general discontent with the policies of the regime.[13] The National Socialists asserted that "the political influence of the clergy among the peasants is still strong. The struggle for control of the villages between the priests and the Burgomasters continues to unfold. The clergy strive with

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all their might to win over the youth and to undermine the Party's work...."[14]

At the outset, especially before 1934, clerical influence and the willingness of the clergy to exercise it, was still strikingly evident. One priest compared the Nazis to the German Communist Party, another insinuated that those who had voted for the Nazis were "dumb Catholics," and a third, agitated over the ban placed on the public reading of a Bishop's letter, denounced the Nazis on election Sunday, November 12, 1933, as a dictatorship which was comparable to the anti-clerical governments of Mexico, Spain, and Russia.[15]

Open clerical opposition was met, on occasion, with imprisonment and it soon ended. Like the secular elites, the priests withdrew into their immediate church world, where they and their congregations hoped to remain undisturbed. Especially after the Concordat between the Third Reich and the Vatican was signed, the Catholic population and clergy looked forward to a resumption of non-political church activities.[16] Their expectations were soon dashed. The Catholic Church in the small villages of Bavaria had built too imposing an edifice and its organizations and influence were too deeply embedded in the rural population for it to be left alone. But to interfere with the Church, as the Nazis proposed to do, was to trespass on a maze of tradition, culture, and loyalty which would be bitterly defended.

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The rivalry on an organizational level was intense, since Catholic organizations competed for the same potential support as Nazi organizations, often with a success that could be extremely embarrassing for the Nazis. For example, the Kreisleitung in Mainburg requested the district council to prohibit a meeting of the Katholische Gesellenverein in a nearby village, since it was scheduled to be held on the same evening as a Christmas party hosted by the village Ortsgruppe. Two such meetings in so small a locale, claimed the Kreisleitung, was clearly impossible. But obviously there was a fear that the Nazis could not possibly compete with the church. When Catholic organizations dared to extend their activities beyond their traditional constiuency, the authorities were even more incensed. The Katholische Arbeiterverein in Eging (Lower Bavaria) began to talk of recruiting local peasants and farmers, and a speaker at one meeting mentioned the already bitter rivalry between his group and the DAF. Such competition could not be ignored by the Nazis and stricter controls over meetings were enacted.[17]

Aside from the institutional rivalry, there was a very real concern that the Catholic Church was obstructing National Socialist attempts to reeducate the masses in the appropriate Weltanschauung. After all, the clergy in rural Bavaria was accustomed to define what was criminal or permissible. Moreover, they tended to regard

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the Nazis as morally lax and even degenerate. They did not fail to insinuate this, at least indirectly, in their sermons: "The sermons concerning divorce, abortion, etc. bear witness to the wish of the clergy to impose on their congregations the belief that such things have so frightfully increased only since 1933."[18] The National Socialists, in their turn, tried to depict the clergy as morally unfit, especially in view of their former support for the Center Party and the BVP.[19]

The gutter Nazi newspaper, _Der Stürmer_, edited by Julius Streicher, seems to have been a special target for derision on the part of the clergy and the religiously inclined peasantry, and it did much to contribute to the unsavory reputation of the Nazis. A _Stürmer_ box in one village was stolen and in the commune of Weildorf, in Upper Bavaria, the plans of the Burgomaster to hold a presentation advertising the newspaper contributed to rising tensions between two communal factions. One of those opposing the presentation asserted that, "_Der Stürmer_ corrupted the youth" and "above all..._Der Stürmer_ and the SA were anti-religion."[20] That the National Socialists were suspected of loose morality was another issue clearly involved in this particular controversy, since the local priest had recently torn down a picture promoting the BDM (Bund deutscher Maedel) because the photograph of girls in sporting uniform was deemed indecent. The pornographic diatribes in _Der Stürmer_ could

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hardly have assuaged his suspicions. One town even seized a special edition of Der Stürmer because it contained offensive references to holy communion.[21]

Another target of religious opinion was Alfred Rosenberg's anti-Christian Myth of the Twentieth Century, which, one priest said, "called for the sharpest protests by every Catholic." The priest cited the book as proof that parents should demand the retention of confessional schools: "Thereby, it may be guaranteed that the teachers of the children present material which is free of ideological error."[22]

The upbringing of the children was, in fact, the most sensitive area of conflict between the National Socialists, the clergy, and the rural folk. Many areas gave only spotty support to the Hitler Jugend (HJ), largely due to the parents' distrust of the moral rectitude of the HJ leaders. Their suspicion, though undoubtedly fostered by the clergy, was often a response to offensive behavior of the more loutish HJ leaders, such as one who insulted peasants in the Berchtesgaden region as "country bumpkins, oafs, and peasant dogs."[23]

The secularization of the educational system shaped up, therefore, as a crucial battlefield. The creation of the Gemeinschaftsschulen (non-denominational schools) offers one of the most dramatic examples of resistance to National Socialist measures and of the resentment which was aroused by National Socialist meddling in the tra-

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ditional relationship between religion and education. Special referendums were organized over the school issue. Yet, the percentage of negative votes and of abstentions was impressively high for a Nazi referendum. The number of No votes reached 50 percent sometimes; it was even more in some small towns. The introduction of the schools even provoked one of the rare outbursts of public protest when forty women and a few men demonstrated their opposition to the schools at the town hall in Ochsenfurt. The Catholic clergy played a leading role in the opposition to the schools. They dominated the protest meetings which were held and they organized tours by leading clergymen to promote resistance. The closing of a convent school in the Landshut region also caused great resentment. In all these cases, Nazi Party members were found as participants in the protest movement. Some Party members even resigned in protest over the anti-clerical measures.[24]

Another highly emotional issue was the question of official and unofficial holidays in Catholic Bavaria. The importance of these days of pageantry and relaxation, when the fields could be quitted, was heightened by their connection to the still virile Catholic Church. The decrees issued by the regime to abolish traditional holidays, to limit their celebration, or to establish other holidays as state holidays met with almost total non-compliance in the Catholic regions of Bavaria. All

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Saints' Day was decreed a workday in 1938, but the fields remained deserted. When the regime ordered that the Day of Repentance and Penitence be celebrated, Catholic areas treated it as just another workday; as one peasant remarked, it was a "Faulenzentag" (a loafer's day). Despite wartime restrictions placed on Corpus Christi Day celebrations, the holiday was universally observed in 1940 in Steinach.[25]

The bitter defense of holidays and religious traditions cannot be understood apart from the physical space within which these institutions and celebrations had taken root. Catholicism was not merely a religion, it was an integral part of Bavarian consciousness that had survived to a considerable degree in the rural areas of Catholic Bavaria. These areas, other than Swabia, were in Altbayern (Old Bavaria), the core of the old Wittelsbach possessions, prior to their expansion during the Napoleonic and post-Napoleonic period. Although the political party of Bavarian regionalism, the BVP, had been abolished by the government, the Catholic Church and the traditions surrounding it continued to give Bavarian regionalism substance and meaning. The attack on religious traditions was an attack, therefore, on Bavaria and, perhaps more importantly, attacks on the symbols and traditions of Bavarian patriotism were often construed as an attack on the Catholic Church, distinctions between the two strands of Bavarian con-

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sciousness being all but impossible to make. The traditional holidays, religious and secular, and the newly created National Socialist holidays (or the Nazification of older celebrations) were always a time of silent but obvious struggle between the authorities and the Bavarian patriots. On May Day in 1935, the white-blue Bavarian colors were raised on numerous May Poles. During the Erntedankfest in 1934, SA men in Seeshaupt tore down a white-blue flag which had been raised. The incident in Seeshaupt demonstrates the depth of Bavarian regional sentiment, since the flag had been raised by Nazi Party members. Many members of the NSDAP believed, in fact, that the leadership of the Party was committing a major tactical error by attempting to eradicate the blue and the white. They agreed with the peasants that such displays were harmless expressions. The more radical National Socialists saw in the demonstrations the work of ultra-Catholic circles.[26] A clear policy on this issue was finally announced in April 1936:

> Peasant customs and traditions are never unchanging but always growing, constantly developing manifestations of our national life. Great political and racial upheavals have had more of an influence on peasant custom than is usually recognized and assumed....In order to align custom with the spirit of these times, clear regulations for the future to appear shortly, are essential. The guidelines and suggestions specify clearly how the May Pole may be decorated in the future and how it may not be decorated....in the future, the May Pole may only be painted with white colors.[27]

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The required display of the swastika was viewed in much the same way--an unwarranted claim of the regime's supremacy. The replacement of customary decorations by the swastika gave rise to defiance, such as when priests refused to fly it over the church.[28] In more extreme incidents, a peasant was jailed in Ingolstadt for saying that he would "shit in my pants and hang them out the window, then you will have your swastika," on the occasion of the Erntedankfest.[29]

Defiance of National Socialist measures went beyond symbolic acts of resistance, however risky even they proved to be. Even such an important policy question as the anti-Jewish measures proved enormously difficult to carry out in the rural areas. The tragic course of National Socialist anti-Semitism occurred primarily in the cities. The absolute number of Jews who lived in the Bavarian countryside was minescule. Many rural districts did not have a single Jewish resident and the number rarely went above 5 percent. The number of Jewish inhabitants in rural Bavaria was only eleven thousand in 1933.[30] The small number of Jews who lived in the countryside did, nevertheless, play an important role in agricultural circles, far out of proportion to their tiny numbers. These were the Jewish livestock dealers, who provided the Nazis with the only visible target with which they could personalize their anti-Semitic ravings. Yet the violent accusations of usury, debt enslavement, and

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dishonest business practices fell largely on deaf ears. While no one would ever venture to describe the Bavarian peasantry as philo-semitic, the business relations between the Jews and the peasants continued to maintain a precarious foothold in rural Bavaria until emigration or the actual physical removal of the Jews from the countryside to the cities, prior to their ultimate extermination, finally left the rural districts Judenrein.

The reason for the persisting trade, which was engaged in by Party members and state officials as well as the average peasant, was that the Jews were a valued asset to the peasantry, which neither the initial propaganda activities and boycotts directed against the Jews nor the later legislation could erase. As one peasant in Lower Franconia remarked, "without the Jews, it was almost impossible to buy or sell livestock."[31] The exclusion of the Jews could only be accomplished, therefore, if suitable replacements could be found. But the peasantry remained suspicious that cooperative sales of their livestock would be less profitable than free market sales and, in any case, the cooperatives for this purpose were too few to take up the slack left by the disappearing Jews.[32] Private Aryan livestock dealers were unable to provide a satisfactory substitute either. The Jews possessed far greater expertise, connections, and capital resources. They were able to buy and sell the livestock more easily than their Aryan rivals, they offered better prices, and,

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just as importantly in the capital-starved countryside, they could pay in cash for the animals and advance cash to their customers.[33] One district office reported, as late as 1938, that nothing had really changed as far as this was concerned. Livestock sales, it wrote, were generally undertaken because of an immediatc need for cash. Aryans were rarely able to pay the full sum of a purchase until the animal was actually sold at the marketplace, while the Jews always paid in full. When buying animals from Jews, the peasants were usually given a period of time in which to pay the full amount, whereas the Aryan dealers demanded the purchase price payment in full at once.[34]

Economic motives and, it must be assumed, a basic humanity, contributed to a general lack of sympathy for the National Socialist anti-Semitic measures. The Jewish question was not high on the list of peasant concerns during these years but, on occasion, it was mentioned as a primary reason for dissatisfaction with the regime. The basic perception of the Jews, despite anti-Semitic cliches, was that they were trustworthy and honorable.[35] As one peasant said regarding them: "The Jews had, until now, always paid him more than thc others. They needed the Jews; without the Jews they could no longer go on."[36] Even in less positive characterizations of the Jews there emerges a sense of bitterness at the priorities of the Third Reich. A peasant whose property had been attached

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for excessive debts, remarked that the regime was a nest of scoundrels. While the Third Reich busied itself clearing out the Jews, the scoundrels were permitted to run loose.[37]

A grudging respect for the Jewish livestock dealers was not confined to the non-Party population. A number of Burgomasters were warned in 1935 that they were too sympathetic to the Jews. One of these Burgomasters had even written a character reference for a Jew who was under accusation for corrupt business practices. Called to account by the local Party office for his remarkable deviation from ideological norms, he responded:

> I did not consider it as incompatible with my official duties as a Burgomaster to offer the requested statement. This, all the more so, since I was obliged by my oath of office to bring the truth to light on all occasions without regard to the person. The regulations of the NSDAP, whereby it is forbidden to issue any sort of certification for Jews, was not known to me at that time.[38]

The authorities possessed various means to force the population to cease their business relations with the Jews. The attitude of the local officals was crucial in this respect. In two communities in the Wolfratshausen area, the authorities announced that any peasants caught dealing with Jews would be prohibited from using the community-owned bulls for mating.[39] At some of the markets where Jews still dared to appear, scenes were provoked by agitators.[40] Aryan livestock dealers who continued to trade with the Jews were placed under investigation

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and threatened with the withdrawal of their licenses.[41] But, the authorities admitted, it was next to impossible to uncover the infractions which they were certain were taking place.[42] In any case, withdrawing licenses from Aryans would only drive the livestock trade further into Jewish hands. Peasants who were Party members were warned that they would be hauled before the Party courts if they continued to trade with Jews.[43] Peasants who held official posts in the cooperatives or district councils could be dismissed for infractions against the anti-Semitic legislation.[44] The RNS could threaten individual peasants caught dealing with Jews by withholding financial aid.[45] Finally, the _Erbhofbauer_ could face the loss of _Bauernehre_, a possible prelude to the loss of the farm, if he traded with Jews.[46] But, as we shall discuss in greater detail below (pages 282-293), there were limits on the extent of economic pressure which could be brought to bear for _Weltanschäulich_ crimes. And, as was discussed in the chapter concerning the _Erbhof_ farms, the application of penalties for crimes against the National Socialist _Weltanschauung_ remained the exception rather than the rule.

So even as late as 1937 and 1938, after years of repression against the Jews, investigations by the authorities revealed a still lively trade between Jews and peasants. Thirty-two peasants were cited for continued trade with the Jews in the Günzberg area and seventy-nine

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were named in the Mellrichstadt area as part of a still "active trade." One report asserted that the Jews could only be displaced if the Aryan dealers were given substantial state subsidies.[47] The failure to completely enforce the anti-Jewish decrees after anti-Semitic legislation unparalleled in modern history, under a regime absolutely committed to solving the "Jewish question" in Germany, is remarkable. Obviously if the regime could not enforce laws on this central issue, it is not surprising that they could not enforce regulations on more peripheral matters.

The physical removal of the Jews, first from the rural areas (a goal largely accomplished by 1940) and then from Germany, ended the Jewish presence in peasant Bavaria. The operation did not meet with any opposition from the peasants, who, after all, viewed the Jews as worthwhile commercial intermediaries, not friends. Yet some hint of the complex emotions of the Bavarian peasantry to the Jewish population and to the deportations was suggested by a rumor which circulated in Franconia in early 1943, long after the extermination machinery had gone into operation in the East. On the Franconian border with Wuerttemberg, the peasants talked of two Jewish livestock dealers who had formerly lived in the region. Some German soldiers who had been captured by the Red Army had supposedly seen these two Jews, who were now commissars in the Russian army. The Jews had, in

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fact, helped the German prisoners to escape. As the tide of war began to turn against Germany once and for all, a faint echo of the Holocaust appeared, albeit, in distorted form. Franconia was indeed Judenrein, its Jews transported to the East. But the Jews were alive, indeed thriving as soldiers for the enemy. Yet they felt no personal animosity for the common German citizen and exacted no revenge for what had been done to them and their families. Thus, the average rural resident was able to incorporate elements of fact (the transports) and myth (the Jew as Communist and enemy, the Jews are still alive) into a tale which denied the essential truth of what had occurred.[48]

The regime used various techniques to inculcate commitment to the National Socialist ideology and engage the rural populace in the various organizations of the Party state. Of all the options which were available, that of economic blackmail was, potentially, the most powerful. The control of public funds permitted the state to exercise a tremendous degree of political pressure through the granting or withholding of subsidies. Since there were only limited funds available to subsidize machine purchases, silo construction, fertilizer purchases, and other useful improvements, the National Socialists argued that the government had every right to direct funds to peasants who were supporters of the regime. A further argument in favor of

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economic blackmail was that state subsidies were a form of communal charity granted to individual members of the Volksgemeinschaft. The community had the right to expect that the individuals would be useful to the larger organism. The principle of Gemeinnutz vor Eigennutz was not to be one-sidedly abused by egiostic farmowners.[49] A general principle was adopted--applications for subsidies were passed on to local Party offices for a political evaluation of the applicants. Their recommendations might well mean the difference between approval or rejection of the subsidy. Among the criteria used in the evaluation was previous contributions to community charities under National Socialist control. Religious charitable contributions were, if anything, regarded with suspicion rather than favor. By such methods, the regime hoped to inculcate at least a minimum level of participation in Nazi activities.

But even a low level of ideological conformity was difficult to achieve, as the response of the peasantry to the Winterhilfswerk (Winter Help Work) and the NSV (Nationalsozialistische Volkswohlfahrt) indicates. The Agrarspende fuer das Winterhilfswerk was one of the major rural charities organized by the Nazis. The yearly campaign was little beloved by the peasants. Although officially a voluntary contribution, the payments were extracted through a mixture of subtle and not so subtle threats, compounded by the public denunciation of non-

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contributors. The payments in non-rural areas were deducted from the paychecks of salaried employees but not from landowners. For peasants, the voluntary nature of the contributions retained some semblance of reality. Payments could be made in cash or in kind. In addition, a strong campaign was undertaken to enroll every member of the peasant community in the NSV.

One of the selling points used by the Nazis in the campaigns was the success of the regime in eradicating the plague of vagabondage which had engulfed the countryside during the Depression. Eliminating begging had been one of the early major efforts the Nazi government had initiated and by 1934 it had the problem well under control, using a combination of police crackdowns, improved employment opportunities, and expanded state charitable programs.[50] Since the connection between the elimination of vagrancy and the success of the WHW was a key propaganda point, the initial attitude of peasants toward the WHW was moderately positive. The financial sacrifices for the WHW may have been equal to or even greater than the money which had been given to beggars, but the wandering beggar, often a stranger to the district, was a source of unease and a potential thief. The more secure conditions were probably worth the price. That was, at least, the mood which was described by the police reports in the first few years of the Third Reich.[51] Even as late as 1937, the local RNS leader in one town could refer to the

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end of the Bettlerplage in his call to peasants to take out membership in the NSV: "In gratitude for this alone, every Volk comrade must consider it his duty to become a member of the NSV."[52] Explicit political goals were also stressed by the Nazi agencies. The KBS Nördlingen, in its directive to the OBFs instructing them to cooperate with the WHW collections, pointed out the potential propaganda benefits of good results, at home and abroad.[53]

No matter how nicely embellished by references to the beggars or to foreign and domestic opinion, the contributions remained, at bottom, a yearly expense which was barely affordable by the frugal and cash-poor peasantry, especially as prices, wages, taxes, and dues began to mount during the economic recovery, while income lagged due to price controls on agricultural products. The NSV and WHW met with growing resistance, attested to by results in district after district, with the peasant, at the most, preferring his customary charities and angered at this apparent duplication of efforts. One village in the Ebersberg district gave no contributions at all to the 1933-1934 WHW drive, but when a local Catholic mission held its fund drive, the collection was a complete success. The apparently obvious declaration of local loyalties infuriated and embarrassed the local district office. It had the funds seized and assigned to the WHW, using the legal pretext that the religious collection had

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not been registered with and approved by the authorities.[54]

Another problem faced by the WHW was related to the anti-statist attitudes of the peasants. Their distrust of state bureaucracies and the growing role of the state in all areas of private and public life left them with the suspicion that funds directed toward one activity were easily diverted to another. A rumor in the Bad Kissingen region in 1936 alleged that the WHW collections were actually being spent to procure and produce weapons for the Wehrmacht, an interesting commentary on the peasants' lack of sympathy for rearmament and military adventure, perhaps a recognition that it was precisely military expenditures which were draining agriculture of much needed funds.[55]

The peasants also regarded the WHW as a non-rural charity. The district administration president for Upper Bavaria reported that the peasants felt that their sacrifices should be balanced by sacrifices on the part of the recipients of WHW funds. Specifically, the beneficiaries of the funds should be willing to help with agricultural tasks. When approximately 10 percent of the owners in the Nördlingen district failed to give a donation to the WHW in 1938 the KBF ascribed it to peasant anger over the ingratitude of the recipients, who refused to help farm owners (perhaps a reference to the lack of enthusiasm on the part of urban residents for rural labor programs).[56]

The success of the WHW, such as it was, declined pre-

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dictably as the price scissors opened up to the detriment of agriculture after 1935 and the various Erzeugungsschlachten followed one upon the other, with their exhausting demands upon the peasantry. Contributions declined as the peasants had less and less to give and the sentiment grew that peasants were making enough sacrifices in time and energy for the Volksgemeinschaft. By 1939, the attitude toward the contributions were described in one report as "great displeasure."[57] Contributions in the Nördlingen district, either in kind or in cash, declined by 50 percent from 1936-1937 to 1938-1939. Only with the advent of the war, with its accompanying appeals to patriotic sacrifice, did the contributions, now in cash alone, begin to rise in Nördlingen--from 29,414 marks in 1939-1940 to 48,864 marks in 1943-1944.[58]

The peacetime tendency toward decreasing contributions was always counterbalanced by the importance which was attached to the WHW by the Party and its associated agencies. The willingness and readiness to give was deemed, as was mentioned above, a measurement of support for the NS state. Refusal to contribute was treated with great suspicion by the authorities and it was strenuously combatted. The government often resorted to the use of public pressure, such as the scene created by the BBF in one district when he publicly insulted a peasant. Despite the sensitivity felt by the RNS over good relations between its peasant leaders and the community, the KBF

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completely supported his subordinate in this dispute.[59] Of course, the major pressure for contributions did not arise from the RNS but from the WHW and Party cadre. The WHW compiled lists of peasants who had not contributed and sent them to Party agencies and the RNS offices. The lists contained information about property size and other economic circumstances and offered remarks about general behavior and political attitudes: "Has a special talent for grumbling and indirect agitation against every institution. He is a Party comrade but never gives the German salute."[60]

But the RNS officials were not always that sympathetic to the special pleadings of the WHW officials. The KBF Nördlingen, for example, received a complaint from the WHW representative in the area that numerous peasants had failed to contribute to the 1936-1937 drive. The KBF cooperated to the extent of sending a further appeal to 153 peasants, with an accompanying contribution form. But he also added, in a report on the matter to the LBF Bayern, that, "a majority of the farmers....are so placed that they themselves require aid....Very often the reports and descriptions of the Ortsamtsleiter of the NSV are exaggerated and can be ascribed to personal differences."[61] Under pressure from the WHW district leader to punish refussals by withholding certain money due to them, the KBF Nördlingen refused because "many small farmers with large families would be, thereby, un-

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justly affected." He argued that each case be carefully investigated before action was taken.[62]

The RNS was also placed in a very uncomfortable position by such requests. Although it acted as a transmitter of state directives to the peasantry, its view of itself as the corporate embodiment of the Peasant Estate led it to oppose these more heavy-handed attempts to mobilize peasant support for goals which were not immediately related to agriculture. In addition, the RNS generally tried to observe certain legal norms. Its role as protector of the peasantry or, at the very least, the sensitive, paternalistic overseer of the peasantry was stated very clearly by the LBS Bayern in a letter to the Nördlingen KBF. The letter was a reply to the WHW administration concerning the refusal of the KBF to punish non-paying peasants. The LBS _Verwaltungsamt_ noted, in defense of the KBF, that a moderate amount of pressure and explanation had indeed led to additional contributions from the peasants. The KBF had achieved this, "as well, without direct pressure and without threats...." Moreover, there should not be any resort to more forceful tactics. The office gave two justifications for a gingerly approach. One reason was that "in no case should direct compulsion be used, as this would falsify the voluntary character of the WHW." In addition, suggestions to withhold certain subsidies could not be countenanced because "the peasant has a claim to it as part of

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the Marktordnung and it may not arbitrarily be denied to him."[63] Even in Nazi Germany, the separation between the Marktordnung and a "voluntary" charity could not simply be abolished. Otherwise, the carefully erected structure of market controls, with its fines and punishments clearly spelled out, would begin to deteriorate. The Marktordnung would then become a mere enforcement tool for ideological goals, with incalculable damage to the nutrition of the German people. The RNS would not step beyond indirect pressure through persuasion and example.

Apparently as a result of negotiations between the LBS and Gau WHW organization prior to the 1937-1938 campaign a procedure was worked out to deal with peasants who refused to contribute. Lists of non-contributing peasants were compiled by the WHW representatives and sent to the KBS organizations. The peasants would be approached and told how important the WHW contribution was to the community. Results would be reported to the LBS. If all other methods failed, the peasant could be denied subsidies. Here, at last, was a form of direct pressure which both parties could agree upon. It could be justified both legally and morally. Legally, because credit approval hinged on a variety of factors, including political attitudes. Morally, because those who actively participated in community affairs, of which the WHW was an important component, were the only individuals who deserved the aid of that same community. Since the

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National Socialist state proposed to save the peasantry for all time, it was justified in sanitizing the peasantry by giving support to its most "progressive" elements.[64]

Not surprisingly, the pressure to deny grants and subsidies to politically suspect peasants was initiated in Party circles. The NSDAP Kreisleitung Dachau-Aichach was one of the most vocal advocates of the tactic. It advised the Aichach Agricultural Office in 1937 that active opponents of the movement were applying for aid and that approval should hinge on political reliability. The RNS was successfully enlisted in support of this policy. The Landshut KBS cut off silo credits from suspect peasants. The KBS Schrobenhausen wrote the Agricultural Office in Aichach that all grants should be denied to peasants who were not NSV members and were poor contributors to the WHW, estimated to total 75 percent of all applicants. However, the policy of credit denials for political purposes was never officially endorsed at the highest level of government. The Food and Agricultural Ministry had itself taken the position that credits should only be refused in cases where truly important grounds existed. Undoubtedly, nutritional freedom from foreign sources would be overly endangered if the policy had been pressed much further.[65]

The Siebert Program, announced in Bavaria by the Minister President and Economics Minister Ludwig Siebert in the spring of 1939, indicates the regime's dilemma. One million marks were appropriated to help subsidize

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purchases of labor-saving machinery and implements by peasants. Only peasants with farms between four and thirty-five hectares were eligible under the program. Applicants were examined by all the relevant agencies in rural Bavaria--district office, Party district office, OBF, KBF, Burgomaster, and agricultural office. The Siebert Program would have offered the regime a perfect opportunity to extract political concessions from applicants in return for the subsidies. The disproportion between the number of applicants and funds available was enormous. For example, three districts in Upper Bavaria, Rosenheim, Aibling, and Miesbach had 362 applications asking for more than 200,000 marks. Yet only 12,900 marks were allotted to the three districts. The Aichach district office asked the Bavarian government for an additional 1,500 marks over the 5,500 which they had been given, since so many applications had been received. Ultimately, a small amount was added to their allottment. Faced with an overwhelming response, the regime might well have restricted approvals to a small number of politically reliable and politically active peasants. But the solution was to distribute the limited funds in small amounts among the larger group, including peasants who were considered opponents of the National Socialists. Of 171 grant approvals examined in the archives, twenty-four received poor reports from the Party offices. But the needs for higher farm productivity outweighed ideological

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error; in only four cases were grants refused solely on political grounds. It appears that a poor Party report had to be coupled with a lack of economic need before the applicant was turned down.[66]

No clear policy was ever adopted by the competing agencies concerning the question of political reliability and eligibility for state credits. Each agency was jealous in guarding its own goals and interests and its control over limited funds. The state and RNS agricultural administration, in particular, were loath to disturb the already hesitant march toward higher productivity and production.

Some of the reasons why the National Socialists were unable to remold the peasants into a politically reliable mass have already been mentioned--the influence of non-Nazi elites, the attachment to custom, economic self-interest, and the less than unanimous agreement among the National Socialists themselves concerning the value of punishment in cases of _Weltanschäulich_ weakness. There were other difficulties which were difficult to surmount. The rural villages and farms were hard to reach in person by functionaries of the regime, even by the policemen who were responsible for local order and surveillance. One example is illustrative of the geographic problems which faced the police force; it is neither the best nor the worst as far as conditions went in Bavaria. The district of Rottenburg counted 21,068 inhabitants. There were

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fifty-six communities which were made up of four market towns, ninety villages, eighty-two hamlets, and 131 detached farms (Einoden). The six police posts in the district had to watch over 307 separate settlements. In addition:

> the villages lie very far apart from each other and the road system does not suit the needs of traffic. The police can only use their bicycles in some spots and in poor weather they cannot be used on the paths lying off the side of the roads due to wetness. The staff have to walk on the paths to the farmsteads and hamlets during such weather and often have to leave their bicycles behind or carry them.[67]

The inaccessible detached farms were hotbeds of independence, resistance, and disobedience, even if mostly of a symbolic nature. In 1936, one report singled out the detached and isolated farmsteads in the area as the most flagrant violators of the decree which required that the swastika be displayed on election days. The same farmsteads were among those most alarmed by National Socialist measures aimed at the modernization of peasant agriculture, as has been noted above.[68]

Despite major technological advances, the physical isolation and rural poverty frustrated Nazi efforts to breach the walls of inaccessibility. Only 6 percent of radio listeners in Germany were from rural districts though these comprised 33 percent of the population. In part, the lack of radios was due to the pace of rural life. The peasants simply had no time to listen to the radio, often arising long before dawn and spending all the day

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in the fields, where no radio could accompany them in the days before transistors. Besides, radio programming contained too little of real interest to the peasants and radios were also far too costly. The RNS had several advisors attached to the radio stations whose task was to develop more relevant programming for the peasants. The production of "people's radios" was also expected to bring cheaper radios into the market. However, neither hope was realized, especially after the war began, when there were further shortages of non-essential consumer goods. Therefore, "the most effective form of propaganda, to bring the best speakers to the broadest layers of the populace, is, likewise, precluded."[69]

Film, that other modern propaganda weapon in the National Socialist arsenal, barely played a role in rural Bavaria. Actually, the number of films presented in rural areas declined in the Third Reich, which led to RNS complaints: "The Gaufilmstelle has cancelled its presentations in those towns where the turnout was no longer profitable. We are of the opinion that precisely these places need such presentations, because they are rural communities in which the monthly film show was the only form of entertainment."[70] The press, the third major form of propaganda utilized by the National Socialists, was also of little use in the countryside. One official noted: "In the rural regions, the populace fails to perceive the necessary educational work in economic and

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political matters, since newspapers are almost never bought due to lack of ready cash."[71]

Equally, perhaps more, disturbing to the regime was the guarded attitude of the peasantry. As one of the more observant (or honest) reports observed: "People have, by stages, accustomed themselves not to talk imprudently, so that their actual attitudes can no longer be so easily ascertained."[72] Another report pointed out that "no one will utter his honest opinion to the police."[73] Since the policemen had usually served for years in the locale and were so close to the populace, their reliability was also questioned.[74]

To those who were familiar with rural Bavaria, peasant wariness represented quite a break with custom. Isolated, without radios, books, newspapers, or films, working weeklong in the fields, the peasants had one major form of relaxation and entertainment at their disposal--their talk, often boisterous and exaggerated, not infrequently encouraged by ample quantities of beer at the local tavern. Even in the early days of the regime, peasants continued to give vent to their suspicions of the political order. Peasant suspicions did not represent serious opposition to the new regime, merely a slightly mocking, ironic, jaundiced, even good-natured and indulgent state of mind. But the growing number of arrests and accusations brought before the police for political infractions soon convinced the rural populace that harmless criticism did not

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exist in the Third Reich, even if the criticism amounted to no more than alcoholically induced jokes or irreverences, such as calling out "Heil Moscow" in response to the Hitler salute or casting aspersions on local or national Nazi dignitaries.[75] With police measures, the National Socialists could enforce a sort of sullen and passive conformity to their laws and goals, but they could not remold the peasantry to conform to National Socialist ideals.

Therefore, ideological control over the individual peasants was neither achieved nor attempted during the twelve years of Nazi rule. At the least, the failure ought to have been balanced by a firm control over rural organizational life. Thereby, the authorities could be certain to have enactments put into effect without great difficulty. Indeed, the _Marktordnung_ associations and the _Erbhof_ Courts were given various means with which they could punish peasants who erred against market regulations or failed to measure up to "community" standards for farming or, even, morality. Fines could be levied, agricultural products seized, civil penalties imposed, and, the ultimate weapon, farm expropriations ordered to enforce discipline. Yet, such measures as these were only as effective as the individuals and organizations responsible for imposing them.

The _Gleichschaltung_ should have enabled the National

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Socialists to effectively control rural organizational life. There were no other legal political parties. The RNS was the single representative of the peasant community and it could be trusted to place reliable individuals in charge of the local RNS organs and cooperatives. The other groups which formed the public life of the towns and villages could be similarly supervised and controlled. But it was the very absence of normal political life, described above, combined with the critical importance of the remaining public and semi-public organizations, which made complete political control of the countryside so elusive a goal for the National Socialists. All the local conflicts in rural society, from the utterly petty and private to the larger conflicts over religion, policy, and politics, were, perforce, acted out within the narrow public arena which remained. The result was that the National Socialists and the RNS organizations began to attract an increasingly diverse crowd, with backgrounds which were not entirely pure from a National Socialist standpoint. Of course, this development had begun ever since the NSDAP began to achieve the status of a mass movement. The appointment of Hitler to the chancellorship and the subsequent Gleichschaltung accelerated the process by which opportunists and even opponents joined the NS institutions and the Party itself. Two important factors prevented the Nazis from excluding half-hearted National Socialists from the Party and from public institutions of

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social and economic power. The first was that many latecomers were village elites who had long dominated rural society. Their accession to the NS state and movement represented a victory of sorts for the regime and certainly eased the tasks of social control. The second factor was that the number of reliable volunteers to public posts was always inadequate, forcing the Nazis to relax their standards.

The cooperative movement, to take a critical rural institution, was regarded by the Nazis as a potential ally in their program of rural modernization and as a valuable tool for surveying, controlling, and supervising rural society. Yet the National Socialists had many problems finding trustworthy and reliable persons to fill the many positions available within the rural cooperative movement. As with any other pre-existing organization, unreliable officials had to be replaced by reliable Party members or fellow-travellers. Since the cooperative leaders were often the elites of peasant society, the Nazis could not permit political opponents to retain these highly visible and important positions. But the problem of expelling or controlling former opponents was exacerbated by the one-party dictatorship created by the Nazis. With the elimination of all other political parties, the non-political institutions within rural society became even more attractive avenues for power and prestige. As we have seen, the police measures of the regime enforced a super-

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ficial conformity in ideology, so it was not easy to distinguish between committed Nazis, ambitious peasants, and political opponents. Therefore, the regime had to be doubly careful that the wrong elements did not infiltrate the cooperatives. Compounding the difficulties, cooperative members often retained a right to elect their officials, subject to the approval of higher agencies. Their choices could occasionally prove to be unpleasant from the Nazis' standpoint. A credit cooperative in southern Upper Bavaria produced one such surprise in its election in November 1935 for the accountant's post. An NSDAP member was defeated by a former member of the outlawed KPD. The elections had to be voided and rescheduled. Cases like this were not always so clear-cut. Sometimes a mere lack of enthusiasm, a suspiciously non-ideological affect, were adequate grounds for the removal of an official from these highly sensitive posts.[76]

Just as the inter-agency rivalry frustrated attempts to use economic blackmail for political purposes (see pages 288-291), so it could impede efforts to secure ideological conformity among public or semi-public officials. The NSDAP could not always bring sufficient pressure to bear against election results, if the RNS or other agricultural agencies stood in the way. In the village of Utzwingen in Swabia, the Ortsgruppenleiter, who was also Burgomaster, had played a leading role in the establishment of a livestock breeding cooperative for the village. At the first meeting, he

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charged the assembled to nominate a chairman and three committeemen for the new cooperative. The names which were proposed at the meeting all met his strong disapproval. The nominee for chairman, Florian Jerger, was not a Party member, had not contributed to the WHW, and was a "grumbler." Of the other nominees, two were also suspect, one for his membership in a Catholic youth group and the other for having only recently attended his first NSV meeting. The Burgomaster wrote to the KBF and the Tierzuchtinspektor (the Bavarian state official responsible for breeding regulations) and requested that other nominees be found to replace the three unworthy men. He proposed that the OBF be named as chairman and that two Party members be nominated for the committee posts. But the Burgomaster's complaint was rejected by the inspector. He pointed out that "it is none of your business to deny this right to the membership assembly. If you thought at the founding meeting that Florian Jerger was not appropriate as chairman, you ought to have been able to impress your opinion on the membership meeting." As the inspector reminded the KBF: "The association can only name as chairman someone who is nominated by the membership assembly and, accordingly, also possesses the trust of the cooperative."[77] His attitudes recalls the case of the dairy cooperative which was founded in Bad Reichenhall (Chapter IV, pages 223-227), where the regime was also concerned that a trustworthy and respected individual be

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placed in charge of dairy deliveries. Controlling the countryside involved a good deal more than just police methods and repression.

The conflict over cooperative posts in Utzwingen illustrates the blurring of boundaries between political-ideological tension and conflict arising out of long-standing village factionalism and the struggle for local influence. Certainly there were, on the surface, ample political grounds for the rejection of the three nominees as cooperative officials. But other factors may also have played a role. The Burgomaster was, himself, the owner of a breeding bull.[78] It seems quite likely that his campaign to establish a cooperative was connected to his hope that he might be awarded the cooperative bull contract. Apparently, the village had been divided for many years by religious and political strife. The NSDAP victory had placed political power in the hands of the Burgomaster's faction, since the Burgomaster would then have held the posts of Burgomaster, Party *Ortsgruppenleiter*, and cooperative bull owner. The head of the cooperative would have been the village OBF, had all gone according to plan, and the other cooperative officials would have all been members of the NSDAP, that is, subservient to the Burgomaster in his capacity of *Ortsgruppenleiter*. But the jealousies within the village were powerful enough to upset his plans and to place the control of the cooperative into rival hands, apparently

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a group which had at least loose connection with Catholic circles. The result would have been a political as well as economic defeat for the Burgomaster. But how could such problems be completely avoided? The factionalism was much older than the Third Reich and who could be really certain that it represented political opposition rather than private vendettas? Similar examples could be multiplied many times.

Problems did not only arise with the obviously or apparently unacceptable political opponents of Nazism. The regime also had difficulty in finding responsible individuals to serve on the cooperative boards. As we saw above, simply choosing anyone to take charge of a cooperative was foolhardy. Since the cooperatives were a major transmission belt for the regulations and policies of the regime, the task of compliance could be eased if the cooperatives were placed under the control of respected figures in rural life. These men should have been able to inspire the confidence of the peasantry and to get them to obey directives through persuasion rather than coercion. But it was not so easy to enlist trustworthy and prestigious personnel, as we hear in a complaint from the Bayerische Landesverband landwirtschaftlicher Genossenschaften in 1937. Attempts were underway to find a chairman for the dairy cooperative in Anhausen, a village in Swabia. As with the Bad Reichenhall dairy cooperative, the smooth operation of the dairy and the

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frictionless delivery of milk to the dairy by the peasants required that the cooperative post be held by someone who enjoyed the trust and confidence of the local peasants. Although some peasants from outlying villages could be found to serve in the cooperative, in Anhausen, "the wealthy and the influential peasants hold no posts in the community and completely refuse to be active in public service." The small landowners who were willing to serve simply did not possess the prestige and influence among the peasants which would enable the milk deliveries to run smoothly.[79]

All the problems plaguing the regime in securing power in cooperative leadership existed in the main apparatus of rural control, the RNS. The chief difficulty within the RNS, which diminished its abilities to control and regulate rural society, was the poor quality of its local subordinates. That did not necessarily mean incompetent. Rather, judged from the perspective of the RNS, a poor local officer would be someone who was unable to inspire or persuade the peasants to follow and support RNS objectives. Preferably, the OBF would be a prestigious local figure, one who was active in public affairs, and who was an able and successful farm manager. The OBF should be a man who could maintain good relations with the local populace and not antagonize or polarize the community. The OBF should be a Party member, active in Party affairs, and ideologically sound. Finally, though

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it may seem too obvious to mention, the OBF should support and obey Party, RNS, and state objectives, laws and directives. Unfortunately, finding adequate numbers of men such as these was an almost insurmountable task.

Just finding enough Party men to serve in the RNS organs was often hopeless. As late as 1936, only one-half of the OBFs in the Laufen region of Upper Bavaria were members of the NSDAP. As the BBF added in his report to the NSDAP *Kreisleiter*, even of those who were Party members, *most* were ideologically sound, which is not an overwhelming affirmation of commitment and soundness even among those who were considered most trustworthy. The available pool of Party members in other areas of Bavaria was often so low that finding a peasant Party member who was also willing to serve as an OBF was nearly impossible. When an OBF for one community was to be named, not a single Party activist could be found. When a Party member was finally named, he was one of only nine Nazis in the former BVP stronghold. Toward the end of 1935, the NSDAP began to put pressure on non-Party OBFs to join the Party, or to resign their offices. Even then, many OBFS could not be convinced to join. One OBF, when asked whether he might be interested in applying for Party membership, answered, "I have never been in any party and never will be in any party."[80] Another OBF was invited to a membership meeting but did not show up. The same man had, eighteen months earlier, exhibited the Bavarian

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white-blue colors on Heldengedenktag (Remembrance Day).[81] As always, it should be kept in mind that figures for Party membership exaggerate even this degree of ideological commitment. At the very least, many members had joined the Party only after the Nazi victory in 1933. Among six Erbhof Court officials named to their posts for the 1939 term in Nördlingen, all were Party members, but only one of them had been an NSDAP member prior to 1933.[82]

Aside from lack of interest or even hostility, the drawbacks of a Party membership were compounded by the existing heavy work load. The OBFs had enormous responsibilities, were paid very little, and had their own farms to look after. Party membership, with the meetings, fund drives, and other activities, was not an attractive prospect for many of these men. They often cited their long hours as grounds for non-participation in public meetings and celebrations. Some of them even quit their office because of this complaint, although the resignation of OBFs in two communities for this reason may have reflected political disenchantment as well, since they had decorated Maypoles with the white-blue colors.[83]

The excessive work load of the OBFs was doubly exacting because it was so poorly renumerated. The RNS was never on a firm financial footing and found it difficult to gain the consent of private individuals or the public administration for larger contributions. In fact, there was pressure, in the straightened economic

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circumstances of Nazi Germany, for lower contributions to the RNS. The communal administrations could only be asked for higher payments with their consent and this they were unwilling to grant. The local RNS functionaries tried to get the communes to agree to reimburse the OBFs for telephone and postal costs but were unsuccessful. The unsalaried status of the OBFs only added to the problems. The RNS finally began to pay them a small sum for their services, but the lowly status of the OBF, reflected in small salaries of twelve marks a month, continued to make recruitment difficult. After the war began, suggestions were renewed to increase the salary to twenty-five marks a month. As one advocate, the Food and Nutrition Office of the Bavarian Economics Ministry, argued, the Bavarian OBF was almost invariably a small- or middle-sized landowner who could not possibly meet office expenses from his own income. "Already prior to the war, it was hard to recruit expert, capable, and ideologically qualified peasants to become OBFs."[84]

A lack of political commitment and engagement on the part of RNS functionaries could barely be tolerated, yet even more overt challenges to National Socialist and RNS policies were made by many OBFs. Their disagreements ranged from the symbolic issues we have discussed above, such as the prohibition of the Bavarian colors, to economic issues. Some of the OBFs reacted just as the peasant masses had to the emphasis within the Hitler

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movement on celebratory activities and National Socialist symbolism. One OBF, in Holzhausen, complained at a public meeting about the poor condition of the local roads and, referring to a recent order to place two swastika flags in the school, complained, "What on earth do we need a second swastika flag in the schoolhouse for?" He was dismissed from his post.[85]

Ideological shortcomings which often existed among the village notables of Nazi Germany are strikingly illustrated by a series of incidents in the village of Weildorf in 1936. The troubles, which were described in a series of communications from the Nazi Burgomaster, began when the OBF, who was also the deputy Burgomaster, organized a public reception in honor of the local priest. The celebration had been expressly forbidden by the Burgomaster on the grounds that no one member of the commune deserved to be placed above the other residents. His appeal to National Socialist principles, in reality a poorly disguised attempt to conceal an underlying hostility to Catholicism, was only one example of the poor working relations between the Burgomaster and his deputy. One week later, on the occasion of an SA celebration to inaugurate an SA propaganda display, the SA troopers and the HJ members held a parade which wound up at the local _Gasthaus_. As the celebrants drank and sang, someone shouted out "Sieg Heil." The local peasants gathered for their own recreational drinking, among them the deputy

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Burgomaster, did not bother to rise from their seats at the ritual salute. Nor would they raise their arms in the German salute. They sat there as "still as logs." The Burgomaster patronizingly pacified the aroused SA comrades: "Comrades, I know peasants because I am myself a peasant. Most of them read no newspapers, see no parades, and cannot look beyond their own farms and priests." Despite, or because of, his delicate attempt at mediation, tensions continued to rise. Songs were sung: the peasants listened sullenly. Finally, one of the peasants muttered that "those who sing such songs have never been in battle," and the others sagely nodded their heads in agreement.

Other incidents had occurred, inflaming public opinion. The local priest, who seems to have been a central figure in the anti-Nazi mood of the populace, had, as mentioned above (p. 271), seized a BDM poster because it depicted a young girl clad in a sports uniform, which he considered indecent and suggestive. _Stürmer_ propaganda was another source of tension between the village factions. Clearly the town was bitterly divided, much influenced by Catholicism, and regarded the Nazis as outsiders, immoral, stupid, provocative, and anti-Catholic. More surprisingly, those who held such opinions continued to sit on the communal council, held important posts, and were even in charge of the local RNS organization. Such laxness on the part of the RNS in enforcing political conformity belies any notion that the countryside was monolithically controlled by the NSDAP. Only when the conciliatory attitude

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led to open conflict and hostility did the National Socialists crack down and, as in Weildorf, force the resignation of the offending ringleaders. But the situation further deteriorated, with a brawl breaking out in January 1937 between the peasants and the local SA.[86]

So far, mention has been made of the ideological religious, and political differences which found their way into the NSDAP and RNS apparatus. As peasants, farmers, and agricultural activists, the men serving in the local apparatus were also subject to doubts over the direction of National Socialist agricultural policy. They voiced their objections and occasionally even obstructed the implementation of policy. Many RNS officials, sympathizing and identifying too completely with their peasant neighbors and their own interests, actively attacked RNS decrees and participated in and organized peasant resistance. This activity can be found for almost any major reform initiated by the RNS. The Tierzuchtinspektor for Miesbach accused the OBF in that village of promoting disobedience to the selective breeding laws. A year later, the BBF and the OBF were described as leaders of the resistance to the selection procedures. In 1935, the inspector reported, once again, that the OBF was agitating against the group selection procedures, this time in cooperation with the Burgomaster. An Agricultural Office report in 1936 complained that the OBFs were not cooperating with that office out of jealousy, rivalry, and

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lack of knowledge. An OBF in Aschheim was arrested in 1937 for agitation at a public meeting against the taxes and measures of the RNS, a common peasant grievance. A district administration president, citing an almost identical case, blamed the OBFs for the insufficient re-education of the rural populace.[87] OBFs who took their peasant leadership seriously, who actually believed themselves to be the protector and representative of the peasantry, were, perhaps, more dangerous than oppressive and incompetent local leaders. The authorities could only frown upon such independent thinkers, such as the OBF in the Cham region, who was the ringleader at the hearing held by the military to negotiate land purchases for the construction of an airport. The reports of the meetings noted: "One of the discussions called by the military commission was so disrupted by name calling and negative behavior under the leadership of the OBF, that the commission had to withdraw."[88] We have seen already that OBFs could be found among those who ignored the injunctions against trade with Jews. The dairy regulations also met with the OBF resistance, such as an entire village including the OBF, which refused to deliver their milk to the dairy.[89]

Sometimes, disobedience was inspired less by outright opposition to RNS directives than by a feeling that in an emergency such as wartime, bureaucratic controls impeded efficiency in the rural economy. The RNS officials were

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not above believing that they knew best what the rural economy needed to work smoothly. The LBF Bavarian Ostmark in 1943 remarked at a public meeting: "It was all the same to the cow whether a bull was a select bull or not and it was equally irrelevant to the city populace whether pork came from a select boar or not."[90] In a similar vein, three men accused of illegally high land rentals in 1944 were acquitted when it emerged at the trial that the KBF in Schrobenhausen had counseled the men to rent the land, even after it had been disallowed as inflationary by the district administration president, in order that food supplies be maintained.[91]

Another problem which hampered effective rural administration was that OBFs were, all too often, willing to conform to community standards rather than those set by the regime. The immediate pressures of public opinion led many an OBF to avoid the too scrupulous use of their potential authority. An OBF in Kirchberg in Lower Bavaria was questioned by the police about a peasant couple that were accused of non-delivery of milk, as well as of making treasonous utterances. He refused to testify against the couple because, as he said, "I have to live among the peasants and would prefer if I were not needed as a witness." Just as remarkably, the entire local apparatus, including the Burgomaster and the Ortsgruppenleiter, made similar statements. For fear of antagonizing the populace and the apparently large circle of relatives of the

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accused, no one was willing to testify. Enforcement of laws under the circumstances was obviously hampered and required the direct intervention of higher authorities, less influenced by and fearful of community pressure. The peasant couple from Kirchberg was finally persuaded to deliver their milk, a small enough price to pay for their anti-Nazi remarks, but a small victory for the *Marktordnung* as well.[92]

Almost, if not more, dangerous than outright or indirect opposition to the regime was the behavior of RNS functionaries who so antagonized the peasants under their control that the peasants were aroused to overt or covert acts of resistance. The BBF in Berchtesgaden, for example, managed to completely alienate the peasants in the region, as is evident from a report from the Koenigsee police post to the Berchtesgaden district office. The police reported a disturbance which had taken place during a peasant meeting the night before, May 19, 1935. The meeting had been addressed by the district veterinarian, who spoke about the new *Koergesetz*. Although the tone of his remarks had been quite firm, no untoward incidents occurred, until the BBF, who had followed him to the podium, proceeded to overreact to some quiet remarks made by one peasant to his neighbor about the previous presentation. The BBF shouted, "If you do not like it, you will be thrown out."[93] The peasant answered back and the BBF quickly

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adjourned the meeting, while also calling for the police. When the police arrived, they ascertained that the BBF was the cause of the disturbance, not the audience. The BBF had also proved his unworthiness by drinking all day long, insulting the populace, and getting into numerous brawls. He was generally regarded as a poor farmer. The district office requested that the Upper Bavarian district administration president have the BBF dismissed from his post.[94] The request was taken up by the Agricultural Section of the Bavarian Economics Ministry, which asked the LBS Bayern to dismiss its subordinate. As the Ministry pointed out, as a result of the BBFs behavior, "the peasants were very upset" and "any further meeting called by the BBF and chaired by him will either have a low attendance or lead to further confrontations."[95] The BBF had permitted his personal enmity toward one peasant to interfere with his work, which, the Ministry suggested, was sufficient grounds for his removal. The RNS acceded to the requests and dismissed the unworthy servant before the summer ended. Men such as these could only obstruct RNS agricultural policies and make the task of control doubly difficult.[96]

Not all functionaries were so censured. When a BBF, who was also the Burgomaster in the town of Geratsried, had insulted and threatened a peasant during a public meeting, the KBF supported his behavior, as did the LBS Bayern after acting on information from the KBF. The

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peasant had brought his complaint to the Agricultural Section of the Ministry, which had directed inquiries to the RNS. The RNS backed its local official because it believed that he had spoken in exasperation at the refusal of the peasant to make any contributions to Party and RNS causes. The BBF was, therefore, justifiably piqued at the peasant's selfishness. In fact, the BBF had gone rather far in his threats. He had told the peasant that he had been increasing his livestock at too rapid a rate and had reportedly said, "If I want to, you will be out on the street in fourteen days."[97] His interferences in farm operations, especially at a relatively early date (1934), and his tyrannical manner, despite RNS backing, ended up creating more hostility toward NS agricultural polices and goals.

The tensions which existed between the rural populace and the RNS functionaries with whom they most often came into contact came to light only infrequently, since, after all, it was dangerous to criticize any public officials in the Third Reich. Therefore, outright attacks were mostly absent until the war began and tensions increased. The treatment accorded a livestock dealer in Eggenfelden, who had become angry at new regulations in the livestock sector, was a warning toward those who might speak too loosely. He had referred to the local KBF as an imbecile and an idiot, who would long since have lost his farm had it not been for the Nazi victory. He was, of

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course, arrested for his remarks.[98] The widespread belief in peasant and other circles that the Third Reich was saving incompetent peasants from economic disasters of their own making, at the expense of the worthier peasants, remained generally submerged in the general silence which engulfed Bavaria. Incidents perpetrated in secrecy did occur from time to time. An unpopular KBF in Bad Aibling seems to have crystallized resentment to his overbearing attitude with the purchase of an official automobile, an Opel-Super 6, in 1935. The car must have symbolized the excessive privileges which peasants believed were being lavished on the KBF or, perhaps, it was a symbol of the high dues which peasants believed they were paying to support the RNS. In any event, while the KBF addressed a meeting, his car was smeared with excrement. Some time later, a fire broke out in the car trunk.[99]

Tensions increased during the war, as the demands laid down by the RNS, or through its mediation, increased, as did the direct interference in and supervision of the farmstead. During the latter years of the war, a certain relaxation of inhibitions occurred, especially as the German defeat approached. For the most part, hostility toward economic measures or the agents who enforced these measures continued to be expressed by implication alone, such as the "malicious glee" felt by the populace in the Aichach region when the KBF was imprisioned for war economy infractions.[100] An OBF in the Nördlingen region

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found that life had become so difficult due to the obstructions and insults of one peasant in particular that he threatened to quit his post if the chief offender was not drafted into the army.[101] An OBF in another district lost thirteen geese when an unknown person strew poisoned wheat about the farmyard.[102] A peasant in the Pfarrkirchen region was arrested for threatening the OBF with the words, "OBF Ammer will be the first to lose his head. Such people have to win the war, otherwise they will be the first to be punished."[103] An OBF in the Nördlingen region was told by one peasant that "we will yet be punished by the Lord God, that is, I will be."[104] One sometimes receives the impression that by the time the war ended, much of rural Bavaria had long since accustomed themselves to the imminent collapse of the increasingly onerous RNS administration.

The war not only contributed to more pronounced acts of opposition toward the RNS and Nazi administration, it also led to an increasing decay of the RNS apparatus itself. As we have seen, the problems of effective administration were exacerbated by the low qualifications of many of the men who served the RNS at the district and local level, an even greater factor as the war dragged on. The most obvious indication of deteriorating standards was the growth of criminality within the RNS. While there was little such behavior prior to 1940, thereafter it was no longer unusual. An OBF in the Kissingen region was

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fined for stealing wood in August 1940; the wife of an OBF was given six months in prison for black market activities in December 1941; an OBF did not fulfill his milk quota; OBFs in Roeding and Parsberg were jailed in June 1942 for black marketeering; the Neuhaus OBF was convicted of illegal pig slaughtering in July 1942; on and on, the cases multiply.[105] Aside from the growth of economic crimes, the RNS apparatus became riddled with what we might term *Weltanschäulich* crimes. One OBF cut off his thumb to avoid military service, another was accused of listening to enemy broadcasts, a third was having relations with a Polish woman.[106] Typical of the crimes among the rural populace during the war, no amount of selectivity could prevent them from occurring within the rural administration of the RNS. Yet the commission of the crimes contributed to the erosion of peasant willingness to make sacrifices, since the OBFs were, after all, supposed to be models for the average peasant. Worse still, there was an increasing abuse of rank and position--the OBF who falsified a livestock weight certificate, the OBF who took advantage of his possession of impounded centrifuges to produce his own black market butter. These crimes were far more dangerous to the regime's prestige, for they led peasants to conclude that their sacrifices for the Reich were not being matched by the Reich, Party, and RNS officials.[107]

None of this is particularly astonishing. Even in a

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so-called totalitarian society, the bureaucracy will be, by degrees unreliable, inefficient, and dishonest. The most that can be said for the RNS in Nazi Germany is that in the little time given to it to transform the German peasantry and salvage the peasant farm enterprise, it remained relatively vulnerable to the doubts and opposition within peasant society in general toward National Socialist agricultural reforms. There were not enough ideologically committed peasants to serve the RNS unswervingly and many of the enactments of the RNS met, therefore, with the same dismay on the part of the RNS infrastructures as they did on the part of most peasants. Even the ideologically motivated OBFs had expected a different sort of rural sanitation than the one they actually experienced under the Nazis. Only at the KBF level does the RNS begin to display a greater uniformity and reliability. These factors made it all the more possible for the peasants to resist the measures of the RNS, since, at the OBF level, there tended to exist a modest complicity of interests or silence between the peasants and the OBF. Even though complicity rarely took the form of outright sabotage of RNS decrees, one has to allow for the greater resistance which was permitted through the less than active scrutiny of the individual peasant and farmstead. The hierarchy of reliability is instructive. It confirms our observation that the Nazi regime represented a revolutionary modernizing force in rural Germany. In that respect, the RNS

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replicated the social divisions of the countryside. The top echelons were recruited from or advised by the agrarian technocracy. Here, sympathy for the rural reforms was most pronounced. Further down the hierarchy, local peasant attitudes were more visible. The OBFs tended to be less educated than the KBFs, more under the influence of village opinion

Compounding the problem of control was the war. Just as there was too little time to create a reliable and ideological sound RNS administration, the war contributed to a loosening of morals and morale. The urge to flout the law and the temptation to break it made the RNS bureaucracy even less reliable than in peacetime. Even if the National Socialists had won the war, the economic chaos and the loss of life would have made it imperative to begin the reconstruction of the RNS apparatus from the bottom up, all over again, in the postwar years.

Twelve years was too little time to create a new human type in rural Bavaria. It may be that with enough time the rural populace could have been brought to more than a sullen acceptance of National Socialist rural policy. But the institutions charged with effecting the reforms were unable to inculcate a National Socialist spirit within the peasant soul. In part, they failed because outward behavior remained an insufficient guide to the true state of the peasant's attitude toward the regime. Re-education was also frustrated because the institutions of rural

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society could not agree on whether non-economic attitudes could be remolded by threats and coercion. Rural institutions were also unable to reorient the peasant *Weltanschauung* because they too fell short of the standards required by the regime. Institutions are, no matter how overwhelming the bureaucratic mentality, at the mercy of their personnel. The officials of rural Nazi Germany continued to display the same prejudices and shortcomings as the rural population. Thus, a cycle was created in which the National Socialist control of the countryside was increasingly a matter of threats, police measures, jails, and concentration camps.

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Notes to Chapter V

[1]BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 20 April, 19 May, 5 September 1933; MA 106672, MB/NB 3 February, 20 April 1933; MA 106677, MB/OF 5 March 1933.

[2]StAND BA Günzberg 4100, MB BA Günzberg 15 July, 15 November 1933; StAL Rep. 164/10 5094, Gendarmerie Post Landshut-Achdorf to BA Landshut, 21 December 1937; BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 18 July 1933.

[3]Zofka, pp. 238-264.

[4]StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1152, Gendarmerie Station MB Steinach a.d. Saale 28 June, 24 September 1934; LRA Bad Kissingen 1154, Gendarmerie Station MB Steinach a.d. Saale 23 October 1936; Burkardroth 25 January, 25 February 1936; LRA Bad Kissingen 1155, Gendarmerie Station MB Nüdlingen, 25 March 1937; BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 18 July 1933; MA 106680, MB/UF 7 November 1934.

[5]StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1154, Gendarmerie Station MB Massbach, 22 October 1936; BA Bad Kissingen MB 29 May 1936; LRA Bad Kissingen 1152, Gendarmerie Station Massbach MB, 24 Dezember 1934; StaL Rep. 164/10 5094, Gendarmerie-Hauptstation Landshut, 30 March 1937

[6]StAL Rep. 164/10 5094, Gendarmerie Station MB Adlkofen 21 August 1937, Kronwinkel 27 October 1937, Landshut-Achdorf 21 December 1937.

[7]Zofka, pp. 199-237.

[8]StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1151, BA Bad Kissingen Lagebericht 28 August 1934; LRA Bad Kissingen 1152, Gendarmerie Stations MB Steinach a.d. Saale 24 August 1934, Münnerstadt 28 August 1934.

[9]StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1152, Gendarmerie Station MB Burkardroth 28 June 1934.

[10]StAL Rep. 167/2 1266, President Landesgericht Mallersdorf MB 13 October 1938.

[11]StAL Rep. 164/10 5094, Gendarmerie Station MB Landshut-Achdorf 21 December 1937; StAND BA Mindelheim 4206, Gendarmerie Station Kirchheim to BA Mindelheim 22 April 1933.

[12]Pridham, pp. 64-68, 146-83, 268-70.

[13]StAND BA Günzberg 4338, BA Günzberg to District Administration President Swabia 31 March 1936; StAW LRA Bad

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Kissingen 1154, Gendarmerie Station MB Burkardroth 25 January 1936; BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 3 March 1934; StAL Rep. 164/10 5094, Gendarmerie Station MB Adlkofen 28 March 1937; StAND BA Günzburg 4338, BA Günzburg to District Administration President 31 July 1935.

[14]StAM NSDAP 126, Stimmungsbericht Pfaffenhofen/Ilm to Gau Munich 1st Quarter 1939

[15]StAND BA Mindelheim 4206, Gendarmerie Station MB Dirlewang to BA Mindelheim 11 March 1933; Gendarmerie Station Pfaffenhausen to BA Mindelheim 24 March 1935; BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 17 November 1933.

[16]StAL Rep. 164/11 Fz 58 1484, Interior Ministry, Politischer Polizeikommandeur Mayern to Bezirksaemter 19 September 1933; BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 5 August 1933.

[17]StAL Rep. 164/11 Fz. 58 1484, Kreisleitung Mainburg to BA Mainburg 14 December 1934;

[18]StAL Rep. 164/11 Fz. 58 1484, Kreisleitung Mainburg to BA Mainburg 16 December 1934.

[19]Ibid.

[20]StAM NSDAP 336, Stuetzpunktleiter Gemeinde Weildorf 14 December 1936; Bericht ueber den Vorfall, 6 December 1936.

[21]StAND BA Mindelheim 4206, various reports in 1934 refer to these seizures.

[22]StAND BA Mindelheim 4206, NSDAP Ortsgruppenleiter Bad Worishofen to Kreisleitung Mindelheim 11 April 1935.

[23]StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1154, Gendarmerie Station MB Massbach 23 May 1936; BA Günzburg 4338, BA Günzburg to District Administration President Swabia 1 October 1935; StAL Rep. 164/10 5094, Gendarmerie Station MB Adlkofen 21 June 1935; BHS MA 106670, MB/OB 9 September 1935

[24]One extensive discussion of the Gemeinschaftsschule issue is Franz Sonnenberger, "Der neue 'Kulturkampf.' Die Gemeinschaftsschule und ihre historischen Voraussetzungen," in Bayern in der NS-Zeit, ed. Martin Broszat, Elke Fröhlich, Falk Wiesemann (Munich: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1977-1981) 3:268-327; on voting for the Gemeinschaftsschule see, among many sources, StAL Rep. 164/10 5094, Gendarmerie Station MB Fürth b/L February 1938; Rep. 167/2 1266 President Landesgericht MB Mainburg 12 April 1938, 17 February 1938; Stadtarchiv Muehldorf 2602, Leitung der Volksschule Muehldorf

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to Burgomaster Muehldorf 10 May 1937; StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1155, Gendarmerie Station reports Steinach a.d. Saale, Premich 22 February 1937; on demonstrations against the school reform plans, see BHSA MA 106680, MB/UB 9 November 1937; StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1154, Gendarmerie Station reports for June through August 1936. On the convent schools, see StAL Rep. 167/2 1266, President Landesgericht report Landshut, 15 February 1938; StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1154, Gendarmerie Station reports June and July 1936; on resignations by Party members, see StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1154, Gendarmerie Station report Steinach a.d. Saale 24 August 1936.

[25]StAL Rep. 167/2 1266, President Landesgericht report Mallersdorf 12 December 1938, President Landesgericht Landshut to Superior Court Munich 20 December 1938; StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1157; Gendarmerie Station report Steinach a.d. Saale 26 May 1940.

[26]BHSA MA 106670. MB/OB 8 October 1934, 8 May, 11 August 1935; StAM NSDAP 328, Stimmungsbericht Freilassing 11 July 1935; NSDAP 340, Ortsgruppe Waging to Kreisleitung Laufen 20 March 1935.

[27]Wochenblatt, 2 April 1936.

[28]StAND BA Günzburg 4338, BA Günzburg MB 31 March 1936; StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1151, BA Bad Kissingen MB 27 November 1935.

[29]BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 10 November 1936.

[30]Pridham, pp. 239-41; Statistisches Jahrbuch des deutschen Reichs 49 (1930), p. 16; Zeitschrift des Bayrischen Statistischen Landesamtes 65 (1934).

[31]BHSA MA 106680, MB/UF 7 November 1934.

[32]BHSA MA 106680, MB/UF 6 September 1935.

[33]Ibid.

[34]BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 9 February 1938.

[35]StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1151, BA Bad Kissingen MB 29 July, 28 September 1935; LRA Bad Kissingen 1152, Gendarmerie Station reports Steinach a.d. Saale 28 June, 24 August 1936; StAND KBS Noerdlingen III B100, KBF Noerdlingen to OBF Gerstmeyer 16 December 1936.

[36]StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1154, Gendarmerie Station Ebenhausen MB 24 October 1936.

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[37]BHSA MA 106673, MB/NB 9 August 1937.

[38]StAND BA Günzburg 6864, Burgomaster Honold (Riedheim) to BA Günzburg 27 November 1935.

[39]BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 11 November 1935.

[40]BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 10 March 1937.

[41]StAM NSDAP 365, Bezirksbauernschaft Laufen to Kreisleitung Laufen, requests on trade with Jews between April and September 1936; NSDAP 367, Stuetzpunktleiter Fridolfing to Kreisleitung Berchtesgaden-Laufen 12 January 1938.

[42]StAM NSDAP 365, Stuetzpunktleiter Fridolfing to Kreisleitung Berchtesgaden-Laufen 7 April 1936.

[43]StAM 365, Kreisgeschaeftsfuehrer Berchtesgaden-Laufen to Stuetzpunktleiter Fridolfing 27 February 1936.

[44]StAND KBS Noerdlingen I B400, KBS Noerdlingen to OBF Gerstmeyer (Belzheim) 31 May 1938.

[45]See StAM LRA 101193, the File on the Siebert Program, for examples of this.

[46]Wochenblatt, 4 August 1939.

[47]StAND BA Günzburg 6864, Gendarmerie Station reports Ichenhausen, Zusmarschhausen, Buehl, Burgau June 1937; StAW LRA Mellrichstadt 1631, BA Mellrichstadt to District Administration President Lower Franconia 3 July 1937; BHSA MA 106670 MB/OB 9 February 1936.

[48]BHSA MA 106679 MB/OF 8 January 1943.

[49]See discussion below, pp. 283-293; for example, StAM Landwirtschaftsamt Aichach 57, NSDAP Kreisleitung Dachau-Aichach to Landswirtschaftsamt Aichach 4 June 1937.

[50]StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1152, Gendarmerie Hauptstation Bad Kissingen report 22 December 1934.

[51]See the file in the StAND, BA Mindelheim 4213 on the suppression of the Bettlerplage.

[52]StAND KBS Noerdlingen I B101, Undated Aufruf des BBF Pg. Klock.

[53]StAND KBS Noerdlingen I B101, KBS circular 62/37 dated 11 October 1937.

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[54]BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 3 March 1934; StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1152, Gendarmerie Station Massbach report 24 December 1934.

[55]StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1154, BA Bad Kissingen report 28 January 1936.

[56]StAND KBS Noerdlingen I B101, KBF Noerdlingen to LBS Bayern 6 July 1938.

[57]BHSA MA 106680, MB/UF 9 November 1937; StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1154, BA Bad Kissingen report 29 May 1936, Gendarmerie Station Massbach report 22 October 1936; StAND KBS Noerdlingen I B101, LBF Bayern to KBF Noerdlingen 13 October 1939.

[58]StAND KBS Noerdlingen I B101, WHW results 1936/37 to 1943/44.

[59]BHSA ML 3641, Konrad Hauber (Geratsried) to Ministerpraesident Siebert, 29 September 1934.

[60]StAND KBS Noerdlingen I B101, WHW Ortsgruppe Hohenaltheim 22 November 1935.

[61]StAND KBS Noerdlingen I B101, KBS Noerdlingen to LBS Bayern 13 March 1937.

[62]Ibid.

[63]StAND KBS Noerdlingen I B101, LBS Bayern to KBS Noerdlingen 18 March 1937.

[64]StAND KBS Noerdlingen I B101, LBS Bayern to KBS Noerdlingen 16 May 1938.

[65]StAM Landwirtschaftsamt Aichach 57, Kreisleitung Dachau-Aichach to Landwirtschaftsstelle Aichach 4 June 1937; Landwirtschaftsamt Aichach 56, KBF Schrobenhausen to Landwirtschaftsstelle Aichach 14 June 1937; StAL Rep. 185 6016, LOF Griesbach to KBS Landshut 5 March 1936; Stützpunktleiter Griesbach to Kreisleitung Dingolfing 30 March 1936; LBS Bayern to KBS Landshut 16 April 1936.

[66]StAM LRA 101193, Siebert 16 March 1939; BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 10 July 1939; the conclusions concerning the Siebert Program are based on the file in StAM LRA 101193.

[67]StAL Rep. 164/16 Fz 114 1000, Gendarmerie Inspektion BA Rottenburg 18 May 1939.

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[68]StAM NSDAP 328, Burgomaster Freilassing to Kreisleitung Berchtesgaden 17 April 1936.

[69]Nationalsozialistische Landpost, 3 February 1934.

[70]StAM LRA 113813, Landrat Bad Aibling report 31 August 1943; NSDAP 126 Stimmungsbericht Bad Toelz to Gau Muenchen last Quarter 1939.

[71]StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1152, Gendarmerie Station Burkardroth report 28 June 1934; LRA Bad Kissingen 1154, BA Bad Kissingen report 28 January 1936.

[72]StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1154, BA Bad Kissingen report 28 January 1936; StAL Rep. 164/10 5095, Gendarmerie Station Essenbach report 22 January 1945.

[73]StAL Rep. 164/10 5095, Gendarmerie Station Wörth a.d. Isar report 19 January 1945.

[74]StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1151, BA Bad Kissingen report 28 May 1935; on the guarded behavior of the peasants, see also StAW LRA Bad Kissingen 1152 Gendarmerie Station reports from Burkardroth 28 June 1934 and Massbach 24 December 1934; BHSA MA 106672, MB/NB 20 April 1934.

[75]StAND BA Mindelheim 4206, Gendarmerie Station reports Dirlewang 23 August 1933, Turkheim 6 December 1933, Kirchheim 11 June 1934, Bad Wörishofen 12 January 1934.

[76]StAM NSDAP 365, Kreisleitung Berchtesgaden-Laufen 13 November 1935; NSDAP 367, Kreisleitung Berchtesgaden-Laufen to Bayerischer Landesverband landwirtschaftlicher Genossenschaften 12 August 1937.

[77]StAND KBS Noerdlingen II D100, Bayerischer Landesverband landwirtschaftlicher Genossenschaften to KBS Noerdlingen 16 December 1938; Bayerische Tierzuchtinspektion Donauwörth to Burgomaster Dornbacher (Utzwingen) 7 November 1938; Ortsgruppe Utzwingen to KBF Noerdlingen 2 November 1938.

[78]StAND KBS Noerdlingen II D100, Ortsgruppe Utzwingen to KBS Noerdlingen 2 November 1938.

[79]StAND Noerdlingen III C200, Bayerischer Landesverband landwirtschaftlicher Genossenschaften to KBS Noerdlingen 13 May 1937.

[80]StAM NSDAP 366, BBF Laufen to Kreisleitung Laufen 5 March 1936; Stuetzpunktleiter Surheim to Kreisleitung Laufen 10 November 1935; NSDAP 340, BBF Laufen to Kreisleitung Laufen 15 February 1935; Kreisleitung Laufen to BBF

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Laufen 5 January 1935; Ortsgruppe Freilassing 28 January 1935.

[81]StAM NSDAP 340, letter to OBF Murr (Waging) 1 September 1936; Ortsgruppe Waging to Kreisleitung Laufen 20 March 1935.

[82]On Party membership of Erbhof judges, see StAND KBS Noerdlingen I G101, KBS Noerdlingen to LBS Bayern 17 August 1939.

[83]StAM NSDAP 336, Stuetzpunktleiter Surheim to Kreisleitung Laufen 10 November 1935; NSDAP 340, Stuetzpunktleiter Shonram to Kreisleitung Laufen 9 May 1935.

[84]BHSA ML 3641, LBF Bayern to Bavarian Interior Ministry 22 October 1934; KBS Ansbach to BA Uffenheim 9 September 1934; Bavarian Interior Ministry to Reich Interior Ministry 3 December 1941; ML 3644, SMW,L to Reich Agriculture Ministry, undated.

[85]StAM NSDAP 340, Bezirksbauernschaft Laufen meeting, minutes 10 April 1935.

[86]StAM NSDAP 336, Stuetzpunktleiter Weildorf 14 December 1936; BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 11 January 1937.

[87]BHSA ML 4781, minutes of staff meeting 29 February 1936; ML 4784, Tierzuchtinspektor Miesbach report 1935; MA 106670, MB/NB 10 March 1937; MA 106673, MB/OB 8 December 1936, 8 June 1938.

[88]BHSA MA 106673, MB/NB 8 September 1938.

[89]BHSA MA 106673, MB/NB 8 September 1937. The OBF was later exonerated.

[90]BHSA MA 106674, MB/NB 10 March 1943.

[91]StAM LRA 101278, Amtsgericht Aichach 15 August 1944.

[92]StAL Rep. 164 Fz. 94 6539, Gendarmerie Station Wittibreut to Landrat Pfarrkirchen 22 July 1939.

[93]BHSA ML 3642, Gendarmerie Station Koenigsee to BA Berchtesgaden 20 May 1935.

[94]BHSA ML 3642, BA Berchtesgaden to District Administration President Upper Bavaria 23 May 1935.

[95]BHSA ML 3642, SMW,L to LBS Bayern June 1935.

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[96]Ibid.

[97]BHSA ML 3641, Konrad Huber to Siebert 29 September 1934; LBF Bayern to SMW,L 24 October 1934; SMW,L to LBS Bayern 19 October 1934; SMW,L to Siebert 5 December 1934; KBF Noerdlingen to LBS Bayern 12 Scheiding 1934.

[98]StAL Rep. 167 st. Verz. 2 2756, accusation against Alois Weinzerl, 26 February 1935.

[99]StAM LRA 47140, BA Bad Aibling report 1 November 1938.

[100]BHSA MA 106670, MB/OB 9 January 1943.

[101]StAND KBS Noerdlingen LBR 105, KBF Noerdlingen to OBF Bauer (Oettingen) 4 April 1941.

[102]BHSA MA 106674, MB/NB 9 December 1941.

[103]StAL Rep. 164/14 6944, Gestapo Staatspolizeistelle Regensburg report 16 May 1944.

[104]StAND KBS Noerdlingen LBR 105, OBF Hahn (Pfafflingen) 7 May 1944.

[105]BHSA MA 106681, MB/UF 10 August 1940; MA 106674 MB/NB 9 June, 7 December 1942; among others.

[106]BHSA MA 106681, MB/UF 12 May 1941; MA 106674, MB/NB 10 April 1942; MA 106695, MB/OB 8 March 1944.

[107]BHSA MA 106679, MB/OF 7 April 1941, 8 August 1942.

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Chapter 6

CONCLUSION

Many historians agree that the twelve years of Nazi rule left Germany more urbanized and less rigidly stratified, in other words, more modern, despite the avowed opposition of the National Socialist movement to modernity. They agree also that the Nazis presided over the continued decline of German agriculture and the peasant farm, although the Nazi movement was officially committed to the preservation of the rural economy and the peasantry. During the Third Reich, accelerating urbanization robbed the peasants of already scarce farm labor, which drove up the wages of those who remained. The heavy capital demands of the rearmament program drained agriculture of funds which might have been used to promote rural development. Nazi trade policies continued to favor the large estates of East Elbia at the expense of peasant farms in western and southern Germany. Agricultural prices lagged behind industrial prices and wages. The growing plight of peasant farming led many peasants to join the rural laborers in their flight to the cities, mines, and industries. In sum, agreement appears to exist that the paramount ideological goals of foreign conquest necessitated the abandonment of the secondary goals articulated by, among others, the <u>Blut und Boden</u> Volkists. The abandonment of the

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peasantry was symptomatic of a general Nazi betrayal of the *Mittelstand* constituency which had brought Hitler to the threshold of power by 1932.

While there is little disagreement, then, about the social and economic effects of Nazi policies, there is considerable disagreement about the causes. Some have argued that industrial and urban development were accidental by-products of the militarization of German society. Others put more emphasis on the Nazi defeat in the Second World War as the chief, albeit indirect, cause of German modernization. The modernization of Germany has been attributed to the totalitarian ambitions of the Nazi rulers, since the Nazis strove to dissolve traditional loyalties among the German populace. It has also been ascribed to class relations, with the Nazis serving as unwitting agents of the capitalist elites. Even the reactionary Junkers have been implicated in the process of development. Supposedly, the Junkers and the urban capitalists continued their corrupt bargain of the Wilhelmine period, with Junker property rights being preserved and industrialization proceeding apace. According to this last thesis, the terror of Nazi rule served to suppress the growing revolt against capitalism and preserve existing class relationships. A slightly more sophisticated version of the Marxist argument holds that the lower classes--peasants, artisans, shopkeepers, and workers--were offered some compensations in the form of increased social prestige and social

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welfare programs, as well as wider career opportunities in the army, bureaucracy, or white collar workforce.

As I have indicated in my dissertation, these explanations of Nazi economic and social policies are more or less unsatisfactory, particularly with regard to agriculture and the peasantry. Indeed, even the descriptions of Nazi rural policies on which some of these explanations are based are incomplete and inaccurate. While there is no doubt that financial, social, and military constraints severely retarded rural modernization a great deal was nevertheless accomplished in twelve years. A glance at the changes in agricultural marketing and processing indicates the extent of the modernization of Bavarian peasant agriculture. For example, the Bavarian dairy sector witnessed the integration of the dairy farmer, as well as other peasants, into a modern industrial production network, the mark of a modern farm structure. The peasant was no longer the largely undifferentiated producer, processor, and retailer of milk and butter, but the supplier of raw milk to modern dairies. Similar structural changes occurred in the livestock and egg markets. In all three product sectors, the role of the agricultural industries increased, sometimes as a direct result of rural reforms (the growing influence of dairies and slaughterers) and sometimes indirectly (farm machinery exhibitions were held concurrently with collective breeding stock certifications).

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Another important achievement of the Nazi era was the encouragement given to rural collective arrangements. Cooperatives grew rapidly during the Third Reich, but other types of collective practices were encouraged as well, such as group livestock certification and group management of private wooded plots. Yet the growth of collective farm arrangements has remained the unwritten chapter of Nazi rural history. Perhaps it jars too much with the widely held assumption that the Nazis were champions of private enterprise. When one historian indicted the Nazis for their destruction of the remnants of common rights, she neglected to mention their support of rural cooperatives. While the former policy doomed the small peasant farm, the latter ensured the survival of the middle-sized peasant property. Middle-sized farms were also secured against severe market fluctuations under the clauses of the _Erbhof_ law. In fact, while the total rural population declined during the Third Reich, _Erbhof_ farms increased their total acreage.

Rural modernization involved a great deal more than economic change. Socially, it meant that the small farm owner, to the extent that he survived, came increasingly under the control of new elites--breedstock owners, innovative dairy producers, cooperative officials, and state, Party, and RNS bureaucrats. Just as importantly, the new rural elites exercized their control over the peasantry through public and semi-public institutions, rather than by the amount of wealth,

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property, or prestige they possessed. Even the Erbhof law contributed to the growth of public authority. Despite its Blut und Boden ancestry, the law undermined parental authority and accustomed the peasants, often despite themselves, to appeal to the public authorities to interfere in matters previously deemed private. In other, equally obvious ways, the Nazi regime accelerated the transformation of the peasant farm from a semi-isolated and independently operated freehold into a modern production site for the agricultural industries. Labor conditions, wages, and social insurance for rural laborers were increasingly regulated by the state; payments by peasants to state and corporate agencies grew under Nazi rule, as the agrarian bureaucracies flourished.

Some historians have pointed to an apparent irony that the National Socialist movement, which espoused a reactionary ideology, attracted the votes of the anti-modern social classes of the Mittelstand, and assumed power in coalition with the most conservative sections of German society, should have presided over some of the most dramatic economic and social transformations in modern German history. I have endeavored to show that the Nazi social revolution was neither accidental nor a betrayal of earlier campaign promises, but the result of both conscious and unconscious policy decisions taken in the earliest days of Nazi rule, the outcome of compromises between different strands of the Nazi movement.

It is by now commonplace to observe that the Nazi

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movement was no monolith. It contained many different, even warring factions, based upon conflicting ideological, political, economic, and social interests. Many believe that Hitler encouraged rivalries within the Party as well as competition between overlapping state and Party bureaucracies in order to enhance his own power within Germany. But quite apart from such obvious benefits for Hitler, the Party's embrace of so many interests was a consequence of its ambition and claim to speak for and control every segment of German society.

As far as agriculture was concerned, many voices claimed to speak for it. The most audible, it not always the most important, were the Blut und Boden ideologues. Long after their eclipse within the Nazi state, the agricultural press continued to echo their nostalgic love of the countryside and farming. Proceeding from the belief that the land was the source of all true human values, the romantics insisted that the peasant farm be preserved for all time. Beyond this paramount goal, they labored to prove that a healthy peasant sector would provide the foundation for renewed German military strength. The ideologues were not opponents of rural modernization. Rather, they recognized that some adjustments in peasant farm practices were necessary if the peasantry were to survive. Why else should Darré be so opposed to Realteilung and urge the adoption of the Erbhof Law, if not to encourage more efficient farming? But technological

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reforms were a secondary goal which followed from the overriding belief that the peasantry had an inherent right to exist.

The eastern estate owners and their supporters within the Nazi state were also concerned with the problem of survival--the survival of the large farm estates of East Elbia. To that end they opposed land expropriation and resettlement projects in East Elbia (though not in the conquered territories). They supported Hitler's pursuit of agricultural autarky, since it assured that their grain would continue to be bought. Yet, as long as rural modernization left their ownership of the estates untouched, they had no objection to it.

The agrarian technocrats and, perhaps, varied industrial interests were the most ardent advocates of rural development. The agronomists in particular viewed rural reform as the necessary prelude to the eradication of rural poverty. They also argued that a prosperous countryside could provide raw materials and purchasing power for a revived German industry, and would free Germany from the threat of foreign blackmail in wartime. Although traditionally dominated by Junkers, the agronomists, often children of peasants, could sympathize with Blut und Boden idealization of rural life. But involved as they were in the daily process of giving farming advice, technical aid, and education, they were all too aware that traditional farming practices spelled misery

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for millions of German peasants. Some industrial interests could also sympathize with the agronomists' modernization policies, especially those that advocated a strategy of industrial expansion through the development of the domestic market.

There was no dearth of support in Nazi Germany for some type of rural modernization, even if the support may have followed from different premises. The question is how the varied approaches came together in Nazi Germany, and, most importantly, how they interacted with the Nazi leadership to produce the rural modernization which we have described. For had rural development offered no rewards to Hitler, it would certainly have foundered.

Hitler had three major reasons for supporting the rural reform. First, it fulfilled a campaign promise to a large group of Nazi voters, the peasantry, that the NSDAP would end the catastrophic rural depression. Hitler could have achieved that goal simply through farm price supports; indeed he did between 1933 and 1935. But a single-minded reliance on price supports could only be pursued at an eventually exorbitant cost to the state that, in turn, would have undercut German rearmament. Therefore, though pricing policies could restore rural well-being, long-term needs called for the technological development of the countryside.

Second, for Hitler rural modernization was inextricably connected with his military plans. Rearmament, diplomatic

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strong-arm tactics, and military conquest could only succeed if German farming provided Germany with enough reasonably priced farm products. Food imports had to be curtailed to an absolute minimum in order to subsidize the military build-up and would have to remain at a low level until military conquests and diplomatic successes expanded available food resources. Although many of the rural programs enacted by the Nazis could pay off only after many years, some of them could be useful almost immediately, such as development of the village commons and the diversion of milk production from farms to dairies. Even the small increases in productivity from the growing use of machinery and fertilizers was of some value.

Third, as we have demonstrated in this dissertation, rural modernization was an irresistible temptation to a dictatorship aspiring to become totalitarian. It would enable the regime to control food supplies as well as consumer demand more effectively, since all food products would now be sold by licensed retailers, who would be supplied by licensed millers, dairies, and slaughterers. Quality, quantity, form, and price could easily be controlled from above. Rapid adjustments to changing market needs could be accomplished as never before.

Though it is clear that rural modernization worked to the Nazis' advantage, it was not necessarily their intent to undertake modernization on the scale on which it occurred.

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Since Darré, who controlled the direction of agrarian policy until 1936, was not insensitive to peasant complaints about Nazi rule policy, why did the rural reform continue to intensify? In the first place, as noted, Darré was not averse to some form of rural development. For example, he believed that adequate dairy product prices could only be assured if peasants ceased to sell their own milk and butter. Almost from the outset of Darré's ministry, laws were passed which prohibited self-marketing of milk except in the immediate locale of the farm. Similar laws were passed for eggs, which had been even less regulated in the past than the dairy sector. Therefore, the early period of the _Marktordnung_ was the result of the congruent interests of Hitler and Darré. It relied on price mechanisms and propaganda rather than direct compulsion and no one envisioned that more coercive legislation would be necessary. I suspect that Darré, like many reformers, believed that the peasant would soon appreciate the efforts undertaken on their behalf.

Once begun, the agrarian reform goals soon took on a life of their own. The regime had set certin goals--price fixing, product improvements, productivity increases. But the early period of market regulation geared toward structural reforms in peasant farming created unexpected bottlenecks, shortages, and black market sales by 1935-36. Faced with unforeseen difficulties, the regime and the agrarian bureaucracy had to choose between moderating their earlier

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goals or forging ahead with more strenuous measures. To a certain extent, both tactics were tried. Egg sales became less regulated, but livestock, dairy, and grain sales were increasingly regulated. In the dairy sector, compulsory delivery zones were newly organized or expanded, and the ban on self-marketing was extended to butter sales. But the cycle of regulation had not ended yet. As long as regulation stopped short of the farm property, it could never be truly successful. If the farm owner was left in control of farm operations, he could continue to allocate resources in such a way as to thwart the authorities. Therefore, the regulatory process logically required increasing interference in farm activities as well, lest the peasant evade the spirit of market regulation by, say, decreasing dairy production or increase farm consumption.

The only way the regime could determine if the peasant evaded market regulation was by having an exact accounting of farm resources. Thus, _Hofkarten_, _Viehzaehlungen_, and endless lists of other statistics were compiled. Compulsion finally reached its conclusion when butter tubs were sealed and centrifuges impounded. Self-slaughtering was strictly regulated and then all but prohibited. Milk productivity tests were ordered. Livestock breeding, even among one's own animals, required state certification. These were the inevitable results of early and less rigorous regulation under a regime which would not tolerate delay or disobedience.

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But it had not been foreseen when the first laws had been passed in 1933.

Undoubtedly, the temptation to pile law upon law, to turn the screws of compulsion a little tighter, was all the greater because the Nazi regime possessed enormous coercive powers relative to previous German governments. It was over the question of coercive tactics that Darré and the Nazi leadership really parted ways, not over the actual direction of the agrarian reforms. Darré sought to revive agriculture through vast increases in government funding on land improvements, rural construction, and higher prices for agricultural products, while Hitler wanted it done cheaply, if necessary by force or, at least, the threat of force.

Their disagreements arose from their separate priorities referred to earlier. For Darré, rural development was the means to one end; for Hitler, the means to another. The one aimed at peasant survival, the other at military might. But since they both perceived advantages to farm modernization, for whatever ultimate purpose, the program could continue to lurch forward. However, the gradual shift in emphasis from incentive to coercion did reflect the real loss in influence and power on the part of Darré and the growing linkage between the agrarian bureaucracy and the Four Year Plan administration under Goering.

Although Darré continued to champion his lifelong belief that the path to increased agricultural production lay in

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higher prices for food products complemented by structural reforms in marketing and processing practices, he was increasingly a voice in the wilderness, even within his own agrarian apparatus. Only at the lower echelons of the agrarian apparatus, whether state or RNS, do we hear loud or persistent voices of opposition to the intensifying rural program. The relatively silent acquiescence of the agrarian bureaucracy in more rapid and coercive reforms suggests that many of the administrators were rather pleased with them, although one must consider the possibility that the regime was able to enforce at least superficial conformance in the higher echelons of the agrarian apparatus.

There were many reasons why the technocrats welcomed the more rigorous program in effect after 1935. I believe that many agronomists--milk inspectors, livestock inspectors, agricultural advisors, veterinarians, and the like--saw the absence of parliamentary, electoral, or other legal safeguards against arbitrary action as an opportunity to accomplish long sought professional goals. The early period of Nazi reforms had whetted their appetites. When the early reforms led to disappointing results or were only partially carried out, they saw no reason not to proceed further. After all, they thought they possessed the means to force the peasants to obey more stringent regulations. And they could certainly rationalize the use of force by pointing out that it was in the peasants' own interests that the reforms be

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enacted. Since the technocrats were generally more likely than the bulk of the peasantry to feel sympathy for the foreign policy goals of the regime, they may also have been concerned that the reforms not be derailed, thereby damaging Germany's diplomatic or military position. Finally, it was surely not incidental that greater accomplishments would be rewarded with career advancement, greater power, and increased personal status. Thus, from opposite directions, the goals and ambitions of Hitler and his entourage merged with those of the agronomists.

If the accomplishments of National Socialism were not simply accidental or incidental, but at least partially the result of conscious policy decisions, it seems that the Nazi leadership betrayed its original constituency--the lower middle class voters who either flocked to join the NSDAP or voted for it in large numbers between 1930 and 1933. Yet the lower middle class and middle class constituency, the so-called _Mittelstand_, which formed the bulk of Nazi support was itself split into often warring fragments. In fact, the economic antagonisms within the _Mittelstand_ could be more bitter than those between the _Mittelstand_ and the urban workers. Peasant cooperatives competed with private retailers, entrepreneurs, and tradesmen. Dairy producing peasants wanted higher dairy prices while retailers and consumers desired lower prices.

The peasantry was hardly any more monolithic than the

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Mittelstand. Some peasants were also rural entrepreneurs who were opposed to rural cooperatives, such as the threshing cooperatives. Peasants selling milk to nearby markets resented attempts by other peasants to sell in "their" markets, as we saw in the example of the Landshut area between 1930 and 1933. The peasants living close to large markets had often been instrumental in the creation of dairy cooperatives. Other peasants regarded Nazi encouragement of dairy processing as egregious favoritism toward these pioneers. Land ownership, the traditional basis of peasant stratification, was also the basis for the _Erbhof_ Law, in which the middle-sized peasant farm owner was enshrined as the only rural resident entitled to bear the honorific of peasant. Nor was the law of mere symbolic value. The protections offered to the _Erbhof_ farm were another example of how Nazi regulations benefited one section of the _Mittelstand_ while discriminating against another.

Even the claim that the Nazi movement was essentially a _Mittelstand_ movement has been cast into doubt by recent research indicating that support for the NSDAP, rather than being concentrated in the lower middle classes, tended to rise with income and status. The NSDAP was actually an electoral coalition which mirrored the social situation in Germany at that time, a coalition which united elites and masses under new auspices. The NSDAP provided an electoral bloc which replaced the discredited middle class parties of the

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Weimar era, enabling the rural elites of technocrats, reformers, and innovators to mobilize mass support for their reform programs. Yet the NS regime made an obvious difference. That difference was the absence of overt squabbling, the apparent unity of purpose among the rural interests, and the relatively greater ease with which many rural demands could be implemented. Above all, there was the terror or the threat of terror, which made it all possible.

But the rural reform program was never entirely carried out. The short duration of National Socialist rule--twelve years, six of which were during wartime--contributed to the partial success of Nazi rural policies. But there were two other major reasons for the incompleteness of the rural achievements. The first concerns the very nature of the coalition which formed the NSDAP. Precisely its greatest strengths, its broad boundaries and programmatic haziness were also its gravest weaknesses. Rural policy was obviously hampered by the clash of opposing interests within the NSDAP. The Nazis tried to please too many constituencies and pursued too many conflicting goals to be fully successful. They wanted to preserve the eastern estates as well as the peasantry. They wanted a prosperous farm sector and cheap food for the urban consumer. They wanted to modernize agriculture and, at the same time, to rearm Germany. But the lower consumer prices meant lower farm profits. Military expenditures meant less money for agricultural

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development. Strict import policies meant high prices for scarce fodder. Support for Junker grain products also cost the peasant farm dearly in the form of excessive prices for fodder. Support for rural cooperatives spelled doom for private rural entrepreneurs.

The second barrier to more thoroughgoing rural reforms involves the extent and effectiveness of Nazi power. Research has by now established that there were many limitations on Nazi power. We have described some of the factors which diminished Nazi strength and unity. Among these were the rivalries between the Party and state governments, rivalries within the Party and among various Party agencies, conflict between the RNS and other bureaucrats, opposing interpretations of Nazi rural policies, the opposition of traditional and still prestigious religious and social elites. In addition, the physical factors of rural geography and farm production impeded rural reforms. Indeed, an important goal of the rural reforms was the attempt to counteract rural remoteness by weaving a network of agencies and relationships which would supervise and contact each and every individual farm owner. Rural remoteness not only made contact and implementation more difficult but also contributed to resistance against certain Nazi rural policies. Collective certification of breeding livestock or raw milk deliveries to dairies were an onerous task for the isolated farmsteads which dot much of the Bavarian landscape. Peasant

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resentments multiplied in response to the burdensome nature of the new laws.

The wide variety of farm products, their distinct methods of marketing, also affected the success of each aspect of Nazi rural reform. Each farm product has its own physical properties of perishability, size, and weight. Grain lends itself easily to state regulation, since it is difficult to transport secretly in bulk. Milling is also an arduous and expensive task, better left to the miller than to each individual farm owner. Besides, grain has the longest tradition of state regulation, which undoubtedly made the peasant less resentful of additional Nazi laws, especially since they did not differ from past laws.

But how different the dairy products are from grain! Easily processed at home, easily hidden for even long distance transportation, it was hard for the authorities to prevent or eliminate black market evasion of dairy regulations until the actual devices for processing milk were also seized or sealed. Even then, the implements were not all that difficult to procure and black market sales of milk and butter continued to thrive. If the dairy sector was resistant to state regulation, the livestock trade was even less controllable. After all, butter soon spoils and milk spoils immediately, so there is pressure on the peasant to dispose of the dairy product before it loses all value.

Livestock remained a peasant product without bureaucratic

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challenge. The extent of livestock production can be easily controlled by the peasant, who retains far greater control over the timing of its disposal. The livestock markets remained the bane of the Nazi reformers. Scattered over the countryside, they were imposible to regulate effectively. Once the _Marktordnung_ agencies tried to extend their control over the smaller livestock markets, trade retreated to the farm. No matter how powerful the Nazi state was, it found that there were physical properties of farm production which were not, ultimately, subject to state regulation.

Just as the physical world of agriculture frustrated the Nazi rural reformers, so did the inner psychological world of the peasants and local bureaucrats. Despite the coercive and persuasive powers of the modern state, the Nazi authorities could not force peasants to become modern overnight. They continued to believe that select breedstock caused barren matings, that fertilizer caused cancer, and that dairies lied about the weight of raw milk deliveries. They felt poorer when they sold raw milk for pennies less than it would fetch if sold as milk and butter directly to the consumers. They persisted in trading with long-standing customers despite laws against such trade.

In many cases, especially with the _Erbhof_ laws, peasant custom made Nazi regulations a dead letter. In the case of the _Erbhof_ law, the authorities even retreated from some of their original goals in the face of peasant protests or

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noncompliance. Enforcement of Nazi regulations was made even more difficult due to the attitudes of the local rural authorities--the police, the Burgomasters, and the OBFs--who were themselves attached or sympathetic to peasant customs. It would have taken much more time before the Nazis could eradicate all vestiges of peasant tradition, or peasant "egotism," as the Nazis labelled it.

The adherence of peasants and the local officialdom to traditional peasant attitudes forced the regime to rely on persuasion mixed with coercion. Even when punishment was meted out, it tended to be mild--a fine or a warning. Retreat and moderation enabled the Nazis and peasants to establish a modus vivendi, but it also delayed the final day of reckoning, since it encouraged the peasants to believe that resistance paid off. Thus, Nazi Germany remained a hybrid until the end--a combination of terror and moderation, a totalitarian state riddled with disobedience. Its agrarian sector also remained a hybrid--with inefficient peasant enterprises existing side-by-side with modern peasant producers, with huge landed estates in the east and peasant farming in the south and west. Whether the Nazis, given their own disparate goals and composition, could have resolved these many contradictions and whether they would have intensified the terror against their own population after the war is a story to which we will thankfully never know the answer.

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340; Beschwerde gegen LOF, OBF
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7202; Verbotene Vereine

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Staatsarchiv Wuerzburg

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8/4; (47); Schulstreik wegen Abbau der Kloster
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2702; Vollzug des Erbhofgesetzes
2875; Vieh-, Schweine- und Taubenmarkt 1922-46

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Reichsministerialblatt der landwirtschaftlichen Verwaltung

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Statistisches Jahrbuch fuer das Deutsche Reich

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