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THE WORLD TO-DAY

FOOD AND FARMING IN  
POST-WAR EUROPE



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IN  
POST-WAR EUROPE

*By*  
P. LAMARTINE YATES  
*and*  
D. WARRINER

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## CHAPTER I

### THE LAND

**T**HIS series of books has hitherto treated of separate nations. But national groups are not the only groups which face common problems, which fight common battles, whose spirit is strengthened in adversity and whose welfare derives from the tasks they pursue together. The peasantry of Europe equally merit consideration as such a group. They too, however great regional differences may be, have been nurtured in a special environment, their lives and all their activities constrained by soil and climate; they too in their relationship with the rest of the world face a set of difficulties peculiar to their occupation; they too hope by their concerted efforts to transform poverty into prosperity and to raise their group—the cultivators of Europe—in status and in welfare.

The present volume purposes to give some brief account of this peasant group about which the average Englishman, or American for that matter, knows so little. Why bother with such a subject at a time like this, it may be asked. Because the politics and economics of farming have contributed much to the strains and stresses culminating in war; because the claims of the peasantry will profoundly influence the policies which European nations will attempt to pursue after the war; and because, as things are likely to be in the post-war period, the food supply of 350 million Europeans and the prosperity of half that number of European peasants cannot, to Englishmen and Americans, be a matter of indifference. The United Nations have accepted responsibility for the relief of Europe's hunger. They are making plans to rush food to a plundered continent. But the activities of relief cannot be kept in a separate watertight compartment from the activities of reconstruction. Just as repairing and rebuilding the bombed cities of Britain will inevitably involve long-term problems of town-planning, of street-widening and the provision of open spaces, so the operations of relief feeding will involve the rehabilitation of European farming, which in turn will shape the future outlines of agri-

cultural policy. It is therefore no academic exercise to study Europe's food production at this juncture. Of all post-war problems it will be the first in point of urgency.

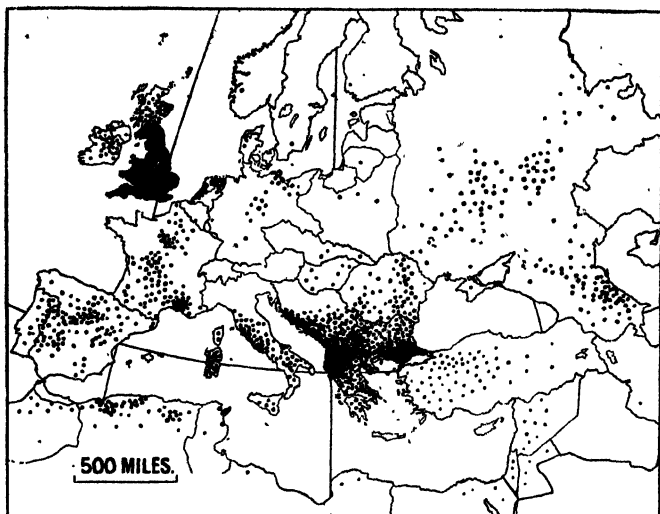
Let us, then, introduce the farming people of Europe: 170 millions of them, men and women, boys and girls. Though in the chapters which follow we shall be primarily concerned with the economic aspects of their life and work, it must never be forgotten that we are dealing with human beings in whose lives disappointment jostles hope, as the wisdom of experience weaves itself painfully into the warp of ignorance. Their story is one of steadfastness and perseverance. There are no epic deeds, no silhouettes against the skyline of human achievement. The peasants have laboured on from generation to generation for the most part under crushing difficulties of hostile environment both natural and economic. There have been drought and flood, invasion and revolution, bad prices and worthless money; yet the peasants have endured, and will continue to endure.

### *Physical Background*

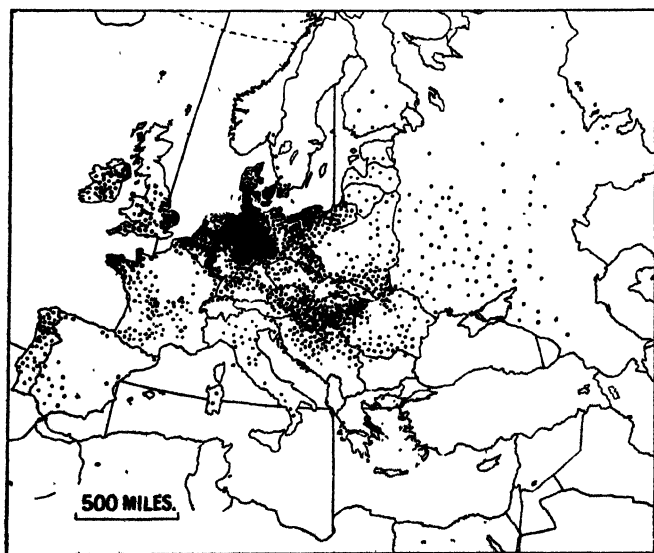
For more than a thousand years the forests of Europe have been gradually cleared, the swamps drained, and the soil tilled. From Brest to Braila, from Cadiz to the North Cape, the farming has adapted itself slowly yet thoroughly to the peculiarities of climate and geology which characterize each region. Just as a shoe with time and use moulds itself to the wearer's foot, so European agriculture has more and more adjusted itself to the configuration of the continent.

Temperature and rainfall are the two factors which most dictate vegetation and cropping. In the Mediterranean lands, for instance, where summers are hot, lack of rainfall prevents grass and root crops from doing well. The water shortage is not so much in actual quantity but in respect of the time of year when the rains come. Naples (33 ins.) has more rain than Paris (21 ins.), but Neapolitan rain comes mainly in the autumn and winter, and least in the growing season when it is most wanted. In N.W. Europe the summers are too cool for maize to ripen or for the vine and olive to prosper, and on the Atlantic seaboard the rainfall, though well distributed through the year, is so great that grass proves the only really safe crop.

Because temperature zones run east-west across Europe, so



SHEEP DISTRIBUTION IN EUROPE



PIG DISTRIBUTION IN EUROPE

*(With acknowledgments to Dr. Dudley Stamp and the Geographical Magazine)*

also crop belts run east-west as the map on p. 66 shows. The most important line on this map is the southern limit of winter wheat which roughly coincides with the southern limit of good grassland. This is the chief farming frontier in Europe. South of this line there can be no mixed livestock farming in the English sense. The observation that all flesh is grass proves abundantly true in agriculture, for where there is no grass no meat production or dairying flourishes.

We can also draw maps showing the distribution of cattle, sheep and pigs. The most striking are those of sheep and pigs (see p. 9)—the pigs concentrated in the dairying north-west, and the sheep in the British Isles, where, particularly in the west, rainfall is too high to permit of very successful cereal cultivation and the grass is not fully utilized by cows. Thus livestock distribution depends on climate almost as much as do crops.

Bearing these points in mind let us now take a journey by aeroplane, to see what the countryside looks like, first of all in the mixed farming regions. Leaving the Sussex downs we pass over the French coast north of Dieppe and skim low over cider-apple orchards and the roofs of comfortable Norman farmsteads. This rich dairying country, with its high proportion of grass to ploughland, stretches right round the coast down to Bordeaux and north-eastwards in the direction we are flying, across Belgium, Holland, North-west Germany and into Denmark and South Sweden. As in England, the grass grows nearly all the year round; though it is October the meadows still look bright green and cows are out grazing. With a glimpse of France's sugar-beet country down towards St. Quentin we cross into Belgium: red brick houses and red tile roofs, even more cattle than before, but the arable land looks like a nightmare chessboard (see page 43). From Holland to Denmark nearly every farm has a long row of pigsties behind the cowhouses; 'the pig hangs on the cow's tail' in that it utilizes the skim milk left over from butter-making. Although soil and climate in these regions have always been favourable for this cow-pig type of farming, specialized dairying only emerged at the end of the nineteenth century, which illustrates how dependent agriculture also is on outside economic factors—in this case the growth of large industrial centres in Britain, Belgium and the Ruhr, with their rising demand for high quality foodstuffs. Only when general econo-

mic conditions develop propitiously can farming take full advantage of its geographical environment.

Passing Hanover and Magdeburg, we see sugar-beet on our right; it is the principal cash crop on the good soil all through Saxony and into Bohemia. This is also a fat-stock producing area using sugar-beet pulp as its main feeding stuff, but you will see no cattle out of doors: in nearly all regions of Central Europe cattle are stall-fed. After we have passed Berlin, the soil changes to sand, a vast flat plain of it stretching away through Pomerania and Poland and into Russia. Sugar-beet and wheat gradually give place to rye and potatoes. Most of the farms are large—500 to 1,000 acres and more, the homes of the Prussian Junkers; potatoes are being lifted by seasonal workers from Poland, and carted to the farm's distillery for making into potato flour or alcohol; some are used as pig fodder. Poor soil and scanty rainfall have meant indifferent grass and few cattle. Where the soil is too poor even for rye and potatoes, it has been afforested. Because of the difficulty of finding water, the houses are clustered in villages each with its goose-pond in the middle.

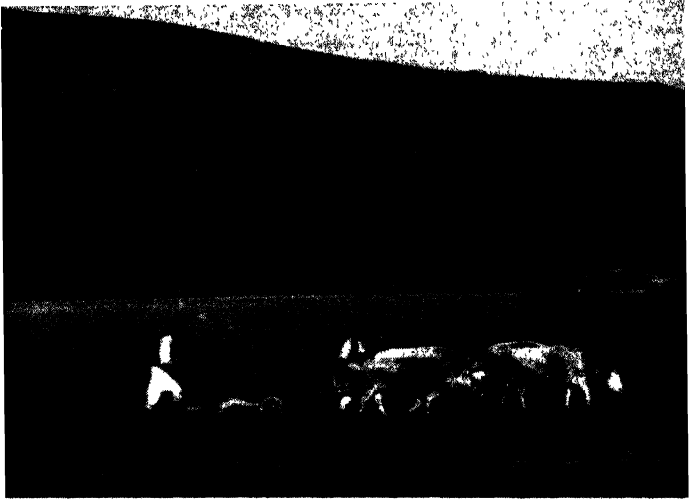
Approaching Central and Eastern Poland, the villages become more numerous, the farms smaller, the crops poorer, the horses skinnier. The peasants here are fighting against overcrowding and adverse climate. The pieces in the field chessboard are now very small. The sandhills turn into marshland, and the marshlands bring us to the Russian frontier. Here there are seven months in the year with an average temperature below  $43^{\circ}$  Fahr., the temperature at which crops cease growing. Birch forests begin to predominate, and if we went on towards Moscow we should find them most of the way.

On this journey we have passed across three big farming regions, the region of intensive dairying, the region of sugar-beet and wheat, and the region of rye, pigs and potatoes. As we have flown east, the system of farming has changed from a very intensive use of the soil to a much more extensive use; livestock production has grown less important, as rainfall grows less, until in Eastern Poland we have reached a system with only 12 head of cattle per 100 acres, compared with 48 head in Holland. Yet through all these regions livestock production has been the farmers' mainstay, and farming in fact means the use of farmyard manure to maintain the fertility of the soil.

But if we take another journey, this time towards the south-east of Europe, we shall see types of farming in which livestock are kept only to work, not to produce meat and milk, except as by-products, and in which animal manure is very little used. Going south, we first cross Switzerland and Austria, the southernmost of the good dairying regions, where we see cattle being driven down from the mountain pastures and stabled for the winter. South of Vienna and in Western Hungary we are still in a livestock region: early in the morning we see herds moving off from every village to the common grazing, first the cows, then the pigs and the inevitable flock of geese. But after crossing the Danube, somewhere south of Budapest, we come into a region where the stubble fields extend to the horizon and where ox teams, horses, tractors and steam ploughs are all at work. Nothing breaks the vast expanse of the Plain, except endlessly straight, poplar-edged roads, and the long-handled dippers of the typical Hungarian wells. Now and then you will see what looks like a biggish town but is really an enormous village, a relic of the time when the Turks ravaged the plain and the peasants were driven to take refuge in fortified settlements. The bulk of the land stretches away in great unfenced blocks, the property of the big estate owners. But peasant and landlord alike grow wheat and maize on the good black soil, which could produce double the yields if only the climate were not so dry. Their main livestock product is the curly-haired mangalitsa lard pig, fattened for the Vienna and Budapest markets.

Crossing the wooded Transylvanian hills, we see that the big Hungarian oxen with their six-foot-wide horns have disappeared, and given place to slow-moving, black water-buffaloes, a sign that it is a struggle to keep even enough animals to do the farm work, for the water-buffalo is cheaper than the ox as a form of draught power, requiring only a bath a day and a few maize-stalks to keep alive. Here the soil is much poorer, and wheat gives place to rye and oats, until we cross the immense upland pastures and come into Rumania where maize is being harvested. The soil is now quite black: it is a variety of that wonderfully fertile 'black earth' which extends from the Danube right across South Russia, yet it yields only fifteen bushels per acre because for centuries all the fertility has been taken out and nothing put back.

Into Bulgaria and over the Balkan Mountains, with their



## I. EASTERN EUROPE

1. BOSNIANS PLOUGHING WITH FOUR OXEN (E.N.A.)

2. HUSKING MAIZE IN DANUBE VALLEY (E.N.A.)



hillsides of scrub—no good grass here, only goat country—we come to the Maritza valley, a region of good soil where grapes are being harvested and tobacco leaves hung out to dry on the cottage walls. Now we can see that farming is on a much more primitive level: wooden ploughs drawn by cows and oxen are turning up the soil, and in some villages we can see the traditional methods of threshing—oxen walking round in a circle, treading out the corn. If we went on to South Serbia or Greece we should see the same archaic methods everywhere. In this journey through the hotter south of Europe we have passed from a region of comparatively intensive farming in the Swiss and Austrian lowlands to one of extensive and inefficient grain growing in the south-east, interspersed with occasional pockets of well-watered soil where fruit and vegetables thrive.

From this brief survey of Europe's farming regions we can observe how far the progress of science has enabled man to obtain mastery over his physical environment. In most of the region covered by our first journey, except Eastern Poland, grain-yields have been raised through better methods of cultivation, through the use of artificial manure, green crops and roots. Barren soils have been made fertile: the light sands of Northern Germany can be made to yield well if heavily dressed with potash and if a green crop is periodically ploughed in: the Dutch have even farmed solid peat by removing the top layer and mixing the underneath layer with subsoil sand.

But climate is more difficult to control, and though in recent years strains of plants have been bred to flourish in climates previously considered unsuitable, on the whole the frontier between the wet and dry regions remains fixed. Cereals cannot be made to grow well in the wettest western fringe of Europe, nor at high altitudes, though liberal subsidies may induce farmers to hazard a crop—as in Switzerland, where, before the war, wheat was bought by the State at four times the world-price. In the south-east region, low rainfall means that grass and root crops cannot be cultivated successfully. But excessive dryness can be modified by irrigation, or, in some areas, by afforestation—and, as we shall see presently, there is much scope for this, especially in the south-east. However, while the long-term trend is for science increasingly to tame nature, to-day it remains true to say: man can master the soil but climate still masters man.

*Political and Economic Background*

To understand the ground-plan of European farming we must look not only at the natural conditions which determine the kinds of farming practised, but also at the forms of society which have enabled man to gain control over nature.

Politically and psychologically the European peasant still bears upon him, in most countries, the marks of his very recent emancipation from serfdom. In Western Europe it was about the end of the eighteenth century, in Central and Eastern Europe it was not till the middle of the nineteenth century that the old burdens of the medieval system were swept away. The memory of bondage still lingers. The peasant has not come fully to realize his political importance.

In Western Europe industrialization followed so closely on the heels of peasant emancipation that in most countries (Denmark was an exception) the urban proletariat became the weightiest class. Agricultural policy, though it gave protection to farming, as in France and Germany, was not formulated by peasant parties and peasant leaders, but by city politicians aiming at national self-sufficiency or by landed proprietors with an eye to their rent-rolls. In Eastern Europe, on the other hand, the farming community constituted a decisive majority, and after the last war the wave of social revolution brought peasant parties into power, enabling them to carry out (except in Hungary) the agrarian reforms which greatly reduced the landowners' influence. But once the reform had been achieved the peasant parties found themselves with no constructive economic policy to offer, and proved helpless in face of the world economic crisis. Gradually they lost their power to military cliques and semi-Fascist dictatorships. The lesson of the past twenty years in Eastern Europe is that peasants can make a revolution against feudal landowners, but they cannot throw up leaders capable of establishing a new social order.

This political impotence has been particularly unfortunate, since the tide of economic progress has flowed strongly away from farming. With the advent of the Industrial Revolution, coupled with a very considerable though less noticed revolution in farming technique, the peoples of Western Europe and, later, of other regions too, suddenly became able to satisfy far more than their basic needs for food, shelter and clothing. Productivity increased, and though the first reaction was that

men could at last eat enough, they very quickly passed this stage, and spent their extra purchasing power increasingly on other goods—on clothing and, later, on a range of miscellaneous commodities. At present, when an industrial worker gets a rise in wages, he spends only a small part of the increase on extra food, the major part goes on other items. In short, the demand for manufactured articles of all kinds has grown and will always grow far faster than the demand for food.

This means that it is almost always more profitable to the individual to invest money in developing industries than in developing farming. Industry can offer higher wages and salaries, and by so doing gets the pick of the skilled workers, of the managerial talent, of the inventors, of the salesmen.

To the intelligent and enterprising peasant's son the prospects of advancement in farming are meagre indeed. The higher-salaried posts—such as foreman on a big estate—are few, while unless he possesses substantial capital he cannot take for himself a farm large enough to yield an income commensurate with his abilities.

Another perennial disadvantage is agriculture's weak bargaining position *vis-à-vis* industry. For this there are many reasons, but two of the more important are, firstly, that, as mentioned above, once the primary hunger needs are satisfied the expansion of demand is much less for foodstuffs than for manufactures, and, secondly, that the farmer when prices are falling cannot easily stop production as the manufacturer can; the farmer has animals which have to be milked, crops which are growing, and he cannot suddenly abandon any part of these. On the contrary, he will try to produce more to recoup himself for the drop in prices. Only if prices remain low for a very long time (time measured in years) will he make the textbook economic reaction and cut down his output, possibly by going out of business altogether.

It is for reasons such as these that agriculture, although the basic and most fundamental of occupations, is the one which struggles against the most chronic difficulties. Under régimes of *laissez faire* it has almost always had a raw deal and its workers a lower standard of well-being than their fellows elsewhere in the community. (The one outstanding exception has been the agriculture of overseas countries which for a time, for special reasons, expanded so rapidly that earnings and prosperity in farming were comparable with those in industry.)

Even under the planned economies so far seen in Europe little has been done to redress the balance. Although many countries appear immensely proud of their peasantries, calling them variously 'the life-blood of the race', 'the moral backbone of the community', 'the element of stability and sanity', there would seem in practice little justification for such adulation. Neither in health, education nor prosperity can the farming population of any European country be compared favourably with the urban population.

Up till now all these disabilities have been regarded as inevitable. But just as in relation to physical environment, so in regard to his economic destiny, man is beginning to realize that he can exercise control. Peasants in their economic lives are still at the mercy of the rest of the community which exploits them, but this state of affairs need not continue for ever. Man has it now in his power to bridge the gap between rural and urban welfare. He can create economic conditions under which the peasants can greatly increase their output, he can provide an expanding market for their produce, he can assure them a steadily rising level of incomes, he can develop rural amenities more in accordance than hitherto with the capacities of modern civilization.

Enough has been said in this introduction to indicate the strength of the forces, both natural and economic, operating against agriculture and to suggest that only the strongest positive measures will effectually improve the lot of Europe's farming community. There is no doubt it can be done. The task of this book is to discover how.

## CHAPTER II

### THE FARMER

**T**HIS chapter consists of four brief sketches of an ordinary day in the life of an ordinary peasant in France, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Denmark. Those who are interested less in the peasant as a human being than in the economics of peasant farming should pass on at once to Chapter III.

B (Y.)

1. *France*

It is an April morning, not yet quite light, as Pierre Blanchard stumbles out of bed, lights his lantern and shuffles across to the cow-byres. The village of Ramellaise got electric light soon after the last war, and Pierre's father laid it on to the house, but did not bother about the outhouses. Pierre is in no good temper, for he has been up in the night to attend his oldest cow, Quiquine, in labour. Now his mood worsens on seeing a still-born calf in the straw—a heifer calf, too, more's the pity! This is the third time Quiquine has done that; they say it is some disease. He clears up, fetching water from the pump in the yard, as none is laid on to the buildings. Then he milks his other four cows, one giving very little because she has some disease of the udder. His neighbour, Richard, when he had the same trouble with one of his, called a vet., but the cow died. Pierre is firmly determined *not* to call a vet.

He leaves the cows in the stall for his little daughter to take down to the river pasture later on her way to school, and he returns to a breakfast of coffee, bread and butter. He is just becoming more genial when the postman brings a letter which proves to be a tax demand; not a large sum—only 374 francs—but enough to call forth from Pierre a tirade against the State which always asks money and never does anything to help the peasant.

The morning being fine and the ground tolerably dry, he decides to finish the ploughing. His farm is of thirty-five acres, including ten acres meadow, an acre of vineyard, and the rest divided between wheat, oats, potatoes and some vegetables, especially asparagus. The meadow is only in three bits, but the arable is aggravatingly divided into sixty-two separate patches, some of them as much as three kilometres from his house. Pierre rails against this daily, though it is not so long since, on hearing that a Commission was coming to 'tidy up' the village land, he attended a meeting at the *Café du Centre* to organize opposition to any regrouping tricks. The strips remaining to be ploughed today are some of the furthest—three quarters of an hour's walk away.

The first strip he reaches is difficult of access, for there is no path to it; it is entirely surrounded by other peasants' strips, and he has to lead his horse across Richard's growing wheat before he can start work. The ploughing goes well; it is

Pierre's pride that he ploughs a straight furrow and his land is remarkably clean of weeds ; it would be cleaner, he reflects, if only that *cochon*, Brignon, didn't allow his weeds to seed and blow across. The strip finished, he is moving across to another of his plots when up the road comes a car from which three gentlemen descend and come to greet him. It is to discuss the taking of a water-conduit across part of Pierre's meadow to serve another village which has decided to have a piped supply and has formed a 'cooperative' to carry out the scheme. The meadow, of course, has to be examined, the exact course of the conduit plotted out, a long argument pursued with the gentlemen concerning the pros and cons of having water laid on, and finally, before broaching the delicate subject of compensation, Pierre takes them home to his little cellar, where, over a glass of his own wine made in his own press from his own grapes, the finances are fixed up.

The morning has gone ; it is dinner time. During the meal his wife tells him of the butter she has been making during the morning (as there is no town near, they always make their milk into butter, and take it once a week to market). There is less butter because one lot of cream has gone bad ; strange, she says, because it was only four days old. Moreover, yesterday, at market, one of the customers complained that the last lot of butter tasted of garlic. She will have to send the children down to the meadow to look for the offending plants. The skim milk left from butter-making she turns into white cheese which, together with bread and soup, forms the mainstay of the evening meal. Pierre has heard it said that at those dairy co-operatives in the Charente, two *Départements* away, they feed it to pigs. A waste, he considers. His pigs do well enough on kitchen scraps and mash. Pierre doesn't like the sty, he admits ; it is nothing but a brick cupboard under a corner of the hay-loft, the only light and ventilation being two holes in the door. He would like to build a real modern pigsty, but where does one suppose he would get the money to put up new farm buildings, with prices what they are and taxes so exorbitant ? No, that must wait till better days.

He returns to his ploughing only to be met by an irate neighbour who accuses him of having ploughed over beyond his boundary. Pierre denies having poached, but the neighbour gets more and more heated, says it happened just the same last year, threatens to fetch the police, threatens a legal action, and

only breaks off when he sees his own horse strayed away and nibbling new wheat.

Dusk falls and there is still one strip which he will have to leave till tomorrow. If only people did not interrupt so much, he says to himself as he returns home; but the working day has been short not merely because of protracted arguments, but because he has in the four journeys spent over three hours on the roadway getting to and fro.

His wife has collected the cows from the meadow, after her afternoon of sowing seeds in the garden. She feeds the poultry and does the evening milking while Pierre puts the horse away, feeding and watering him. The horse is getting old and losing strength; but Pierre reckons he cannot afford another one these days, so must carry on as best he can.

At supper the future of Jean is discussed. He is just about to leave school, and his mother thinks he ought to go to an agricultural school—there is one in the chief town of the *Département*—and get some diploma to fit him for taking a hand on the farm. Pierre laughs at the idea. Did any farming sense ever come out of professors? You don't learn farming out of books, says Pierre, but on the land. Did 'ologies' and 'isms' ever bring a man a franc more per lb. on his bread and butter? No, it would have been nice if Jean could have gone on to a secondary school and then got some local government position under the mayor. He would then have been safe for life; also, he would have had a pension and could have retired back with it to the farm in his declining years. But Jean is not clever enough. He would never get through the exams. Better that he should come to help his father on the holding. It is too much for one man. Indeed, Pierre had a labourer to help him till last Christmas, but the old man, though a willing worker, was past it, and Pierre has since not found anyone to come for the same small wage, plus keep.

The meal over, Pierre goes down to the *café* to a meeting of the local *syndicat*, or farmers' club. There are two *syndicats* in the village, representing two political groupings, but Pierre is not quite sure what the differences are. The present meeting is to discuss whether a cooperative wine-centre shall be established to buy all the grapes of the district and make the wine collectively instead of on each individual farm as hitherto. Supporters of the scheme enlarge eloquently on the superior quality of wine made under expert supervision and on

the better prices that would be obtained. Opponents assert that bad grapes will be mixed with good, that there will be no inducement to those with good vineyards to maintain quality if all are to receive the same pool price, that anyhow a free man has a right to make his own wine and drink his own wine. The argument then develops into a general discussion of liberty and individual rights. When at a late hour the business subject is reintroduced and a vote taken, the cooperative proposal is heavily defeated. Pierre returns home very tired.

## 2. East Slovakia

Andrej Hasovsky's house, like all the other houses in Stebnik, has only one room for the whole family. It is a large, low, dark room, with an earthen floor, and everything—the beds, the linen, and the table—has been made by those who live in it; everything but the row of holy pictures high up by the big stove. On a July morning the family is already up by four. Andrej gets the big key from its hiding-place and goes out into the farmyard to get the scythes out of the *sypianka*, the little storehouse where rolls of linen, a bag or two of flour and his farm tools are locked up. Andrej's wife and daughter stay to milk the two cows in the pitch-dark low stable, next door to the living-room, and then let them out to join the village herd which is going out to pasture, with the youngest son, Janos. The youngest girls sleep on in bed; they cough intermittently, like all other children in the village who suffer from the 'black cough'. One little sister died last winter with a sickness which carried off several Stebnik children.

Today Andrej is going to cut his rye, and at five he and his two sons are already on their way to the rye field. Their land lies in different parts of the village, one strip in the rye field, one in the oats, and one in the fallow, about four acres of arable land in all. Stebnik village keeps to the traditional three-field way of farming. Andrej also has four acres of pasture land, and the right to pasture two cows on the common grazing lands up by the forest.

The rye looks like being a poor crop this year, only about four quintals to the *jutro* (twelve bushels to the acre). Last autumn the villagers bought some powder in bags from a trader in Zborov who said it was lime, but it turned out to be just stones and gravel, and did no good. They complained to the



notary in Zborov about this trick, but he blamed them for not buying through the cooperative, instead of from the dealer. So this year the crop is poor, and the strips at the top of the field are almost bare—only three times the seed. If they could get more manure they might grow a better crop, but they cannot keep enough cattle to manure the land, and the cattle are always grazing high up in the forests.

Now some of the neighbours pass them, and 'Slava' (Praised be Jesus Christ) says Andrej, and they answer 'Až na vieku' (World without end). Other neighbours are coming with their scythes, and soon the reaping has begun over the whole expanse of corn, the men reaping with long, slow, rhythmical strokes and the women binding behind them. Towards eight o'clock they break off and return to their houses in the village for breakfast.

Back in their house, Andrej and his sons sit down at the table to eat *halušky* (flour-and-water dumplings) cooked by Andrej's wife, and to drink sour milk. After the meal they go back again to the field and go on cutting till midday, when they return for dinner. Now for the first time they have bread (baked from bought flour, since their own ran out in spring), cabbage, dumplings and more sour milk. This is their food all the year round, but Andrej can remember the old days when they never had rye bread at all, only potatoes and very heavy barley bread. Things are better now. The best land in the village used to belong to a Hungarian lord, but when the Czechs came, the lord went, and the Government sold the land acre by acre to the peasants of Stebnik, about two acres to each. That made a difference to the Stebnik peasants, who had had only four or five acres of very poor arable land before, and now got some really good land for corn-growing. Andrej often thinks that without this land his family could not live at all.

As it is, it is a struggle. Andrej can manage to keep two cows, but now the Government has forbidden them to graze more livestock in the forest, because there is barely enough grazing for them. The hay crop—for Andrej has three acres of meadow—is really only enough for the cows. But Andrej shares with his brother next door a horse which they use for drawing timber in the winter, and he has to find winter keep for the horse too. Andrej sells two calves and a pig every year, three or four geese at the Jarmark in the autumn, and these sales

bring in about 2,000 crowns (about £12) or so a year. That is enough to buy oil for the lamp, some salt and soap and a little sugar, and to buy some sacks of flour in the spring. All these things are now very dear, twice as dear as when Andrej was young. Then he meant to build a house, with windows to open and a wooden floor, and a tiled roof instead of thatch, but now that prices are so bad he will never save enough; it is only the rich farmers in Stebnik, who get money from relatives in America, who have built new houses like that.

After a rest, they go back to work again, and work on till evening. On the way home by the potato field Andrej finds some of his potatoes have been stolen. That must be the people from Blechnarka, the next village, always stealing. There is ill feeling between the villages, for the peasants of Blechnarka used to work on the lord's land in the old days and now there is no work for them, and there are other causes for distrust—they are Roman Catholics, while the Stebnik people, speaking Ruthene, belong to the Uniat Church; and they follow Father Hlinka, while in Stebnik the older men are pro-Czech and vote Agrarian.

Andrej is not surprised that they have been stealing again; he is never angry, and is glad to think that harvest has begun at last. For supper there are potatoes mashed in milk, and stewed plums from the trees in the little orchard. The boys go out to see their girls. Andrej at the back of his mind is worried about his sons; they are three—seventeen, sixteen, and twelve—and they are lazy and discontented, and there is no work for them. One of them went to Bohemia last year to work on a farm for the harvest, but he was back again in the winter. They get some work in the forests in winter, drawing wood with the horse. But when they have money they go to the inn at Zborov and drink and hear stupid talk about a war for Great Ukraine which will make them all rich. They can read, as Andrej cannot, but all the same he knows this talk is nonsense. He remembers the last war, and sometimes when ploughing he has turned up bones and skulls, for Stebnik lay between the lines of the Hungarian and Russian armies. All the cattle were killed and most of the houses burnt. But to-day there is no work anywhere, no hope of a job that will last over the winter, and no hope of a passport to cross the sea to America. It is the same in every house and every village—two or three sons, and no land to feed them, and daughters of sixteen with babies already.

'Everywhere there is poverty', thinks Andrej, 'and nothing will change it.'

### 3. *Croatia*

The train drops two peasants at a small railway station of Northern Croatia. One of them wears a black 'urban' suit and a black hat; he is of medium height, well-nourished and muscular. The second, a tall, lean mountaineer, is clad in the national costume of the South Dalmatian mountains: blue woollen trousers, a blue doublet with silver trimmings, and a white shirt, home-woven. A large knife protrudes from the broad red belt.

These two had met at a peasant festival in Zagreb, and Franjo has brought his friend Ivan back with him to show him his village and his holding, situated in the fertile valley of the Sava.

It is evening, a summer evening in August. The village is coming to life. The cattle are being driven in from the common pastures by the village shepherd. Each one of them knows her way home; at most houses two or three of them turn aside and enter the farm-yard; at some houses only one cow leaves the herd, and there are houses where none of them enters. Certainly there are not more than two farms which open their gates to as many as five cows.

From the houses the young girls are coming out to fetch water. Ivan is surprised. These villagers are indeed fortunate—every house boasts a well. In his own village they must fetch the water in summer-time from the spring, which is at a distance of five to six hours' walk.

This is a large village. It comprises nearly 800 houses with about 4,000 people living in them. It looks just like a town to Ivan. In his district you would have to walk around for a whole day before you could count up to 800 houses. And the land here is fertile; there are no stones to be seen. Ivan smiles at Franjo's explanation that here they must buy stones to mend the roads and convey them to the village by rail. Ivan's holding is a kind of rocky cemetery, with a small patch of land here and there, carefully enclosed by a stone wall to prevent the mountain storms from washing the earth away.

However, Ivan presently notices that the land here is just as much dismembered as his own at home. 'There is not much

land', says Franjo, 'and the population grows more and more. And whenever a patrimony is divided up amongst the heirs, everyone of them wants his fair share of the good land and the bad : some of the fields on the mountains, some of those in the plain ; some of the meadows and part of the vineyard and orchard.'

The parcels rarely include more than half an acre. 'It makes an attractive pattern, doesn't it?' says Franjo, 'but it's a confounded nuisance to till it. I need half a day to walk from one of my parcels to the next. My holding consists of about five hectares (12½ acres), but it's divided into thirty parcels ; and my neighbour owns twelve hectares divided into a hundred and twenty-five different parts. The value of my land would be doubled if it were all in one piece.'

Meanwhile, the friends have reached the centre of the village. The houses are small, but built with brick, and whitewashed ; around them are the farm-buildings : the stables, the pigsty, the granary, a curious storehouse for maize, and here and there a cemented silo. Ivan wonders why the stables are larger and more impressive than the houses. Franjo explains : 'We are cattle-breeders. There are now so many of us that we cannot earn a living from the sale of wheat or maize. We are doing much better with stock-farming, and our people say that if I build a new stable it will help me in time to build a new house. But if I begin by building a new house, I shall have great difficulties in improving my holding sufficiently for me to build a new stable.'

'My village is a small one,' says Ivan. 'We have no courtyards, and our houses are built with stones. When my father returned from America, where he worked before the last world war, we built a new house from his savings, and I turned the old hut into a stable. So now we need not sleep under the same roof with the cattle. But our cows and oxen are very small. It seems to me that one of your cows weighs about as much as two of my oxen.'

Night is falling when they arrive at Franjo's house, which has three rooms and a large kitchen with a covered fireplace. Ivan, observing this, is vastly pleased. In his house the smoke from the *primaeval* fireplace makes your eyes smart. . . . Here, they have quite a lot of furniture. In every room there are chairs, cupboards, chests of drawers, pictures, looking-glasses. The beds are high, they nearly reach the ceiling ; you can

hardly swing yourself into them. In Ivan's house there is only a kitchen and one bedroom for all the inmates. They sleep on the floor on a layer of straw. There is only one single bed in the house: it is reserved for the old and sick. There is no cupboard, only a box. Most wonderful of all, the friends here have even light . . . they can read in the evenings. At Ivan's they light a resin torch at nightfall and that, of course, makes reading impossible. Therefore they sit around the fire, telling old stories and singing ballads of heroes and heyducks. The people in Franjo's village have already forgotten this old custom. They sing only love-songs and—they read the papers.

The inmates of the house have gathered around the table for supper: beans and cabbage with bacon-fat. There is no meat, for that is only eaten once a week. The brown whole-meal bread is either pure wheat or mixed with maize. It occurs to Ivan that his children are now probably sitting around the table at home, eating the eternal maize porridge.

Franjo listens to what his house folk are telling him about the farm. The aftermath is ripe and ought to be cut. They ought to ask the neighbour for hands: he owes them five field-workers since, at the last harvest, they helped him more than he helped them. The plough should be repaired in time for the autumn tillage. The cow, Rumenka, has been ill, having eaten too much clover; they had to send her to the vet; and two months' profit on the milk of this cow will not settle the vet's bill. Having no ready money at hand, they had to borrow some as best they could from two neighbours, to satisfy the learned gentleman.

'There is a message from the authorities: they want you to pay your taxes—now, immediately after the harvest, when wheat prices are at their lowest. People are saying that the tax-collector has a secret understanding with the corn-dealer.'

'Well, well, here are troubles and worries enough and to spare,' remarks Franjo. 'Why, as soon as a body leaves the house for a few days, behold! every kind of misfortune seems to settle on it.'

'Neither do I know how I shall be able to manage', replies Ivan. 'We have had a bad year. From a hundred kilograms of barley sown, I reaped no more than three hundred kilograms of produce. The children ate that up. So, in the spring, I had to borrow for this year's seed. And the dealer is now asking me to pay him back twofold in the autumn after the harvest.'

'Hold on for a moment: why, that means interest at a hundred per cent for half a year, or two hundred per cent per annum. That's downright robbery.'

'How should I know how many per cent it is? Needs must when the devil drives; hunger asks not and the soil does not wait.'

'Is there no cooperative in your neighbourhood, so that you could get cheaper credit?'

'There is a cooperative, my dear Franjo; but the gentlemen from the authorities and those who obey them implicitly are in control of it; and they do not lend to anyone who does not vote for them; certainly not to me. They say they lend at sixteen per cent yearly.'

'Well, it's very late. Let's forget our worries and go to sleep.'

The next day Franjo shows Ivan his farm. First, they visit the stable. Franjo owns two Simmental cows and one calf. They are good cows. The spotted one gives four litres of milk daily, the other a little less. For a litre of milk he gets only half a dinar, while in the towns the consumers pay two dinars for it. Moreover, he cannot sell any milk in summer because there is no market for it, and the dairyman takes advantage of this to over-reach him in every possible way.

There are four pigs in the sty. Next winter he will sell two fattened pigs to pay for autumn expenses, and slaughter the other two for his household. There will be 150 kgs. of pork—probably half of this will be meat and half of it lard. He will also sell the calf in the autumn because he cannot feed unproductive cattle through the winter.

The courtyard is full of chickens, hens, ducks and geese. It costs nothing to keep them—they are easily fed on offals and on whatever they can pick up in the yard, with a handful of maize and barley at night. Eggs, butter and vegetables provide petty cash for the wife, and enable her to buy a few necessities at the grocer's; salt, matches, paraffin, coffee and so on.

The friends now look into the toolshed. Franjo boasts a plough, a harrow, a small scythe, a chaff-cutting knife. He is extremely proud of his new iron plough. It was expensive, but then the customs duty on ploughs is so high. People say that the German peasants only pay the equivalent of 340 kgs. of wheat for such a plough, while Franjo had to sell 810 kgs. of wheat to buy his.

'The plough is excellent,' declares Franjo. 'If I could only

get some horses for it! Still, even with the cows, I can manage somehow.'

'I could not think of buying such a plough', rejoins Ivan. 'To begin with, I should never be able to afford it. Besides, if I ploughed too deep into the earth, I should mix up the fertile black soil with the heavy yellow earth, and that would spoil the field. So I must keep to my wooden plough. Heaven knows it's not easy work. I need a team of six oxen. We are managing the best we can—I have seen neighbours yoking horses and oxen together into a team.'

After dinner, Franjo shows his fields to his friend. The five hectares (12½ acres) of land are divided up roughly as follows: one hectare of good meadows; about half a hectare of fields around the house, on which he grows, mainly, vegetables, potatoes and beans; about three hectares sown with wheat and maize, and half a hectare with clover, beans and cow-rape. He gets sixteen to twenty bushels per acre, which is high for the district; he has heard that they get forty bushels and more in Western Europe.

On Ivan's land in Dalmatia things are much simpler: barley and maize are the main cereals, and the yield per acre half what Franjo gets. There is no vegetable except cabbage, and that is scarce enough. One third of the land is fallow—the cattle graze on the stubble fields after the harvest; otherwise they stay indoors.

There are no pigs, but sheep provide the peasants with milk and cheese, meat and wool. Not very much, however, for these small, badly kept and badly fed sheep do not give more than one kilogram of greasy wool annually.

'Life is getting more and more difficult. The prices we can obtain are so very low. Look, before 1914 I could get two pair of boots for a hundredweight of wheat. To-day I must give two hundredweights of wheat in exchange for one pair of boots. For one kilogram of nails, I must give one kilogram of wool. When I sold a sheep before 1914, I could buy fifty metres of cottons in exchange. Now I cannot get fifty metres of cotton-stuff even for four sheep.'

'Things are no better on the coast of Dalmatia either. Before 1914 they could get a suit of clothes for a hectolitre of wine. To-day they must give three hectolitres of wine for a suit. Before 1914 they could get ten boxes of matches for a litre of wine, today they must give a litre of wine for every single box.'

'And it's all in consequence of politics,' observes Franjo. 'The gentlemen say that we peasants had better not meddle in politics. But what can we do? We should be very happy indeed if politics would not meddle so much with us. Intolerable burdens are laid on our shoulders, and our misery grows from day to day. The prices of our products are steadily falling. We cannot get out of our difficulties by buying tractors. What should we do with machines on our small patches of ground? The population increases, and there is not enough land. Forty years ago my grandfather owned fifty hectares of land. When he died his sons divided the property, and each of them got sixteen hectares. When my father died we two brothers and my sister again divided the holding into three parts. Now each of us owns five hectares of land. And what will our children do?'

'That's true enough, Franjo. That's exactly how it is. The experts are telling us that we should introduce more progressive methods of cultivation. They never ask how and on what we live. It can't go on like that. There must be a way out of this misery, and we must find it. . . .'

#### 4. *Denmark*

Hans Nielsen is owner-occupier of a sixty-acre farm in East Jutland which has belonged to his family for generations. His boyhood was spent from the age of six to fourteen at the village school, in the latter years helping his father to milk the cows, feed the pigs and thin the beets. He then worked full time on the farm till at sixteen he wanted to go and see how other farms were run, so he went to work for one of his father's friends who had a farm in Funen. After a year there he spent a year on a farm on Sealand.

When Hans was eighteen he developed a strong desire to learn more about life, about his country and the world outside; so he used the savings from his wages to go to a People's High School, where he enjoyed five happy summer months in company with other young men, this being followed by his period of military service. Hans still did not feel that he knew how to farm as well as his father, so he decided to go to an agricultural school, where, from November to April, he learned how to apply scientific knowledge to practical farming.

He was now ready to take a job as foreman on a comparatively large farm. The farmer, quite a prominent man in public



life, had a daughter who that summer was away at a People's High School, but when she returned in the autumn Hans and she fell in love and became engaged. As Hans's parents were grown old and tired after a busy life, it was arranged that Hans should take over the family farm. Hans's father had to see that his other children had their share of the capital which was mainly invested in the farm, so Hans, in order to pay out his brother and sister on taking over, had to borrow money from the credit association in the form of a long-term mortgage to the maximum limit of fifty per cent of the value of his farm. On this he pays five per cent, which includes interest and redemption. He also had to borrow from the local bank in order to carry out improvements. Altogether, his borrowings amount to nearly the same as the value of his property, but his father told him that adequate working capital is essential, and the interest is no great burden.

Now Hans Nielsen and his wife, Marie, are farming the old family holding in East Jutland. The buildings are modern, built after the fire ten years ago (the farm had been well insured). With their whitewashed walls and red tiles, they are laid out in a square, with a well in the middle from which water is pumped by electricity. Looking from the dwelling-house, we have the cowhouse on our left, light and well-ventilated, with room for fifteen cows and fifteen calves and heifers. Above it is the loft for hay and straw. Beyond it are two small rooms, one for roots and one for cooling milk and washing the utensils. On the right of the yard are the store-rooms for grain, oilcake and tools, also the stable for four horses and a foal. In the loft over the stable is oat-straw and the chaff-cutter, so placed that the chaff can fall directly through into a bin in the stable below. Finally, on the fourth side of the yard, opposite the dwelling-house, stands the main barn, where the corn is threshed. Behind is another barn for unthreshed corn, since Hans, like his fellow-Danes, never normally builds stacks outdoors. Behind the cowshed is the manure-heap with concrete floor and walls and with liquid manure-tank beneath so that nothing is wasted. Further along are the pigsties with about thirty pigs. Between house and road lies a well-kept garden with lawn, flower-beds and fruit trees; the kitchen garden is a little way off.

The layout of the land—all in one block—is as convenient as that of the buildings. Hans generally follows a normal rotation



## II. WESTERN EUROPE

1. DANISH COOPERATIVE DAIRY (E.N.A.)
2. FRENCH SHEEP FARM, CALVADOS (E.N.A.)

of crops : wheat, mangolds and fodder sugar-beets, barley, red clover for hay, oats, swedes, barley, two-year ley with white clover for grazing ; but he deviates from this whenever appropriate. He is a hard worker, rising at five o'clock, when he and one of his men milk the cows, while the other—both are farmers' sons who will probably have farms of their own some day—waters and feeds the horses. At 6.30 one of Hans's neighbours, a smallholder, drives a big cart with two small horses into the yard to fetch the milk. This smallholder spends part of each morning collecting churns from the farms for the cooperative dairy. The morning milk has just been cooled, while last evening's has stood all night in churns in a tank through which fresh water runs from the well.

Now it is breakfast time. Hans, Marie, the two men and the maid all eat together. They have porridge with milk, coffee, rye bread and butter. At 7.0 the men go to the fields, while Hans sees to the cows. Hans Nielsen belongs to a milk-recording society and has the yield per cow and butter-fat content of the milk registered every four weeks by a recorder. Behind each cow hangs a black tablet with the results of her last recording. Hans has also chalked up the number of the cow's mother, the name of the sire, the date of last calving and the date of mating. After each visit of the recorder the cows are regrouped in the stable according to performance. This makes it easier to differentiate the feeding, and Hans is determined to get the highest possible value for his feeding-stuffs. In consultation with the recorder and animal husbandry adviser of his agricultural society, Hans has learned how much hay, roots and straw it pays to give each cow and how much concentrates, so that each receives the starch equivalent and digestible protein appropriate to her yield. First Hans feeds the concentrates and then the roots. Next he cleans out the cowhouse, and by then the cows are ready for hay and straw. It is important to keep the byres clean—and they are indeed now spotless—for although it is only October, Danish cows already stay indoors all day and will not go out again till next May.

Meanwhile the smallholder returns with churns full of pasteurized skim milk, which Hans mixes with barley meal for the pigs. When feeding them Hans decides that two are ready for the cooperative bacon factory, so he phones the village lorry-driver (everyone seems to be on the phone) and fixes to

have them fetched next morning. Hans used to take the pigs in his own cart, but soon found it more economical to pay the lorry-driver to do it and stay at home himself, instead of wasting valuable time in the town.

Now he has a cup of coffee with his wife while the maid washes the milk-churns and milking utensils. Marie has, meanwhile, cleaned the house and attended to their two small children. Hans, if it is not a morning when he has to grind barley or chop straw, now goes out to help the men in the fields. At noon all foregather for the midday meal, which may consist of butter-milk soup followed by bacon and potatoes. Afterwards all have a short nap and then a cup of coffee. Back again to the fields, but at 3.30 Hans returns to feed the cows and clean out the house as in the morning. At five o'clock the others come back, one to help Hans with the milking, the other to feed the pigs and horses.

After this the men wash and change their clothes. Supper at 6.30 consists of bread and margarine with cold meat or liver sausage and cheese (or a warm dish) plus a glass of milk or light beer. The day's work is discussed. Marie tells how many eggs she has collected and how many she will be delivering next day to the collector from the cooperative egg-packing station. Afterwards Hans slips away into his 'office', as he calls the little writing-room-study, to do his accounts. In the evening there is nearly always something on. Sometimes he and his two men go to the lecture hall to listen to a paper on an agricultural topic given by the adviser of the farmers' society. Sometimes he and Marie go to a lecture by one of the teachers from the People's High School about Danish history or world politics. Sometimes he has to attend a business meeting of one of the half-dozen cooperative societies to which he belongs.

Life seems full of activities; indeed, there are always more things that Hans would like to do or study than he can possibly find time for. Neither he nor Marie feel 'out of it' though they seldom go to town; they are not in a backwater in the way those German peasants seem to be over the border. In the meetings and discussions on farming problems, on cultural topics or political questions, they feel themselves fully participating in the life of the Danish community.

## CHAPTER III

### POVERTY AND PROSPERITY

WE have visited Pierre, Andrej, Franjo, and Hans each in his home, and caught a glimpse of his daily life. Let us now go to Switzerland and climb a mountain, not too high a one whose top is snow-covered and assailed by icy winds, but a moderate-sized mountain with comfortable warm rock at the summit on which we may sit for an hour and discuss the economics of peasant farming. If the day is clear we may enjoy a wide view over the carpet of Europe, from the French Jura past the German Black Forest to the Austrian Vorarlberg, whilst behind us on the skyline is the Monte Rosa, where we see almost into Italy. But our mental panorama must stretch farther still to embrace Scandinavia, Poland and the Balkans. Up here we can detach ourselves from the personal problems of Pierre, Andrej, Franjo, Ivan, and Hans; we can consider in broad perspective the condition of the whole of Europe's peasantry.

An introductory word of warning : in this chapter a number of comparisons will be made between the standard of life and of farming in different countries. We would ask the reader, from whatsoever country he may come, not to be grieved if his country does not always come out on top, nor offended if some hard things are said about conditions in his homeland. We all have a long way to go in improving human welfare, and there will not always be space in a little book like this to elaborate the fact that bad conditions are more often the result of hostile environment than of faults in the people themselves.

With this in mind let us take a rapid glance at the comparative prosperity of peasants in different countries. The following table sets out very rough estimates of weekly incomes of cultivators and labourers :<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Figures for Eastern Europe estimated from data in *Economics of Peasant Farming*, by D. Warriner. Figures for Western Europe from *Food Production in Western Europe*, p. 535, by P. Lamartine Yates.

*Incomes in Agriculture (1937)*

	Small Cultivators.	Hired Labourers.
	Shillings per Week.	
Jugoslavia . . . . .	5-10	(few hired)
Poland and Rumania . . . . .	7-12	7-10
Hungary . . . . .	10-15	7-12
Belgium . . . . .	18-23	18-22
Germany . . . . .	20-25	18-23
Netherlands . . . . .	20-30	23-30
Denmark . . . . .	30-40	23-26
Great Britain . . . . .	40 ?	30-36

We must remember that the cultivators live rent free, so that even where the money incomes of the two groups appear the same, the cultivators are really the better off. Two further and most important reservations must be made. Firstly, the above figures are only indicative, they are not a mathematical average, for it can be argued with much justification that in an occupation such as farming there can be no such thing as a representative income; the range is too wide for an average to have precise meaning. Secondly, comparison of money incomes means little unless account be taken of the differences in the purchasing power of money in different countries. Undoubtedly the £ would buy more in Eastern Europe than in Western, more in Belgium than in the Netherlands, more in Denmark than in Britain. But except between East and West the differences are not enormous, and in no case would the adjustment affect the *order* of placing the countries.

Despite all the difficulties of measurement, it may not be too rash to say that farm incomes in Denmark and Britain are something like three times as high as farm incomes in Poland and the Balkans. These disparities in agricultural income correspond to similar disparities of income in other industries, for in most European countries the relation between agricultural and industrial earnings is fairly stable, the former always being lower owing to reasons mentioned in Chapter I. But whereas in Britain nearly ninety-five per cent of the population are in occupations outside agriculture and earning for the most part higher incomes, in Eastern Europe only thirty to forty per cent are in non-agricultural occupations. Thus the comparative poverty of Eastern Europe is even greater than the above figures suggest.

In terms of money, incomes in Eastern Europe are so low that it is difficult to form any idea of what standard of living

they indicate. However, numerous investigations in the villages have shown that large sections of the farm population are living below an adequate nutritional standard, in the simple sense that for part of the year they are starving. In some regions, for three or four months of the year even the bread supply is inadequate. There is a Czech saying which finds a parallel in all the Slav tongues :

Když kvetou boby, je nouze o chleby;  
Když kvete mák, již ne tak.

'When the beans are in blossom bread is short, but when the poppies bloom the harvest is soon.'

When cereals are sufficiently available, they provide up to eighty per cent of the calories in the diet. Here is a typical July menu for a family of thirteen persons, six adults and seven children (all over six years old) in the Serbian village of Banjane :

FRIDAY : *Breakfast*—haricot beans, cucumber salad, onions, rolls.

*Lunch*—the beans left from breakfast.

*Supper*—potato soup.

SATURDAY : *Breakfast*—haricot, cucumbers, bread.

*Lunch*—the same.

*Supper*—bacon soup, dried haricots and bread.

SUNDAY : *Breakfast*—fruit and bread.

*Lunch*—vermicelli soup, stew.

*Supper*—remains of the stew.

(Ingredients of stew were : one chicken, 2 lbs. potatoes, one spoonful of fat, three eggs, flour).  
40 lbs. of bread were consumed that day.

MONDAY : *Breakfast*—bacon soup, bread.

*Lunch*—cheese, bacon, bread.

*Supper*—roasted breadcrumbs fried in fat.

TUESDAY : *Breakfast*—pears and rolls.

*Lunch*—cucumbers, bread and onions.

*Supper*—curdled milk and bread.

WEDNESDAY : *Breakfast*—haricots, cucumbers and bread.

*Lunch*—the same.

*Supper*—haricots and bread.

THURSDAY : No cooking done, as adults all working outdoors.

One woman and seven children at home ate only cucumbers, onions, cheese and bread.

Because of the month, July, this week's menu contains an unusually high proportion of vegetables; but it is extremely poor in protein and fats. In 1936-7 the League of Nations undertook a series of investigations in Eastern Europe which showed the prevalence of diseases of malnutrition. In a group of Serbian villages sixty per cent of the population showed signs of rickets, while in a sample of Rumanian villages eighty per cent of the children had intestinal parasites; bad conditions prevailed also among the landless labourers in Hungary. Furthermore, in all the Danubian countries we find high rates of infant mortality, which are due in large part to the low nutritional standards.

What are the causes of this state of affairs and of the startling contrasts between Western and Eastern Europe in standards of living? What factors principally determine peasant prosperity? One important group consists of course of those factors which influence national wealth as a whole—*i.e.*, richness of natural resources and general level of industrial development. Here, however, we are concerned with causes more especially related to the economics of farming. These may be grouped under five heads.

### 1. *Land and Labour*

Quite the most fundamental factor is the ratio of agricultural land to agricultural labour. If on every hundred acres of farm land there are in Denmark two cultivators' families, while in South-eastern Europe there are six, no statistics are needed to show that the latter must be poorer, unless indeed they can make up for their land shortage by producing very much more per acre—a point to be considered presently.

Land shortage has always been a characteristic of farming in Europe, just as it is in India, China and Japan, whereas in most parts of the New World there is so much land available that farming has had to be mechanized in order that few hands can cope with large areas. In countries where the 'density of agricultural population'<sup>1</sup> is too high the peasants cannot escape poverty. One may find it difficult to define 'too high' in this connection, but there are two unmistakable signs of overpopulation. The first is where the peasant family, for lack of

<sup>1</sup> 'Density of agricultural population' means the number of workers (including the peasants themselves) actively engaged in farming per one hundred acres farm land.



land, is actually under-employed—*i.e.*, the adult workers could undertake more if they had the work to do. The second is where peasants cling to old, roundabout, laborious methods of cultivation because, if they adopted modern methods, they would become under-employed. In either case it is insufficiency of land which prevents them turning out more produce and earning better incomes.

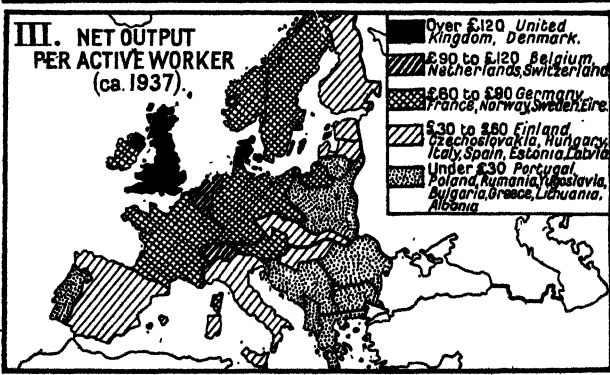
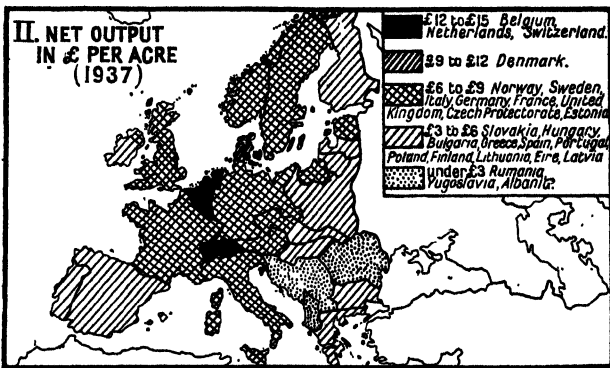
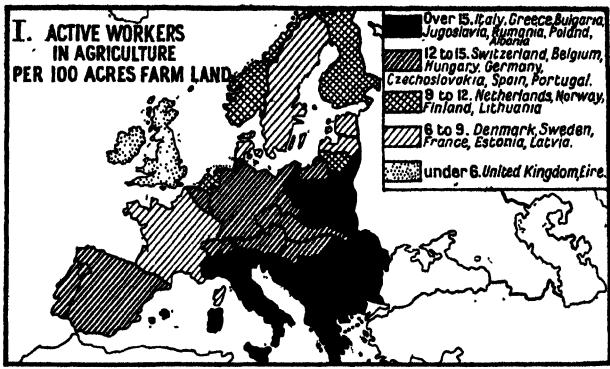
The map on p. 39 shows the densities of farm population in various European countries. Italy and the whole of Eastern Europe are over-populated, in the sense that removal of some of the people would enable those remaining behind to improve their well-being without any change in farming technique; rural over-crowding in those countries directly causes poverty. To a less serious degree the same is probably true of Germany, Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Spain.

## 2. *Intensity of Farming*

Population pressure is not a factor which can be considered in isolation; it must be studied in relation to the intensity of farming, or 'output per acre'.

A high net output per acre is associated with certain special types of farming, notably market-gardening and intensive livestock husbandry. Obviously if a man covers his land with fruit trees and grows vegetables beneath them he can achieve big cash sales from a very small acreage. Similarly, if a small-scale farmer keeps a substantial number of cows, pigs and poultry, grows all the crops his land will produce and buys additional feeding-stuffs, he too will have a high per-acre net output. Incidentally, it may be noted that even the bought fodder helps to improve net output, since it enables him to keep more animals than he could on the basis of his own crops and so utilizes more fully his skill in tending livestock. (This is the Danish system.)

Where output per acre reaches a high level the land will obviously support more workers at a satisfactory standard of living than where output is low. (For instance, in Belgium before this war the average net output per acre was some £14 and in France £8; Belgium had 13.3 agriculturalists per 100 acres, while France at a somewhat similar standard of living had 8.5.) This being so, a natural line of development in such a crowded continent would be to increase output per acre,



especially in the more over-populated regions. In Chapter V we shall discuss ways and means by which it may be attempted.

It must not be concluded from this that in all places and at all times the greater the intensity of cultivation and the sparser the farm population the greater the prosperity. Practice must adapt itself reasonably to environment. It would be foolish to attempt market-gardening in the Cheviots, and impossible to organize large-scale milk production for liquid sale in the prairie provinces of Canada, where no large urban agglomerations exist. Or again, in regions where land is cheap it will not profit a farmer to try to increase grain yields to the upper limit by applying large quantities of fertilizer to the land; it will pay him better to farm bigger areas and be content with lower yields.<sup>1</sup> Nor does removal of population from the countryside always and everywhere promote prosperity. British farming in wartime is managing with fewer experienced hands than pre-war, owing to a great burst of mechanization and of individual farmers putting in longer hours. But there comes a limit. Not many more workers could be taken away from British agriculture in 1943 without making labour so scarce that output would suffer.

Nevertheless, it remains true that over a long period and with a given state of technique those farm populations have prospered most which have with comparative paucity of numbers achieved a comparatively high output per acre. The map on p. 39 shows how low the output is in Eastern Europe, just where it is most necessary that it should be high. Output per acre in Rumania and Yugoslavia is less than a third of what it is in Denmark, and less than a fifth of what it is in Switzerland. In Eastern Europe the farming is grain production for the food of the family plus a small surplus for sale; in Denmark and Switzerland it is intensive dairying and pig-keeping, the products being sold in urban markets. The reasons for these contrasts will be more fully analyzed later, but it can and must be emphasized that grain production by itself will never give a high money output per acre and is therefore utterly inappropriate as the staple farming for crowded regions.

The third map on p. 39 shows output per man—the factor

<sup>1</sup> It may also pay him to disregard future generations and exhaust the fertility of his land, intending to abandon it when it will yield no more. This is where the State must step in, as it has done in the U.S.A., and assert the long-term interests of the community.

most closely related to level of income. Whereas in Britain the output is £200 per person and in Denmark £150, it is less than £30 in the south-eastern and Mediterranean countries.

### 3. *Efficiency*

To list efficiency as a factor making for prosperity may seem at first sight platitudinous. Obviously the man who is more proficient than his neighbours will tend to be more prosperous too. That is not what is meant here. Under efficiency it is convenient to group a number of improvements in the organization of farming which, though sometimes first attained through the efforts of individuals, have come in time to benefit the whole farming community, efficient and inefficient farmers alike.

For instance, a farm of twenty-five acres composed of one or two blocks of land can clearly be run more successfully than a similar sized farm made up of a hundred scattered strips. In England this curse of *parcellement*, as the French call it, is almost unknown, largely because of primogeniture; but throughout the length and breadth of the Continent subdivision of the land among the children in each generation constitutes one of the major obstacles to progress in farming technique. In Switzerland, among smallholdings of less than two and a half acres in size there were at the last census no fewer than two hundred and twenty, each of which was divided into fifty or more separate plots! In other words, the average size of each plot was smaller than a standard English allotment. The photograph on p. 43 shows what the European chessboard looks like. It is estimated that in Western Europe one-quarter to one-third of the land is parcelled out in this manner; in many parts of Eastern Europe the proportion must be higher. It is true that not every tiny field is surrounded by a hedge, but it is bordered by a neighbour's plot, which often dictates the type of crops a man can grow. The peasant cannot ignore local custom. If all his neighbours are growing wheat, he cannot, on a plot situated in the midst of theirs, grow lucerne—which needs mowing and carting when the wheat is standing high—unless there be a sufficiently broad track giving access to his plot. In practice there is often no track at all, and the whole field, consisting of many peasants' plots, has to be cultivated with a single crop—though of course sown separately and harvested separately. Other disadvantages include the impossi-

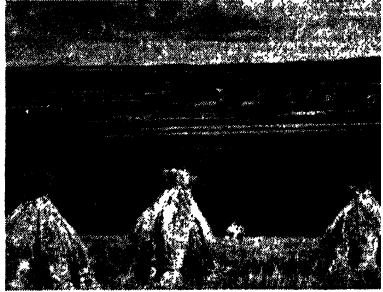
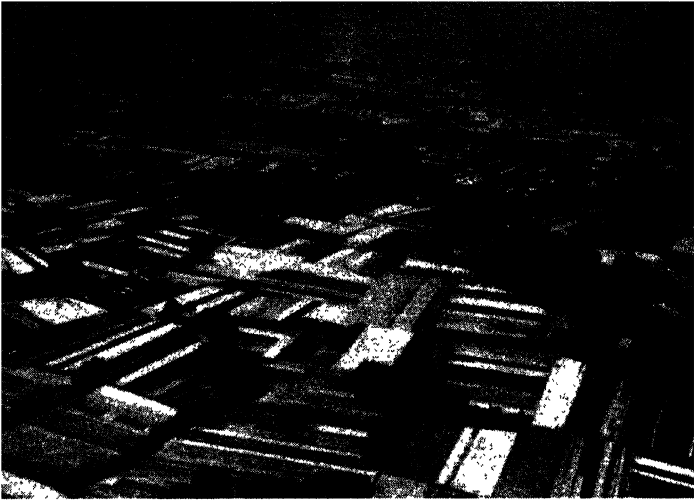
bility of using, on these pocket-handkerchief strips, modern implements such as reaper-binders, the impossibility of draining unless the neighbours cooperate, the inordinate amount of time wasted in coming and going between strips. It has been calculated that in France the costs of growing wheat on a plot two-fifths of an acre in size are seventy to eighty per cent higher than on a plot of two and a half acres<sup>1</sup>—and no one supposes that even that is the optimum size for a field of wheat!

In Denmark this danger of *parcellement* has been consciously overcome, or rather prevented from ever coming into existence. A series of Acts of Parliament dating from the beginning of the nineteenth century firmly prohibited the subdivision of farms below a certain size. Consequently the farms have never been split up and the strips handed from one family to another through marriage and inheritance. The farms of Denmark are almost all compact single-block units, and this contributes powerfully to facilitate the high standard of arable cultivation at comparatively low cost which characterizes Danish agriculture.

There are other directions too in which efficiency once achieved benefits everyone. A notable example is animal breeding. A cow which on a given amount of feed yields 800 gallons a year costs no more in labour of tending than one which on the same feed only yields 500 gallons; a pig which puts on weight faster and consumes less fodder than one of another breed will clearly be more profitable. Another example from Denmark illustrates progress in this sphere. Over the last thirty years the Danes have reduced the number of 'food-units' which a pig consumes per kilogramme liveweight increase from 4.0 to 3.4, the average length of body has been increased from 89.3 to 92.2 centimetres, while the percentage of exportable bacon to liveweight pig has been increased from 57.3 to 60 per cent. These figures do not look large in themselves, but they mean a difference of many tens of pounds sterling each year to each Danish farmer.

Another field in which efficiency has been successfully developed is cooperative processing and marketing, not only by the Danes, but by the Dutch, the Czechs, and others. If a farmer makes his own butter on his own farm, takes it himself to

<sup>1</sup> *Le Remembrement de la Propriété Rurale*, published by La Fédération Nationale des Collectivités d'Électrification et d'Améliorations Rurales. Paris, 1933.



### III. DRAWBACK

1. STRIP SYSTEM :  
BELGIUM  
*(Associated Press)*

2. STRIP SYSTEM :  
POLISH VILLAGE  
*(Polish Ministry  
of Information)*

3. PLOUGHING ON  
SWISS MOUNTAIN  
*(Paul Popper)*

market and hangs about half the day till it is sold, he not merely wastes his time, but gets less for his article than if it were made under expert supervision at a dairy, graded, packed and sold in bulk to wholesalers or exporters. By up-grading quality and dealing in large quantities the cooperative can gain for the little man the advantages normally inherent only in big undertakings.

We shall see in a later chapter in what circumstances co-operation flourishes and what opportunities there may be for extending its scope after the war. It suffices to note here that wherever it has taken firm root it has brought added security and prosperity to the peasant's life. It has not only enabled him to buy cheaper and sell dearer than he could otherwise have done, it has brought within his reach benefits which, playing a lone hand, he could never have obtained : credit facilities, livestock insurance, electricity, piped water-supply, and so on. 'Like the invention of gunpowder, it made the peasant on foot as tall as the knight on horseback.'<sup>1</sup>

#### 4. *Education*

Perhaps the most essential pre-requisite for successful co-operation is a high general level of education. But in other ways, too, education promotes success in farming. Because the progress in agricultural science has been so rapid of recent decades and because the knowledge necessary to efficient working of all the different activities of a farm has grown so complex, it can only be exceptionally keen, intelligent and forward-looking peasants who will grasp, or even wish to grasp, a modicum of the new technique. If the youth has had instilled into him a desire to learn, an interest in the acquisition of knowledge, an appreciation of the value of technical advice, he will likely enough develop into a progressive farmer.

Only within the last three or four decades has elementary education become general through the country districts of Europe, and there are as yet extremely few countries in which it instils into its pupils any of the capabilities just mentioned. Where education has achieved a high level, notably in the agricultural schools of Belgium and Holland and in the Folk High Schools of Denmark, there has been a marked effect on the standard of efficiency in farming and, therefore, on prosperity also. In most countries all that has been done is to pro-

<sup>1</sup> Branson : *Farm Life Abroad*, p. 134.

vide for the rural population a cheap, emasculated version of urban education. So far few serious attempts have been made to provide a curriculum and a type of training suitable to agricultural communities.

### 5. *State Intervention*

Until the nineteen-thirties, practically the only way in which the State assisted agriculture, apart from certain smallholdings schemes, was through tariff policy. In the three great protectionist countries, France, Germany and Italy, though self-sufficiency and the safeguarding of supplies in time of war were the primary consideration, statesmen were firmly persuaded that by using the tariff weapon to shut out cheap, competing foodstuffs they would secure and promote the prosperity of their peasants.

It is never wise to argue much about 'might-have-beens'; no one can confidently say what would have been the development in those three countries in the absence of import duties. But if the reader turns to the table on p. 35 he will see plainly enough that agricultural earnings have been lower in Germany (and while figures for France are slightly above, those for Italy would be well below the German level) than in traditionally free-trade countries such as Britain, Denmark and the Netherlands.<sup>1</sup> This, of course, is not conclusive. There have without doubt been other factors, besides the policy of free trade, which have contributed to the prosperity of these latter countries. But if we turn to more exclusively technical matters and take various yardsticks to measure agricultural progress, then we find that over the last fifty years in respect of improvement in crop yields per acre, increase in livestock numbers, up-grading in quality of livestock (*e.g.* milk yield per cow) and so on, Denmark and the Netherlands make a much better showing than France, Germany and Italy. Such a conclusion need not surprise us, for the essence of protectionism is to protect—*i.e.*, to enable producers to continue their accustomed methods of production without being driven out of business by competition. The French did not want wheat growing to diminish, they did not even want the production to concentrate into the hands of large-scale, low-cost producers, since a large rural population was deemed a source of military strength. And, indeed, wheat

<sup>1</sup> Admittedly Belgian earnings are low, but Belgium suffers from having an exceptionally high density of population.



cultivated by traditional methods has remained the primary interest of the French peasant while his Danish colleague was switching over to dairying, which meant a much more intensive, prosperity-bringing form of production. Thus, although protection keeps prices high, it also keeps costs of production high and often brings less prosperity than was anticipated.

Not that protection's opposite, free trade, is the panacea for farming. Far from it. It is the central thesis of this book that peasant prosperity cannot be attained without a large measure of governmental intervention, not only in the sphere of foreign trade, but in numerous other directions also. History does show, however, that intervention which confines itself to the imposition of import duties has not contributed conspicuously to the promotion of farming prosperity.

By the nineteen-thirties many governments had already realized this and proceeded to experiment with a whole range of new devices: quantitative regulation of imports, fixed prices for home produce, voluntary or compulsory marketing schemes, subsidies in cash and kind, and measures designed to foster technical efficiency. Many of these schemes were improvisations to save the peasantry from being overwhelmed by the great depression of 1929-33. Already modified before the outbreak of war, most of them have been radically changed since. But among them were many ideas which might profoundly alter the position of the peasant, and which will form the basis of suggestions to be made in later chapters. It unquestionably lies within the power of the modern State rapidly to improve the prosperity of the agricultural population, but the task has hardly anywhere yet been attempted.

We have analyzed some of the principal economic factors at work, factors which exercise quite as potent an influence as climate and soil. We know at least what some of the problems are, though we have not yet seen how to overcome them.

Perhaps the most significant difference between the age of yesterday and the age of tomorrow is that whereas in the past man's environment, both physical and economic, has in the main been passively accepted as unalterable, the public of all countries is now fully persuaded that in large degree both can be mastered and is firmly resolved to attempt the task. If in a particular region the rainfall is insufficient for good grass crops to grow, and if good grass crops there are considered essential

to prosperous farming, the public begins to demand that science shall by irrigation or other means provide the grass. Similarly, if a district is over-populated and the peasants under-employed, the public is beginning to demand that alternative occupations be created or that the surplus people be moved elsewhere. Man is slowly but surely developing undreamt-of faculties for controlling his destiny.

It is therefore in a bold, challenging spirit that the tasks of re-organizing European farming must be faced. The next five chapters seek to sketch the main outline of such a reorganization and to suggest lines of policy which might appropriately be developed when the immediate relief activities of the early post-war period begin to give way to schemes for long-term reconstruction.

## CHAPTER IV

### OVER-POPULATION

**T**O give a vivid idea of what over-population looks like in practice, the following bare inventory of farms in two typical villages in Southern Poland may be quoted :

#### I. *Village of Handzlówka*

- (i) Farm with 9 acres : 1 horse, 4 cows, 1 heifer, 4 calves; 4 workers.
- (ii) Farm with 2 acres : 2 cows; 3 workers.

#### II. *Village of Albigowa*

- (i) Farm with  $3\frac{1}{2}$  acres : 2 cows, 1 heifer; 1 worker.
- (ii) Farm with  $5\frac{1}{2}$  acres : 3 cows, 1 horse, 10 pigs, 16 hens; 6 workers out of family of 10.
- (iii) Farm with  $9\frac{1}{2}$  acres : 2 horses, 1 foal, 6 cows, 1 fat pig, 1 sow, 1 boar; 4 workers. The farm buys hay. Sells 10 quintals wheat.
- (iv) Farm with  $4\frac{1}{2}$  acres : 2 cows, 1 heifer, 1 horse, 2 pigs; 2 workers.

The number of workers were those living permanently on the farm and having no other occupation. These particular farms

were much above the average in the number of animals they possessed, the majority having only one cow. Imagine how under-employed six adult workers must be on a farm of  $5\frac{1}{2}$  acres which is growing ordinary cereals, with no market-garden crops requiring extra labour. The output of products for sale is meagre in the extreme and yet is all-important, so much so that in these villages only half the families can afford to eat their own pig. It has been estimated that in these regions the minimum area necessary to provide a bare minimum of food for the average family would be 7-8 acres, but actually half the cultivators have less land than this, and among these only a small percentage can augment their livelihood by working on estate farms.

Southern Poland (formerly Galicia) is admittedly one of Europe's blackest spots in respect of over-population. The soil is on the whole fertile, and the peasants' methods of cultivation are highly intensive, often reaching a comparatively high standard of efficiency, but owing to the excessive population density, the land is cropped too frequently with grain, and yields per acre have been decreasing for the past twenty years. If the population were reduced by half, South Poland, with its good soil and sufficient rainfall, would be a comparatively prosperous region for peasant farming.

A second belt of over-population is to be found in the mountain provinces of Yugoslavia. In this area agriculture can only be carried on in the valleys, the limestone mountains behind having long since been denuded of their soil. In the Lika valley, for instance, which before the war suffered from an acute water shortage, there is less than one acre of arable land per head.

'Yields are poor; the corn output is so small that there are no barns, and the corn is threshed immediately after harvest, being trodden by bullocks; livestock are equally poor, with very small Buza cows and a few sheep. There is only one pig to every two houses. Goats are gradually destroying the shrubs which grow on the Karst. The population lives in extreme poverty on the verge of starvation. . . . In this district there is really no prospect of improving the condition of the farmers in any way but by opening the land to grazing when it could support a few families.'<sup>1</sup>

Though the statistics are not very satisfactory, it would seem

<sup>1</sup> D. Warriner: *Economics of Peasant Farming*, pp. 136-7.

that during the last thirty years, both in Southern Poland and large parts of Yugoslavia the rural population has increased faster than agricultural output; in other words, output per man has fallen, and with it earnings per man. Each year the people plunge deeper and deeper into poverty from which there is no apparent escape. The children suffer from rickets and other diseases of malnutrition—almost every family has its cripple.

It may be wondered how this state of affairs could come about. It appears to be in part a result of an excessive rate of population growth, in part a result of the backward development of industry. In Europe as a whole, population about doubled in the course of the nineteenth century, but in the Western countries industries developed and absorbed most of the increase, while in the East no industrialization occurred, so that the whole increase of population had to look for employment in agriculture. For a time this increase could continue without causing an excessive density, since the plains of Hungary and Rumania had been depopulated by periodic invasions, and it was only in the mountain areas where population pressure was felt. In the pre-1914 period the younger generation from these regions emigrated in considerable numbers to the U.S.A., but after 1914 this outlet closed. While in Western Europe the rate of population growth has slowed down considerably, in the East the rate of increase declined only slightly, and remained almost three times as high as in the West in the years 1919-39.

It is always difficult, if not impossible, to provide any statistical measure of what is and what is not an over-populated area. So much depends on the intensity of the farming. Where plenty of capital can be invested in agriculture the density of labour becomes of little significance; for instance, in Belgium and the Netherlands, which are also densely settled, there is much capital in the form of livestock, which promotes high output per man. In Eastern Europe the land is really the peasant's only capital, except his working livestock—his horses or oxen. The land has to support two or three times as many people as in Western Europe with less capital equipment. Moreover, even the corn yields are much lower than in the West, partly for lack of livestock and partly on account of climate. To make matters worse, there is no correlation between high output per acre and high density of population. On the contrary, the regions of poor soil remote from communications are the most

densely settled and have the highest birth-rates. To farm efficiently in Western Europe it would appear that about six workers are needed per hundred acres of farm land. This is the density in Denmark, which has an extremely high proportion of its land under the plough. Probably in Eastern Europe a reasonable figure would be twelve per hundred acres, making allowances for the much lower level of technical efficiency; but over wide areas we find the density is from fifteen to twenty, so that it is not surprising to find a Bulgarian economist asserting that one-third of the Bulgarian rural population is unemployed. In South Poland and most of Yugoslavia the percentage is probably even higher.

Over-population has other serious effects, besides under-employment of labour. In the first place, it drives up the price of land. Under conditions in which the lack of land is the reason for the peasant's hunger, it is only natural that when he has, by dint of great self-sacrifice, managed to save a few pounds, his first thought is to acquire an extra piece of land. But because all his neighbours think the same way, the price of land reaches heights totally unrelated to its capacity to produce, and the peasant's savings will only acquire for him a very tiny plot. Nevertheless, he persists in aiming at this because he is anxious about providing adequately for his many children. It is a game which he must play, and one which he is bound to lose. As an indirect consequence, he has not sufficient money to acquire as much livestock as his holding might carry. Many are the farms in Eastern Poland which have no cow at all and where no milk is drunk except perhaps a little goat's or sheep's milk. One of the chief virtues of peasant farming, as opposed to capitalist farming, which has always been emphasized in discussions in the West is that the peasant's savings go to improve his holding either through purchasing more animals or increasing his use of artificial fertilizers or through other forms of intensification of production. In the East, where poverty makes it more difficult to save, every penny is invested in the acquisition of land, just as it was in the Middle Ages, though this, of course, contributes nothing to the improvement of farming technique.

Another unfortunate consequence of over-population is that labour remains so cheap that the introduction of labour-saving methods does not pay. Such a situation is not, of course, peculiar to Eastern Europe. There was a period in the later

nineteen-twenties when a large number of farmers in Northern France bought themselves tractors, only to lay them up after a year or two because it proved much cheaper to go on using manual labour. But apart altogether from tractors, over-population, by keeping farms down to a minute size, makes uneconomic the use of much less ambitious implements. On a farm of ten acres it does not pay to acquire implements such as a horse-hoe, a hay mower, a threshing machine and a reaper, which will each only be used for a few days in the year; indeed, in the districts of under-employment, the peasants bend their energies to discover more labour-consuming crops and labour-consuming ways of cultivation, and as long as there are too many people on the land this constant drag on technical progress will persist.

Although over-population takes its most acute form in Eastern Europe, where practically the whole area from Danzig to Istanbul is too densely peopled, and much too densely in the regions mentioned earlier in this chapter, there are parts of Western Europe which may also be considered to be over-populated, though to a lesser degree. For example, in the plain of Switzerland there are as many farm workers per hundred acres as in south-east Poland, and holdings are nearly as small; but because the intensity of farming is at an infinitely higher level, and because of opportunities for certain part-time employment in industry, the Swiss peasants enjoy a quite satisfactory standard of living. None the less, from their own point of view, having regard to what they consider a reasonable income, they regard shortage of land in their cantons as a real obstacle and feel they could attain a much better standard of living if they could farm wider acres. Very much the same may be said of the peasantry in Belgium and the Netherlands, which have a slightly lower density of agricultural population but where most of the cultivators could easily deal with more land if they could come by it. All these three countries, however, have already achieved a high degree of industrialization, so that they now have less than one-fifth of their population engaged in farming. Consequently, for them, the remedies advocated for Eastern Europe—namely, industrialization and intensification—offer little further scope. This is, of course, why the Dutch have felt it necessary to spend such large sums in making new land by the enclosure of the Zuider Zee.

The present war has created conditions which greatly

aggravate the problems of the over-populated areas. First and foremost, by destruction of the intensive livestock industries of Western Europe, it has lowered the intensity of farming, and so impoverished the small-scale cultivators. In Eastern Europe the poverty-stricken conditions of the worst regions are spreading to the more prosperous ones, inasmuch as the pig-fattening which was a lucrative enterprise in the Hungarian plain has had to be given up for lack of maize, which now goes into the bread, thus forcing farming back on to a cereal basis. Furthermore, in Hungary and Rumania a large part of the male population has been mobilized to fight for Germany, and this has been pushed to such lengths that insufficient labour has been left in agriculture to cultivate all the land, so that harvests have declined. Thus, the effect of the war is that the peasants have been further impoverished and have been driven back into still more primitive methods of farming.

What, then, are the remedies for this state of affairs? What is to be done with the over-populated regions after the war? Undoubtedly, the solution must be sought over a wide field; no single antidote will suffice. We shall, in later chapters, have occasion to discuss ways and means of intensifying the output from the soil and of upgrading farming efficiency. Our task in this chapter is to see what alternative occupations can be found for the population which remains truly surplus. However much these other remedies can be put into effect, it is, for instance, beyond question that large tracts of Yugoslavia and of Poland could not by any conceivable improvement in farming be made to support their present population at a reasonable standard of living. The only remedy in such districts—and these are not the only ones—is to find other work for some of the people either locally or, if necessary, farther afield.

This, of course, means industrialization. To some extent, beginnings had been made during the inter-war period. For instance, considerable industrial development took place in Czechoslovakia, copper and bauxite mines were developed in Yugoslavia, coal-mining and textile industries were expanded in Poland. Yet all these countries still have from a half to three-quarters of their population working on the land. Clearly, industrialization has not yet gone very far. Hitherto, the trouble has been lack of coal, which is only found in Poland and one corner of Czechoslovakia, but if, as seems likely, we are now entering an age in which electric power is replacing

coal, this disability should vanish. Opportunities for hydro-electric power schemes in Eastern Europe are enormous. From the rivers which have their source in the Carpathian, Transylvanian and Bulgarian mountains enough electric power could be generated to supply very cheaply the industrial needs of that entire area. But the scheme would naturally not be practicable for any one of these small countries acting alone. For technical efficiency it requires an area which overlaps several frontiers; moreover the financial cost would be too great for any individual state. Yet, without power, any progress in industrialization must inevitably be slow.

Accordingly, it would seem essential to set up some regional authority to establish a power supply for the entire Danube area. The slogan 'A Tennessee Valley Authority for the Danube Basin' has been coined, and, indeed, the analogy of the T.V.A. is peculiarly apposite. What is needed is a regional commission with powers to replan not only the power supply, but also the industries and the layout of agriculture in cooperation with the local governments of the area. We shall see in Chapter V the importance that this might have in the diversification of farming and the overcoming of climatic disadvantages, but its most immediate importance would be in facilitating the establishment of new industries.

What sort of industries can be developed? There is no reason why all these countries should not have their own textile industries, their own boot and shoe industries, their own chemical, dyestuffs and plastics industries, based on domestic raw materials such as lignite and cereal by-products, their own agricultural processing industries, their own timber- and paper-making, besides a further development of their own natural resources such as the mining of Yugoslavia. Moreover, given cheap power, there is no reason why these new industries should not be decentralized in a large number of localities. One of the reasons why any well-intentioned person in Britain involuntarily shrinks at the suggestion of industrializing a country is because he has a mental picture of Lancashire cotton towns and Durham mining villages. But the industrial development of the twentieth century has no need to be of this kind. It is much more likely to grow up in a decentralized pattern situated in a number of small urban centres, so that very often the workers could continue to live on their own farm holdings, just as they do, for example, in South-western Germany. There



would be admittedly in this a serious danger of exploitation, of creating a class of 'sweated home-workers'; to avoid it, far-reaching extension of workers' participation in control would be essential.

A corollary to planned industrialization of this type would be a better transport system. Eastern and South-Eastern Europe are poorly served by railways and by roads, and the provision of an adequate network should rightly be included among the tasks of the commission entrusted with the development of power resources. Again, improved communications will have beneficial repercussions over a wider field; they will make it possible for peasants in remoter regions to market perishable produce such as milk and vegetables, an enterprise which was formerly debarred to them. Better transport will also increase the mobility of labour and facilitate the transfer of surplus workers from more isolated districts where, as we have seen, over-population is most serious. The East-European peasant is not naturally peripatetic, even though some of his fathers and brothers have emigrated to the U.S.A. He will not willingly move to a strange district far removed from the stretch of country he knows. For this reason, it is all the more important that industrial development should be as decentralized as possible if it is to avoid unnecessary friction in the transfer of workers to new occupations.

The example of Russia may prove instructive in all projects of this kind, for the U.S.S.R., during the past twenty-five years, has been engaged on a very similar task. She set out to create a vast network of industries where none existed before; she transferred a large slice of her rural population, running to millions, to the new towns and taught them to become industrial workers. She has by this means not merely arrested the growth of population on the land, but has actually reached a point at which the numbers engaged in farming are beginning to decline. Indeed, one of the principal economic reasons why she has mechanized her farming to such a high degree is in order to accomplish food production with a much smaller labour personnel than in olden days. Of course, conditions in Russia have been somewhat different from those of Eastern Europe. There are few parts of the U.S.S.R. where the density of population is anything like so great; there are large tracts of new land which could be taken into cultivation for the first time. The whole of the increase in food output has come from the new areas, and has



**IV. WORK  
ANIMALS**

**1. HUNGARIAN  
OXEN**  
*(Paul Popper)*

**2. WATER  
BUFFALOES IN  
BULGARIA**  
*(Paul Popper)*

not been achieved by intensifying production in the old settled area. Consequently, on the farming side, conditions were less difficult than those which Eastern Europe will have to tackle. On the other hand, in achieving her industrialization Russia was particularly hampered by being unable, and possibly unwilling, to borrow money from abroad. All her new factories and plant had to be provided out of current savings. She had forcibly to restrict current consumption so as to divert an exceptionally large proportion of the national income to providing her new capital equipment. In short, the first fruits of reorganization had to be denied to the first generation of Communist workers so that the next generation might reap a true reward.

It is to be hoped that in Eastern Europe such privations will not be necessary; it is to be hoped that, for instance, the funds for a Danube Valley scheme might be obtained from abroad, and that, once power and transport services were being provided, foreign capital might be attracted to establish industries. In so far as this happens, the peoples of Eastern Europe will not need to have their consumption restricted. In Italy and Spain further industrial growth would greatly relieve the difficulties of the farm population:

It is important however to re-emphasize that the development of industry and communications, vital though they are, should not be regarded as the only panacea for over-populated agricultural regions. The problem has to be approached from several different angles simultaneously. A natural counterpart to new industries and new occupations is the intensification of farm production wherever natural conditions allow, which would give more work on the land. Much might be done by irrigation to increase the efficiency of grain-growing; it would be quite practicable, for instance, to raise grain yields in Rumania by fifty or a hundred per cent, and to develop pig-feeding to consume the additional maize. In the Southern Hungarian plain, the poultry industry, which expanded quite rapidly in the nineteen-thirties, might be put on a sounder marketing basis and expanded much further. In Bulgaria and the Vardar valley in Serbia, tomatoes, strawberries, and other fruits and vegetables might be more widely grown and marketed to canning factories using electrical power. In the next chapter we shall return to these methods in greater detail.

Yet another method of relieving overcrowding would be the

provision of more, or rather, better land. In the eastern part of Poland there are big expanses of land which if drained might be made into good grazing areas. Similarly, in Yugoslavia, Bulgaria and Greece there are stretches of hill country where grazing could be improved by the new technique of grassland improvement. These areas could then support more livestock and thus provide better incomes.

In all these ways, then, by industrialization, by development of communications, by land reclamation schemes, by introducing new and more varied types of farming, a wide diversity of occupations could be created for those who are redundant on the land. The preparation of these ambitious projects raises, of course, wider issues: where, for instance, is the necessary capital to be found? How can markets be secured for the products of the new industries? Questions of this character are highly pertinent and cannot be left unanswered; but inasmuch as they involve matters which we have not yet discussed, consideration of them must be deferred to later chapters.

## CHAPTER V

### BREAD OR MILK ?

WE cannot do better than begin this chapter with a practical illustration. Let us set down, side by side, the output of two typical farms: a farm of twenty acres in Holland and one of ten acres in Rumania.

#### *Net Value of Output*

(including produce consumed by farm household)

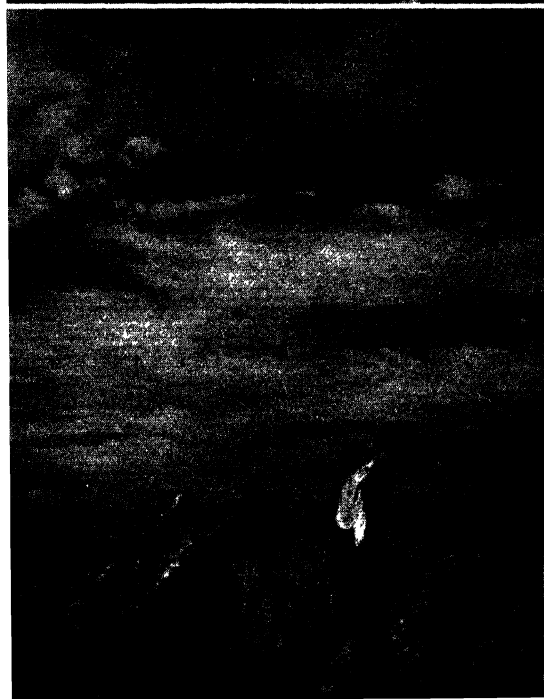
Holland.		Rumania.	
Milk . . . .	£160	Wheat . . . .	£15
Calves . . . .	40	Maize . . . .	15
Pigs . . . .	35	Pig . . . .	5
Miscellaneous . . . .	25	Miscellaneous	5
	<u>£260</u>		<u>£40</u>

Both farms have to support two active workers and three dependent children. The Dutch farm achieves its higher output by having seven cows and seven or eight pigs, whereas the Rumanian has no cow and only one pig.

In the last chapter it was argued that where the density of farm population is high, the only way to increase prosperity is by reducing the density *and* by increasing the output. It is with the latter that this chapter is concerned. The above example indicates one way in which output can be raised, and in fact the farming prosperity of North-western Europe has been built up this way, resting primarily on milk production, with pigs a poor second. But there are other combinations which also give high output per acre. The vine-growers of Southern France, for instance, can earn a good living off much less than twenty acres per family; some of the market-gardeners of Southern Italy, with their tomatoes, peaches and apricots, do the same. Clearly these are all types of farming appropriate to a crowded continent, and if we are right in believing that industrialization, at any tempo that appears likely, will only partly relieve the pressure of population, then everything possible must also be done to intensify agricultural production.

What are the chances? How rapidly can European farming be re-orientated in this direction? Let us first consider the argument so often advanced by the peasants themselves: they say, 'What is the good of producing more livestock products, fruit and vegetables? The markets are glutted, and the peasants already producing these things cannot obtain remunerative prices for them.' Now there is a certain truth in this contention. If the peasants of Hungary and Rumania were asked to switch over to dairying and market their produce in competition with Denmark, Holland and New Zealand, they could not do it. Their quality would be much lower while their costs of production would be almost as high, because, though their labour costs are lower, so also is their technical efficiency. Certainly there can be no future for dairying and market-gardening merely to compete in a world market which, in recent years, has in practice been the United Kingdom market.

But the matter must be examined from a wider angle. And here we must make a short digression to consider the *potential* demand for these 'protective foods' (milk, eggs, fresh fruit and vegetables)—so called because they protect the human organism against a whole range of diseases. Any serious examination of the customary diets of the peoples of Europe at once reveals how astoundingly deficient they all are in the elements essential to health and adequate nutrition. Even in Western Europe we find Belgium and France with a *per caput*



**V. NEW  
AND OLD**

**1. HARVESTING  
BY COMBINE:  
UKRAINE  
(E.N.A.)**

**2. HARVESTING  
BY SCYTHE:  
GERMANY  
(Paul Popper)**

milk consumption just half of what it ought to be; we find the farmers of Denmark and Norway eating margarine and selling their butter; we find the Germans eating about  $1\frac{3}{4}$  lb. of potatoes per head per day because they cannot afford milk, eggs and fruit.

In Eastern Europe the position is notorious. At least two-thirds of the daily caloric intake comes from cereals, and in the Danube basin the cereal consists for the most part of maize which is grossly deficient in vitamin B<sub>2</sub>. Milk consumption is infinitesimal except in the Czech districts and a few areas of Poland. Vegetables are fairly freely consumed in the fertile valleys of the south-east, but not in the mountain districts, while in Poland the 'vegetable' is potatoes—2 lbs. per head per day. Meat consumption is everywhere low, averaging  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb. per head per week in many of the countries, but much lower than that in the rural areas. Throughout Eastern Europe the diet is deficient in animal protein and calcium; in many areas it also lacks vitamins, notably A and B<sub>2</sub>. Diseases characteristic of malnutrition are as widespread in the mountain villages of Yugoslavia as in the industrial districts of Upper Silesia. The women lack the physique to bear healthy children, and infant mortality rates remain high despite substantial improvements in medical services.

Consider the magnitude of the need. In Eastern Europe and Italy alone there are 150 million people with an annual average milk consumption of something under ten gallons per head. To double it would bring it up to not quite the British level, which in turn is supposed to be only fifty per cent of the optimum. In Germany, France and Belgium there are another 130 millions whose milk consumption could and should be raised by at least fifty per cent, bringing it to thirty gallons per head: together an increase in demand of 2,800 million gallons, or the output of nearly ten million additional cows—making allowance for the lower yield per cow in East European countries; and even that is far below the level of consumption which nutritional experts recommend. (It is not assumed that all these countries could be brought to one and the same level. Obviously, in hot countries milk is a less convenient and less palatable foodstuff than in the temperate north. But while the south might reasonably consume less than the average mentioned, the north ought to consume more.)

Moreover, milk is not the only 'protective food', though

possibly the most important one. Meat, butter, cheese, eggs, fruit and green vegetables are all from a health point of view under-consumed in these countries. Each country and each district can attain an adequate diet by a different combination of the protective foods suited to its own tastes and its own local production; there is no need for uniformity, but there is need for improvement.

Very probably, comes the reply; but how is it proposed that poorly-paid factory workers and poverty-stricken peasants can afford diets of this kind? The answer, of course, is to be found in industrial development on the one hand, and in agricultural re-orientation on the other. As new industries are established, so urban purchasing power will expand; indeed, given a bold programme, it should expand rapidly and unremittingly. A substantial proportion of the increased incomes, as experience shows, will naturally be devoted to the purchase of foodstuffs, particularly the protective foods. It is only when industrial workers have reached an altogether higher income-level that increments to earnings go mainly on non-food items. At the same time the foodstuffs must be available in sufficient quantity and at reasonable prices. That will be agriculture's contribution, to be considered in a moment.

Put briefly, the plan for Eastern Europe is in two parts. One involves raising the productivity of industrial workers and providing a steadily increasing supply of consumption goods which the peasants want. The other involves a reorganization of farming, also greatly raising productivity and providing a bigger surplus of food than hitherto for consumption in the towns (and incidentally by the peasants themselves too). That is the plan. The problem is to create a hinge which shall link the two halves of the plan together. Contact being once assured, there is no reason why mutual exchanges should not continue in an upward spiral of prosperity.

It would be foolish to ignore the fact that this linking together often proves the most difficult step of all. Under *laissez faire*, maladjustments occur and do not quickly right themselves; under planning, miscalculations may have results as grievous. A conscious effort in adaptation is needed, and numerous devices may have to be concocted to keep the exchanges going.

One such device, capable of considerable extension, is the Stamp Plan, which has been successfully developed in the



U.S.A. It was originally launched to deal with surpluses of food, and has been operated as follows. Any person belonging to certain income groups (actually in the U.S.A. it was those in receipt of public assistance) may buy orange-coloured stamps in fifty cent units which may be exchanged for any food at any shop. Those buying orange stamps receive half again as many blue stamps free, which are also good at any shop, but only for foods designated 'surplus'. This system ensures that for the most part the foods obtained on blue stamps are really additional to the foods the recipient would otherwise have purchased. In 1940 some five million U.S. citizens were benefiting under this scheme. And in that year a Stamp Plan was also introduced for cotton goods—wear-the-surplus as well as eat-the-surplus. Plans of this nature need not be confined to crop surpluses, they can be adapted for use in a two-way exchange such as was envisaged above. Provided that industrial and agricultural development keep in step, there seems no reason why on either side goods should stock up; by means of Stamp Plans consumption goods, such as clothes and shoes, can be unloaded, if need arise, on the peasants while the increased food output of the peasants can be made available to the urban workers.

Other methods can also be developed. One which has worked well in Britain is the feeding of children in schools, first by the milk-in-schools scheme and later by the provision of full meals. This has the advantage of ensuring that extra supplies of the protective foods go to those who most need them—the rising generation. Another is the distribution of special foods for expectant mothers through clinics and health centres. Or again, the present war has seen the widespread organization of factory canteens, most of them providing nutritionally well-balanced meals far below ordinary restaurant prices. In all these and other ways a government which resolutely pursues human welfare can maintain a steadily rising consumption of foodstuffs and manufactured goods. Thus there need be no worry about the demand side of the problem. Given a minimum of intelligent administration, the foods will be consumed all right.

The other half of the problem is : can they be produced? Is it technically possible to switch the peasant farming of Europe to intensive cultivation? Is it economically possible? What sort of obstacles and difficulties stand in the way?

The first, undoubtedly, is climate. We saw in Chapter I how large areas of Southern and South-eastern Europe have too little rainfall at the times of year necessary to the growth of fodder crops; neither grass nor turnips flourish in Spain, Italy and Greece. The answer to this is that agricultural science has advanced much farther than agricultural practice, and that a considerable part of the areas hitherto deemed unsuitable to mixed farming can be transformed.

One technique is irrigation. If a Danube Valley Authority went into action it could probably arrange for the irrigation of some ten million acres in that basin—acres now so parched each summer that even the wheat and maize crops are precarious and fail every four or five years. Lucerne, the best fodder crop for such country, has already been introduced by some of the more progressive peasants of the Hungarian plain and forms an excellent basis for cattle-keeping. Beneficial if less spectacular irrigation schemes await execution in most of the Mediterranean countries too, and in parts of Poland. Much also depends on finding the right strains of grasses. For example, strains have now been produced which will make a good pasture on the sandy plain of Pomerania and East Prussia; others could perhaps be acclimatized to Andalusia and Sicily.

The animals to eat this fodder will not, of course, everywhere be dairy cattle, though the regions of possible dairying are not so limited as has been commonly thought. Yet there will remain many of the hotter corners of Europe where cows do not thrive. In these districts pig-fattening in the valleys and sheep-grazing on the hills are the natural adaptations.

There will remain a few districts in which fodder crops are not a practical proposition. These, if they are hilly country, may be capable of afforestation; if in the plain, they may be suited to large-scale grain-farming with occasional fallow or green crop ploughed in so as to maintain fertility. And there will be some areas with peculiar aptitudes for certain special crops, such as flax, tobacco, strawberries, which can be most lucrative forms of intensive cultivation. But over the greater part of Europe mixed livestock farming will be the predominant form, and the programme is to intensify by making the livestock side more important than the crop side.

Though the job may be technically possible, perhaps there are economic obstacles? It is often argued that the peasant living on a tiny plot cannot afford to introduce a fodder crop

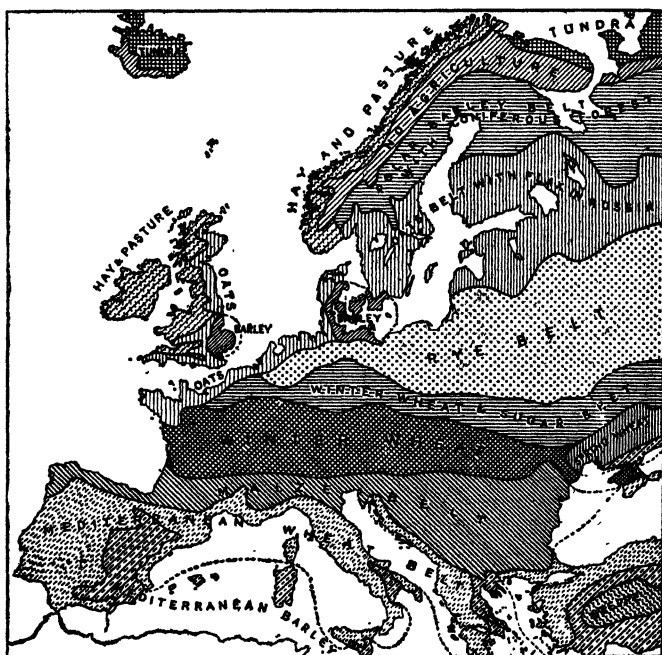
and sacrifice a part of his cash crops—in Eastern Europe wheat and maize. Consider the Rumanian peasant mentioned at the beginning of this chapter with his ten acres, of which, say, six are under wheat and maize, the output of four being sold. Now the introduction of two acres of lucerne will cut his cereal sales by half, which he cannot afford. For the very small peasant, though only for him, this presents a real difficulty. In some cases it may mean that the holding is really too small to support a family at any reasonable standard of living, and that two or three ought to be amalgamated, moving the surplus population to other occupations. (Over-population again!) In other cases the peasant may be able to develop some different line—*e.g.*, intensive pig-fattening on bought foods, so that he no longer relies mainly on sales of grain. Ultimately he stands to gain substantially by introducing a fodder crop, since the more soil-conserving rotation will greatly improve the crop-yields. It is the transition period that will be hardest when he first puts his crops in the feeding-trough instead of sending them to market. He may need help at that stage, perhaps in the form of credits for the purchase of animals, or subsidies for soil-improving crops, or stamp-plan schemes for the supply of cheap feeding-stuffs.

By shifting the emphasis of his production from grain to livestock products, the peasant sets his feet on the beginning of a road which can ultimately lead to prosperity in a way which cereals never can. Animal husbandry stimulates capital accumulation. A livestock farmer tends to put his savings into more livestock, and in this way, provided land be not too scarce, he can proceed from strength to strength, always increasing his productive assets. Under a grain-farming system the peasant's savings have no outlet except in buying more land; this does not increase productive assets, it merely raises land prices. The chief difference between the farming of Western and Eastern Europe lies in the much greater quantity of capital per head in the West, capital expressed partly in there being more land per head but mainly in the much greater holdings of livestock. This facility of capital accumulation constitutes the principal justification for the peasant system as opposed to large-scale mechanized farming by companies or collectives. If, therefore, for social and other reasons the peasant system is to be retained, let us see that it performs this capital-building function effectively.

There are other economic advantages in mixed as contrasted with pure grain-farming. For one thing the work is spread much more evenly over the year. Where grain is almost the sole enterprise the peasant family overworks from dawn till dusk at seedtime and harvest, but is largely idle for great stretches of the year. A dairy farmer is much more steadily occupied all the year round. And though there does not sound much in it to a layman, this spacing of work can be an important factor in increasing output per man.

Another advantage is the opportunity given to substitute productive for unproductive work animals. One of the great burdens of East European farming is the excessive number of work animals on the very small farms. A farmer who has a hundred acres can keep two horses and feed them without difficulty, but a peasant on ten acres finds that his one horse eats all the grain he can spare for fodder (and sometimes more, not leaving enough to sell), so that there is no grain left for fattening a pig. Until pressure of population can be relieved so that farms can be a little larger, it is essential that work animals should also be productive animals. For instance, in Switzerland, where in some districts the holdings are extremely small, the peasants are urged, not always successfully, by their economic advisers to use a cow for ploughing and other field cultivation. The effort of working, it is true, somewhat lowers the cow's milk yield, but the loss is small compared with the cost of keeping a horse.

So far it has been mainly the needs of Eastern Europe which have entered into the discussion. But even in certain Western countries, notably France and Germany, there is scope and need for a further shift of emphasis in the direction of live-stock products. Both countries have maintained their grain production artificially by protection; both still have an average output of foodstuffs per acre of £7-8, which is low by Western European standards; both could develop much more dairying for their own urban markets and thereby raise the prosperity of their peasants. Both countries have been not merely virtually self-sufficient in corn, but have had it produced principally by smallholders. Half the grain in Germany comes from farms under fifty acres in size; more than half France's wheat comes from farms producing less than ten tons each. In neither country is pressure of numbers so great or the average size of holdings so low that a switch to more fodder crops would be too



EUROPEAN CROP BELTS

*(With acknowledgments to Dr. Dudley Stamp and the Geographical Magazine)*

difficult for the peasant. All that is needed is a vigorous and constructive policy, one which on the one hand stimulates by sundry devices consumers' demand for the protective foods and on the other up-grades the efficiency of dairying among the peasants. In both countries, in order to reach a standard of living which Western Europe would consider reasonable, home-produced fodder will be insufficient for the level of intensity of output required. Both ought to budget for the importation of cheap feeding-stuffs as well.

We have now surveyed the ways in which farming can be intensified in Europe and output per acre increased. We have seen that there are no insuperable obstacles either on the side of demand or on the side of production. No doubt, economic maladjustments have prevented this sort of development taking place spontaneously. Indeed, such a suspicion is confirmed by

the fact that progress has hitherto been so slow. To expedite matters governments will have to take a hand. If they wish to promote peasant prosperity they will have to undertake a policy of agricultural intensification just as vigorously as a policy of industrialization. The two policies must go hand in hand. The transfer of labour into new industries cannot proceed so fast as to obviate the necessity for increasing output; nor can output easily be increased until some of the population pressure is relieved.

When the war is over the difficulties which formerly stood in the way of such changes will be much less formidable. Scientific discoveries of the last twenty years have made it far more feasible for man to master his environment. Just as the manufacture and distribution of hydro-electric power make industrial development possible over wide areas where it was previously inconceivable, so also the progress in plant breeding, livestock breeding and in irrigation technique, has now made possible quite revolutionary changes in traditional farming systems. The Hungarian plain need not continue to grow wheat, maize, wheat, maize, in perpetuity; the slopes of the Balkan mountains need not always produce only bad grass and stunted bushes. These things can be changed—for the better. The task may be gigantic; but the men are there, the knowledge is there. They only need to be applied to the job.

## CHAPTER VI

### ON THE FARM

**T**O decide what things the peasant ought to be producing is of fundamental importance, yet it is only part of our programme for food and farming in post-war Europe. Peasant prosperity will further depend largely on what improvements can be made in the technique of production and what security of prices and of markets he can be vouchsafed. This and the next chapter will deal with those matters.

The first thought entering the ordinary person's mind in any discussion of farming efficiency is the question of size. Fascinated by the analogy of industry and misled by the example of prairie farming in North America, the ordinary person tends to assume that the bigger the farm the better the

farming—at all times and in all places. This is plain nonsense. On the other hand, the continental agronomist has an equally ingrained illusion about the superiority under all conditions of the peasant farm. In truth, of course, optimum size depends on climatic and economic factors; no hard and fast rule can be laid down. Speaking generally, it may be said that the rapid mechanization of grain production in recent years has given the large unit an overwhelming advantage wherever cereals constitute the sole, or almost the sole, product. But nothing suggests that a 1,000-acre farm is likely to be any more efficient at dairying than a farm of a hundred acres. On the contrary, the most successful dairying the world has seen is run on the 50–150-acre farms of Holland and Denmark. As we have already noted, the peasant farm can be a most effective unit for capital accumulation, especially in the form of livestock, which in turn promotes further intensification of production, besides increasing soil fertility. In these respects it is a system especially valuable in a crowded continent. In actual number of acres the peasant ‘family farm’ may vary considerably—say, from ten acres (which, except in very intensive market-gardening, is much too small to keep the family fully occupied) up to 300–400 acres where the head of the family has to employ extra hands to help him in his work. For dairying it is the farms of over fifty acres which prove the more successful.

In Eastern Europe during the between-war period a great increase in the number of peasant farms was effected through ‘land reform’. After the last war the greater part of the large estates were divided up with or without compensation and allotted to peasant families; only in Hungary and the western provinces of Poland have the big properties survived. How far did the peasants benefit from this? In a social way the benefit was unequivocal: it created a more egalitarian society. But economically the reform only succeeded (*a*) where the country was suited to livestock farming and (*b*) where the agricultural density was not so high as to make the new holdings hopelessly small. These conditions obtained in the western provinces of Czechoslovakia and Poland. In Rumania and Yugoslavia they were absent. The reform too often created peasant units in grain-growing areas where large-scale methods should have continued, or in areas so overcrowded that each family had not enough land to provide a basis for animal husbandry.

However, that is of the past. The problem is whether any further land reform should be undertaken, or, more generally, whether any conscious modification of units of existing size is desirable.

In one country of Central Europe, Hungary, there is a special problem of farm poverty due not to the existence of over-population—since Hungary is already half-industrialized, and has a comparatively low rural population density—but to the inequalities of the land-owning structure. About forty per cent of the land of Hungary is owned by a few hundred families, while the bulk of the farm population, between three and four millions, are either landless labourers or 'dwarf' peasants with holdings of under one acre. Peasants with farms above the minimum subsistence area are a small class. The prevalence of very large estates—farms of 5,000 acres worked as one unit are not uncommon—keeps Hungarian farming too extensive and too one-sided. The estates concentrate almost entirely on grain production, and are able to pay starvation wages to the agricultural proletariat because the supply of labour (at least in peace conditions) exceeds the demand. Yet if the estates were divided into medium-sized peasant farms, a much greater intensity of production and a much higher standard of living could be achieved. In some regions of Hungary, particularly the maize-growing Southern Plain, a 'corn-hog' farm type could develop, based on pig-fattening with subsidiary poultry production, vegetables and fruit. At the end of the war, if a revolutionary movement sweeps away the Hungarian ruling class, it might be well to plan the reform of Hungarian farming on the lines of the medium-sized intensive peasant farms, rather than to indulge in doctrinaire collectivization experiments which lost the revolution before and would do so again.

In the other eastern countries, in so far as there is to be livestock farming, which we hope will be very much more widespread than formerly, there seems every reason, both social and economic, for retaining the peasant family farm. In these districts the task will be not to subdivide but to prevent further subdivision and to regroup some of the quite uneconomically small 'dwarf holdings' into more manageable units. These dwarf holdings—*i.e.* those under five acres, almost all of which are too small to support a family—are simply a reflection of over-population and can only be eliminated to the extent that population pressure is relieved. It might be well to copy the



Danes and prescribe by legislation minimum sizes below which farms might not in future be subdivided.

But what is to be done with the areas unsuited to fodder-crops and livestock? How are the purely grain-growing areas to be farmed? As long as the agricultural density remains at all high, any equalitarian share-out of the land must lead to units absurdly small for cereal farming. But the advantages of large-scale production, in the use of machinery and so on, could be attained by farming the arable acres of the village in cooperation. One set of machines and implements could do all the work of the fields in much less time than individuals working their separate strips, and it would relieve the peasants to a large extent of having to maintain unprofitable work animals. Some such solution is probably the only practical possibility in the districts of especially low rainfall. Arrangements of this kind sprang up spontaneously in a few villages of the Dobrudja and Bessarabia already before the war. In view of the strong tradition of communal life among Southern Slavs, there is likely to be support for some form of collective cultivation in the Balkans. For instance, the Agrarian Party of Bulgaria (in opposition to the present dictatorship) includes voluntary collectivization in its party programme.

Where cooperative arable cultivation proves impracticable the peasant's land must at least be conveniently located. At present the reverse is the case. Owing partly to an unhappy transition from the collective open-field farming of the Middle Ages to the individual ownership of the nineteenth century, and partly to continental inheritance laws which prescribe equal division of property among all the children, the farm land of Europe is for the most part a mosaic of microscopic plots (see p. 43). We noted in Chapter III what a tremendous obstacle this system presents to any attempts by individual peasants to improve their farming methods, how time-consuming in journeys to and from the plots, how great a source of friction with neighbours. It is no exaggeration to reckon the strip system as the biggest single curse afflicting European farming to-day.

So far, comparatively little has been done to change it. After the last war, the French Government, in rebuilding the devastated areas of North-east France, consolidated the strips and established reasonably homogeneous farmsteads. But already twenty years later the effects of inheritance subdivision

were becoming apparent and the area was resuming its old appearance. Clearly, no regrouping scheme has much value unless accompanied by legislation which in some way limits the cultivator's right again to split up his land. In other parts of France, and in other countries, notably Switzerland, the Netherlands and Germany, efforts were made to grapple with the problem, but the work proceeded slowly and only a negligible proportion of the afflicted acreage was taken in hand.

This programme must be resumed and vigorously speeded up immediately after the war, otherwise there can be no progress in farming and no improvement in peasant welfare. The aim might well be in each country to tidy up over a period of, say, twenty years, all the worst afflicted land—*i.e.* in Western Europe some twenty to thirty per cent of the whole agricultural acreage, and in Eastern Europe a higher percentage. Such an operation could rightly be regarded as a public works project the pace of which could be accelerated or retarded according to the state of employment. It would be useful not merely in the period of demobilization when some time may inevitably elapse before men can be assimilated back into peacetime occupations, but also in later periods of business recession. The proposed time-spread of the programme may appear to some unduly long, but actually twenty years is an extremely optimistic target having regard to the formidable difficulties involved.

The most awkward initial obstacle will be the opposition of the peasants themselves. Experience in France has shown that as long as regrouping remains voluntary and cannot be carried out except by a majority vote of the village, little progress is made. Each cultivator is too anxious lest in the process of exchange he will come off worse than before. Each is convinced that his own particular strips are the most fertile or in some other way the most desirable strips in the village, and this, in his mind, far outweighs any paper advantages which he has never experienced and which therefore he counts for little. Yet experience also shows that where compulsion has been used the peasants quickly come to prefer the new arrangement, appreciate its benefits and express a determination, however imperfectly fulfilled, not to let the fields revert to their former condition. Undoubtedly, the governments of the new Europe will do best by being bold and ruthless.

In addition to peasant opposition, technical difficulties and a variety of subsidiary activities are involved. In regions where the village is a tight agglomeration of houses, it is not enough just to regroup each man's property into a single piece; for the more distant land new farmhouses have to be built adjacent to the plots, and families persuaded to move out from the village. This has been done in Switzerland and South Germany and, though it adds greatly to the expense, it proves the only satisfactory way of replanning the village. This conclusion is confirmed when consideration comes to be given to modernizing the farm buildings. Often the village street is so congested that by no ingenuity can modernized cowsheds, pigsties and hay-barns be fitted in. Regrouping and rebuilding, therefore, go hand in hand. At the same time there will almost certainly be new roads needed, either to provide access to the newly grouped fields or to replace existing roads which mount the hillside at too steep a gradient, making two horses necessary for ordinary loads which one cow ought to be able to draw.

A piped water-supply may often most conveniently be brought to the village in the course of these upheavals. Though beginning to be widely introduced in the villages of the West, it may seem a utopian proposal for the East. It unquestionably would be for some districts where water would have to be brought from a long way. Nevertheless, plenty of pure water easily accessible in house and cow-byre is a *sine qua non* of hygiene in the dairying of the future.

From all this it will be readily understood that regrouping is a long job and an expensive job. To tackle it on any adequate scale requires an army of surveyors, agricultural advisers, road and water engineers, house designers and builders, as well as organizers who acquaint themselves with and endeavour to meet the needs of each individual peasant family. Yet the job is worth while, and, indeed, of the highest urgency.

Another item which cannot be omitted from any programme for the future of farming, and one which may or may not be linked with regrouping projects, is rural rehousing. In many areas the houses of peasants and almost everywhere the dwellings of hired agricultural labourers ought to be pulled down. Not a few of the labourers' dwellings in Germany and Hungary offend in their own ways against modern concepts of health quite as much as the worst urban slum. Some consist of a single low room with one small pane of glass, with no

ventilation save the draught under the door, a floor of beaten earth, and beds of wooden boards covered with straw mattresses. In contrast to this one may find in some districts, for instance Northern Switzerland, houses on quite small ten- to twenty-acre farms which are attractive, spacious, modern cottages, with large windows which open, water laid on, proper heating stoves, electric light and cooker, and not infrequently a tiled bathroom. Actually there is no reason why something approaching this standard should not be rapidly realized throughout the whole of Europe. Labour will be plentiful, and building materials—either stone or wood—are available in almost every locality. Rehousing would be one of the biggest and least expensive contributions which the State might make toward raising rural conditions nearer to urban levels. And with rehousing of human beings goes, of course, rehousing of animals: cow-byres and pigsties with ventilation, washable floors, and water laid on.

Our next question is: mechanization? What scope will there be for introducing mechanical methods into the farming of peasant Europe? Hitherto the use of agricultural machinery has been primarily associated with grain-farming by prairie methods, notably in the New World and the U.S.S.R. This type of farming, with its low money output per acre, is, as we have seen, quite unsuited to a crowded continent, and fortunately there are comparatively few districts in Europe where soil and climate make it the only way of dealing with the land. Hitherto, also, the impulse to mechanize has come largely from the high price which had to be paid for agricultural labour. (An exception has been the U.S.S.R., where, however, mechanization was part of a State plan, not the result of untamed economic forces.) In most parts of Europe it has been unprofitable to mechanize to any considerable degree owing to the low rates of agricultural wages. In Hungary, for example, a few of the big landowners used tractors and quite a large number operated steam ploughs, but both were kept for reasons of social prestige; most of the landowners freely admitted that to hire more labour and purchase more ox-teams would have been far cheaper. As a general proposition, therefore, the speed at which farming can be mechanized will depend on the speed at which surplus labour can be transferred from the land to other occupations and at which agricultural wages can be raised. It would be unwise to force the pace of mechanization

so that it gets out of step with progress in these other spheres.

As for the types of machinery which will be needed, the colossuses of the Russian steppes—multi-furrow ploughs, 40-h.p. tractors, and sixty-foot combine harvesters—will find little employment in Europe, which, from the point of view of space and elbow-room, must be considered as one gigantic metroland. Smaller editions of these machines will be wanted in those few regions where irrigation proves impracticable and where grain production continues as the chief farm enterprise. Not that each ten- or twenty-acre peasant should have a tractor or even a reaper-binder; nothing could be more wasteful. That is precisely why the peasants in these areas should be strongly encouraged to develop cooperatives for farming their arable land in common, as already suggested above. Probably the best way to overcome peasant dislike of such an innovation would be to get the scheme successfully working in one or two villages and then give the widest publicity, in the form of leaflets and wall-notices, to the economic benefits obtained, at the same time urging the peasants of neighbouring villages to visit the experiment and satisfy themselves on the spot.

There is no inherent reason why this cooperative technique should not spread further to arable-dairying and arable-pig-fattening regions. In this case, the livestock would be in individual ownership, thus providing each peasant with a basis and opportunity for gradual capital accumulation by additions to his herd, whilst the growing of food and fodder crops would be undertaken in common, thereby securing the advantages of large-scale operation. Such an arrangement would also ease some of the characteristic labour difficulties: it would allow for that individual attention which has been proved so essential to successful animal husbandry, and it would provide for the peak moments of work in the fields a pool of casual labour—the womenfolk and older children of the village—much larger than would be available to any individual cultivator.

It has been said by some that the need for economizing labour by mechanization of arable farming will only arise when the rural population density has been so much relieved that individual holdings would be able to be of a reasonable size, as they are in Denmark, and that then each peasant would have enough land to undertake his own ploughing economically. This argument rather neglects the peculiar features of farming

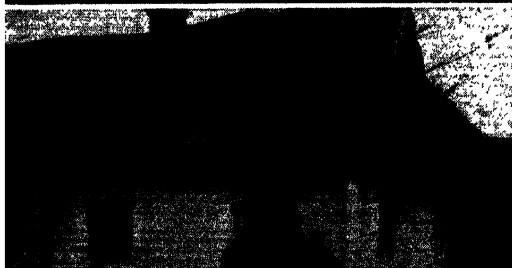
in Eastern Europe. In that area the labour-requirement peaks for the spring and autumn cultivations are more intense than in the West owing to climate—autumn and spring are not seasons but brief interludes of two to three weeks between winter and summer. Mechanization would help to smooth down these peaks and by ensuring prompt completion of cultivations would make for better harvest yields. Moreover, it is possible to develop a substantial livestock industry, as the experience of Belgium and the Netherlands shows, even while the population density remains high and the average size of holdings so small that rational arable farming is impossible. After all, if the policies outlined in this book were to be developed in Eastern Europe, great parts of that area would begin to look, in some respects at least, like the Low Countries; and who can doubt that, in such circumstances, the cultivation of the fields could be much more advantageously undertaken in larger units?

But it is not only, nor perhaps even chiefly, in the field of arable cultivation that we must expect to find the greatest scope for mechanization in a peasant continent like Europe. It is rather in easing the humdrum tasks about the farmhouse and farm buildings. If the first era of agricultural machinery was characterized by size, the second era on which we are entering appears to be devoted to evolving small machines for the small man. The advent of the small, cheap petrol engine and the small electric motor has brought mechanical power within reach of a very small purse. Consider all the barn machinery developed in recent years: the chaff cutter, the root slicer, potato sorter, wood saw, hay elevator, smallest threshing machine, water pump, liquid manure pump, fruit or oilseeds press, milk cooler, milk separator, perhaps even milking machine for the larger-scale peasant. Outside he may have a cheap hay mower which has replaced the scythe throughout Western Europe, electric clippers for his sheep-shearing, a small motor-plough (specially useful in market-gardening) to which a hoe or harrow may be harnessed and which can even do duty for the horse in taking loads to market. Not that all these appliances can immediately be put within reach of the peasantry of the poorer regions. They are mentioned to show that the future for farm machinery in over-crowded Europe may be in these comparatively inexpensive implements which an increasing number of cultivators will be able to afford.

Scope for these machines may be found particularly in parts of France, Germany and Italy, where the family farm is a rather larger unit and where the peasants have somewhat more purchasing power than in Eastern Europe. In the East they can only be introduced more gradually as the standard of living rises and labour becomes less absurdly cheap.

In many other directions, too, there are great opportunities for developing efficiency: in securing the use of better seed and more manure, in improving the quality of the animals and introducing more modern methods of feeding them. During the present war the government in Rumania is distributing early-ripening wheat and maize seed, which are of the utmost importance in preventing a harvest failure, but the amounts available still cover only a small fraction of peasants' total requirements. Nothing has yet been done about dung and fertilizers. In many Eastern European countries dung is used for fuel instead of on the land; in some it is used as building material for pigsties. Even in the West the methods of collecting and conserving dung, in France for example, are primitive and involve an enormous loss of plant nutrient; the liquid manure is often not saved at all. Yet the liquid-manure cart which, despite its offensive odour, contributes so much to the phenomenally high grass and hay yields in countries like Switzerland, should be a regular feature everywhere. As for artificial fertilizers, their use in Eastern Europe is practically unknown. Germany is said to have stimulated fertilizer consumption in Poland since her occupation, in order to get surplus crops for her troops; but the quantities used are still insignificant in relation to the whole area farmed. Considering how little nutrient of any kind is put back into the land it is surprising these Eastern countries do not get even lower yields.

That the quality of cattle needs improvement can be judged from the fact that yields of milk per cow average some 200-250 gallons per annum in Eastern Europe compared with about 700 gallons in Denmark and the Netherlands. It will be a long uphill task to improve these herds. Much can be accomplished by the creation of local cattle-breeding cooperatives, by a State system of licensed bulls and by gradual introduction of milk-recording. Some beginnings have already been made in these directions, but all efforts will be retarded as long as the peasant cannot afford to feed his animals adequately, and continues to house them in dark, unventilated hovels.



## VI. RICH AND POOR

1. PEASANTS IN  
HUNGARY  
*(Black Star)*

2. PEASANTS IN  
BOSNIA  
*(Warriner)*

3. PEASANTS IN  
POLESIA  
*(Warriner)*



Many States will see fit to allocate funds for these various purposes. They will decide to subsidize the purchase of tested seeds and artificial fertilizers, the building of manure tanks, the purchase by village cooperatives of high-quality bulls, and so on. Such moneys, wisely expended, will yield an enormous dividend in increased efficiency. And they are innovations of which the peasant is slow, at any rate at first, to appreciate the advantage. In Chapter VIII we discuss proposals for making the peasant more receptive to new knowledge and more capable of applying new methods intelligently, for, fundamentally, any attempts to upgrade technical efficiency will fail miserably unless and until the operator, the human material, has been upgraded too.

In the present chapter we have seen what can be done and what ought to be done 'on the farm'. The conclusions are, first, that the peasant farm is a suitable economic unit for the intensive cultivation which must be practised in Europe, though in several regions cooperative cultivation of arable land would be beneficial; second, that the strip system must be abolished and, by legislation, prevented from ever reappearing; third, that a great housing campaign is needed to modernize farmhouses and farm buildings; fourth, that as regards machinery, Europe will be primarily interested in the smaller implements and motors, of which an increasingly wide range is available; fifth and last, that by subsidies and other methods much can be done to spread the use of good seed, sufficient fertilizer, higher class animals and more up-to-date methods of animal husbandry. A positive policy vigorously pursued in all these spheres over a period of ten years would utterly transform the efficiency and the well-being of Europe's peasant cultivators.

## CHAPTER VII

### MARKETING

**I**N the last chapter we sketched out certain proposals which might improve the efficiency of food production and enable the peasant to attain a larger output of better-quality produce with less expenditure of effort. But efforts at real improve-

ment in this direction will be of little avail if the peasant is unable to secure satisfactory markets for what he produces. In the modern world it by no means follows that commodities which have been efficiently produced can be sold for remunerative prices, even if consumers in the same country or in other countries urgently need them. In the present chapter we shall be concerned with the home aspects of market security, and while we shall say a good deal about State planning and guarantees of stability it must be remembered throughout that more valuable even than security will be the expanding market generated by policies of full employment and adequate nutrition.

There were two kinds of ups and downs which in pre-war days afflicted the agricultural producer. One was the whole complex of fluctuations in world prices. Those whose output had to face competition, whether at home or abroad, with the produce of all five continents, found that over a period of years the price which they received rocketed about in a manner which bore no relation at all to their own output or to the demand of the consumers for whom they catered. The price which the Rumanian peasant obtained for his wheat was determined by the rainfall in Manitoba or the psychological tone of Wall Street.

But even those producers who enjoyed a sheltered market at home experienced annoying and, to a large extent, unnecessary fluctuations in prices. Fruit-growers, for example, found that when nature provided a bumper crop the prices obtainable hardly covered the costs of picking, whereas in years when prices were really attractive they had no produce to sell. Of course, some price movements are necessary to reflect shortages and surpluses, but the peasant had a not entirely unjustified suspicion that legitimate fluctuations were greatly exaggerated by the unsatisfactory nature of existing marketing arrangements.

Besides these price fluctuations, another disability of the peasants, particularly in the more remote regions, has been lack of marketing facilities. It makes, for instance, an enormous difference to the profitableness of milk production if the bulk of the milk can be sold in the liquid market instead of being made into butter and cheese, but in regions such as the south-east of Poland most villages have no facilities whatever for disposing of the milk they produce, and their general level of

well-being contrasts with villages where collecting depots have been established. Similarly, for butter, cheese and market-garden products, if no organized system of grading and packing has been built up, the peasant is likely to get a much less favourable price if all he can do is to peddle his wares in the weekly town market.

Already during the inter-war period governments had developed policies over a wide field with the object of shielding the peasants from these economic ups and downs. In the more industrial countries they introduced or completed already existing schedules of import duties, supplementing them by quotas and numerous other devices. It may be remarked in passing that even the political parties representing the industrial proletariat were for the most part in favour of protectionist policies, since they feared low wages more than high prices; in other words, they were more anxious lest the agricultural worker should be displaced and offer himself on the urban labour market than that the cost of foodstuffs to the urban consumer should be kept high.

The State also tried to introduce greater stability into the home market by establishing systems of fixed prices for certain commodities. Thus, in France, after 1936, all wheat was bought through the State Grain Office at a fixed scale of prices, and for some years prior to that the growers of sugar-beet had already arranged to work on a contract system with the factories which took their output. The more *laissez-faire* governments went little further than this, but others, notably the German, went in for one hundred per cent planning and control, and built up a system of fixed prices for every stage from producer, wholesaler and retailer down to the consumer, for every product and for every grade of product. This gave both the farmer and the distributor complete security and relieved them of all anxiety in finding profitable outlets for their wares. The Dutch Government attempted a system of price and output control nearly as comprehensive as the German. But the Netherlands encountered grave difficulties owing to their position as exporters of foodstuffs; while they kept their internal price at a level which, from the producer's point of view, was fairly profitable, they were obliged to sell the surplus for what it would fetch on world markets and to finance the loss out of taxes on consumption.

During the war the operations of government control have

been widely extended in the countries under German domination. The peasants, owing to the increasing difficulty in obtaining consumption goods which they need, and owing to the uncertainty of the times, have more and more attempted to hold back or hide their produce, and this has forced most European governments to decree the compulsory surrender of the most important crops, such as bread-grain and potatoes, and even, in areas such as the Czech Protectorate, the compulsory surrender of a stipulated quantity of meat from each holding. By asking for security and stable prices, the peasants have brought upon themselves a great deal more: a vast number of forms to be filled up, inspectors to placate and fines to pay for infringements of regulations of which they often have not known the existence. Hence, it seems reasonable to expect that by the end of the war the cultivators of Europe will have an intense dislike of governments and all their works—even before the war the relationship was hardly cordial—and they will be firmly opposed to all schemes of planned production in so far as these involve individual quotas assigned to each farm. They quite naturally expect the community to guarantee them their fixed profits; they are unwilling to guarantee the community a fixed quantity of output in return. They all cling tenaciously to the idea of fixed prices, since they will want a guarantee against fluctuations, whether due to internal or external causes, but they will not readily understand that a régime of fixed prices cannot easily be maintained without some control of quantities too. It is in this that post-war governments will have to show some ingenuity, evolving schemes which cause the least friction between the organizing authority and the farming population.

What then are the sort of marketing arrangements that States will need to devise in the interests of their peasant populace—in addition, that is, to providing an expanding market for protective foods? This may best be answered by glancing briefly at some of the practical problems that arise. One is how to handle crops which naturally fluctuate tremendously from year to year. Perhaps a useful example may be quoted of a co-operative fruit-marketing organization in Central Europe which to a large extent managed to solve this problem. Members of the cooperative brought their fruit to the depot, where it was graded and then sold by auction. On days when there was a scarcity and dealers were willing to offer a price above the

legal maximum (the State had fixed maximum and minimum prices for different classes of fruit) the available produce was shared out among the dealers at the maximum price in proportion to their purchases over a previously agreed basic period. On days when there was a surplus and the price threatened to fall below the legal minimum, the canning and jam factories were called in and required to buy all surplus produce at the minimum price. It may have been a little difficult for the factories to absorb all this glut of supplies satisfactorily, but, apparently, the wastage was not such as seriously to affect the price of jam. In this way these growers achieved a certain security, the price of their product oscillating within comparatively narrow limits. They were also relieved, of course, of the task of grading and packing their produce, a task that can always be better performed by some larger organization, very often a cooperative.

Another problem which has to be tackled is the allocation of transport costs. If a series of prices is fixed for a commodity like grain in various provinces of a country, and another series of prices for flour province by province, it may well happen that there will be some provinces to which no dealers can send any grain and sell it at a profit owing to the incidence of freights. The only practicable way of overcoming this difficulty is to have pooled freights for the entire country, such as the English Milk Marketing Board has had. This, however, in turn entails an important disadvantage: it means that there will be a lot of unnecessary transport, since there will be nothing to discourage the commodity from being grown an unnecessarily long way away from where it is wanted for consumption. For example, the recent change in contracts of the British sugar factories, by which the price is now fixed free on rail instead of free at factory, encourages sugar beet to be grown at excessively long distances from the factories. The State can, of course, partially remedy the matter by artificially creating price-zones and so discouraging the production of bulk commodities in remote districts. This is rather a clumsy weapon, but it is probably the best that can be used if the State wishes to maintain a régime of fixed prices.

Whether or not the State goes on from here to fix retail prices, and even further to obtain control over the export and import trade in food and feeding-stuffs, will depend more on the economic philosophy of the State than on any need for safe-

guarding peasant welfare. In the immediate post-war period, with all the difficulties of readjustment and of restoring adverse trade balances, most governments will be obliged to exercise some degree of control over foreign trade. The need to allocate scarce foreign assets for purchases for relief and reconstruction will of itself foster the development of techniques of control in inter-State trading relations which were not known before the war, and having once acquired these techniques some governments will feel it wise to maintain them for the sake of insulating their national economies from the economic storms of the outer world.

Another adjunct to marketing control which may play a considerable part in the future is the system of stamp plans already mentioned in Chapter V. If the State is prepared to take responsibility for seeing that, as far as its own country is concerned, there will be no poverty in the midst of plenty, and if it is determined to get surplus commodities into the hands of needy consumers, then it will have to make a number of unorthodox incursions into the realm of distribution. American experience has shown that the stamp-plan type of scheme can be operated without any interference with the rights and interests of the distributive trade. Moreover, there is no reason why such plans need be limited to commodities which are temporarily superabundant. As already suggested, they could equally well be applied to a two-way exchange of food-stuffs on the one hand and manufactured goods on the other.

A more difficult question is how far the State itself should determine the acreages which are to be sown to particular crops. No doubt a great deal can be done merely by influencing the farmer through schemes of subsidies which encourage soil-conserving—to use an American expression—as opposed to soil-depleting crops. But if the State wishes to go further and establish an ever-normal granary in, say, an article of export, it may have to resort to definite acreage allotments for individual districts, leaving it, perhaps, to local farmers' cooperative organizations to share out quotas among individual farms.

Turning from these more general considerations to the individual needs of the peasant producer, some special measures will, no doubt, be necessary in conjunction with the schemes for intensifying agricultural production outlined in Chapter V. It is useless to encourage peasants to develop dairying unless adequate arrangements are made for collecting and processing

their milk. Whereas in countries of moderately large farms, such as Denmark, the cooperative dairy can collect direct from the farms of all its members, in countries of smaller holdings and where the livestock density is less, some intermediate form of milk-collecting depot may be needed. The idea would be to have in each village a depot to which the milk was brought morning and evening after milking and where it could be strained and cooled. Particularly in backward areas where peasants have not had much experience in modern dairying, it would be unreasonable to expect the standards of cleanliness necessary for reliable treatment of the milk on each individual holding and it would be uneconomic to install cooling machines on vast numbers of very small farms. These things, for a time at any rate, are better done in some central place and under supervision. Similarly, with butter- and cheese-making, experience shows that a high and reliable standard of quality can only be obtained when reliable and clean milk is processed under modern hygienic conditions. This means removing as rapidly as possible the making of butter and cheese from the farms to the dairies.

Developments of this kind, unless undertaken gradually, may arouse considerable peasant opposition. The peasant would distinguish little difference between such regulations and the systems of Communism and Nazism which he has learnt to fear. But to the extent that measures for rationalizing dairying can be organized as far as possible from below upwards rather than from above downwards, and, preferably, through bodies of the peasants' own making whether called cooperative or not, there is more likelihood of new ideas winning acceptance. There is a striking difference between the vigour and efficiency of the Danish cooperatives for butter-making and bacon-curing which are organized from below, and the analogous German institutions organized from above.

It is comparatively easy for those few European States which have already developed strong cooperative movements to develop towards a planned economy by using the cooperatives as an instrument of State policy, by working through them and relying on them for the execution of the general plan. Elsewhere, the position is more difficult. In a country like France, for instance, cooperation has been confined to activities such as agricultural credit, livestock insurance and local schemes for the supply of water and electricity. Cooperation has not been

developed on a national scale for the processing and marketing of foodstuffs. Elsewhere, cooperation has been developed, but only in respect of a few particular commodities—for instance, fruit-canning and pulp-manufacturing in Bulgaria.

But the State which wants to guide and control economic development cannot afford to wait until a cooperative movement has grown up. Indeed, in the conditions of the mid-twentieth century it is by no means certain that they will grow up, as there is no longer the same impetus to cooperation that there was fifty years ago. On the other hand, the State can still less afford to lose the benefit of local enthusiasm and local initiative expressed through the peasants' own organizations. A government which is in too much of a hurry to organize a community for greater efficiency may kill more than it creates. The peasant, of all classes of the community, will least put up with large doses of bureaucratic interference and will only give of his best when also given responsibility.

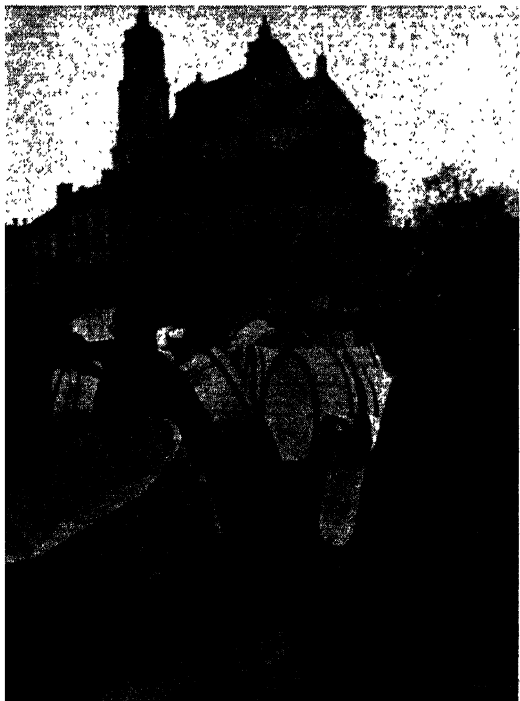
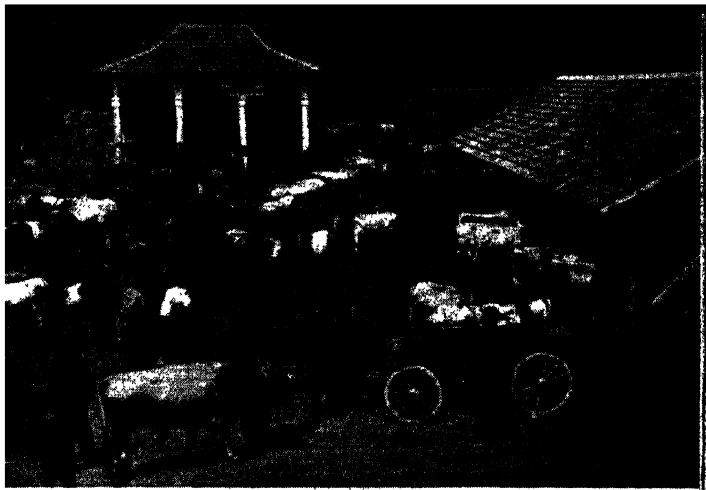
The task of the future will be to marry State leadership in the realm of agricultural policy with local wisdom in the execution of that policy. There must be a central plan, but administered locally by bodies which are left as free as possible to choose their own methods. This problem of organizing farming is fundamentally the same as the problem of government, and involves, as in the case of government, a right balance between authority at the centre and responsibility at the periphery. For example, in the sphere of dairying, it may be for the State to plan how much liquid milk and butter it wishes to have produced, and the State may determine what proportion of the output should come from each regional province. The execution of the task might, for the rest, be left to local organizations which would be responsible for the running of individual dairies and for milk deliveries by the peasants. To run the dairy as a branch of a national butter-making cartel is less likely to make for efficiency and less likely to awaken the interests of the local peasantry in that dairy's progress and prosperity than if it is run by a peasant committee of management responsible to the peasants themselves. Its production programme can be part of the State plan; its day-to-day administration will be the concern of the participating producers. Similarly, the State ought to lay down standards of hygiene in the handling of milk, and of quality in butter production, with, perhaps, different grades to allow for conditions



in different regions. It would then be the task and ambition of the local dairies' management committee to raise their business into a higher grade which would perhaps earn them a better remuneration for their product. Incidentally, it would be desirable for the State to appoint national inspectors rather than local ones, so that the requirements of a particular grade of cleanliness and hygiene would be uniform throughout the country.

In these various ways there are opportunities of organizing a planned economy without losing those indispensable factors, local knowledge and local goodwill. Some States, such as Germany and Italy, will emerge from the war with a far too centralized system of control; there the task will be to revive local initiative and delegate more responsibility to local bodies. In other countries, such as Bulgaria, there will be a strong formerly-established peasant movement through which the organization of processing and marketing can be operated. What has been envisaged throughout this book and in all the proposals put forward has been not a static and bureaucratic mechanism, but a vigorous and dynamic policy of progress—of expansion in demand for protective foods, of increase in output of intensive products—a policy planned by the State but depending for its success on the spontaneous and freely-given services of the peasantry themselves.

There are also wider aspects of marketing policy which will have to be considered. In particular, the problem of export markets, how far an interchange of foodstuffs and manufactured goods can be organized by the countries of Europe among themselves and what arrangements can be introduced for achieving greater stability of the volume and value of such trade. This, however, involves more far-reaching questions of the relationships of Europe's farming communities with those of overseas countries and is deferred for consideration in Chapter IX.



## VII. THE MARKET

1. CATTLE IN  
BULGARIA  
*(Paul Popper)*

2. WILNA MARKET  
*(Polish Ministry  
of Information)*

## CHAPTER VIII

### EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

**M**ORE is expected of the farmer than of anyone else in the community. He has to be a skilled worker, prepared to turn his hand successfully to all the manifold jobs which crop up on a farm; he is supposed to be versed in modern scientific methods, which nowadays involves a working knowledge of half a dozen different subjects; he is presumed to be capable of managing a business, though he is the smallest-scale and least well-paid entrepreneur in the state; finally, to make up for smallness in size, he is expected to exhibit unselfishness and community spirit in a marked degree by cooperating with his fellow cultivators in a variety of ancillary enterprises.

Rather more than half the adult male agricultural population are in charge of holdings and are presumed to have, in some degree, the qualities enumerated above. Yet would it be reasonable to expect anything approaching the same range of qualities from half the adult male industrial population? What is surprising is not that a large proportion of the peasantry show themselves unfitted for so much responsibility, but that any considerable number at all make a success of farming—and quite a number do. If, as we have advocated, the peasant system is to be retained in Europe as the dominant type, that means the continued existence of several million small entrepreneurs, and it follows that very special efforts ought to be made to fit them for their exacting vocation.

What has been done up to the present in the way of rural education can be summarized briefly. Universal elementary education was not brought to the rural areas of Western Europe till the beginning of this century and to some of the Eastern countries not till after 1920. The deficiencies are broadly similar everywhere: insufficient teachers, often all the children of school age taught together in the same class, dingy, unrenovated buildings, lack of equipment, lack of medical attention, widespread successful evasion of the last year or two at school.

This régime has been supplemented in most countries by a system of agricultural education in three grades. The primary

grade consists of continuation classes devoted to agricultural subjects on two or three evenings a week in the winter months. The courses may be given by teachers from the agricultural 'middle schools' or sometimes only by the village school-master who is expected to instruct in simple botany, natural history, the principles of plant-growth and the elements of animal husbandry. The secondary grade consists of farm schools where in a two-year to four-year course an attempt, usually much too ambitious, is made to lay the foundations of a scientific understanding of agriculture. Chemistry, mathematics and physics are taught; zoology, entomology and veterinary hygiene. The highest grade is the agricultural college, at which the student takes a diploma or degree in agriculture and from which he proceeds either to the civil service or to the teaching profession, but rarely back to farming.

Such, in broad outline, is the provision made in such countries as France, Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands, though each has its own special variants. Similar systems, somewhat less complete, have been built up in Italy and Eastern Europe. Considered as a whole, they have been singularly unsuccessful. For the substantial sums which each State has paid out for this technical instruction the tangible dividend in the shape of increased intelligence, culture and efficiency among peasants has been low indeed. Everywhere, it is agreed, agricultural science is far ahead of agricultural practice, and no satisfactory methods have been devised for imparting that knowledge to the peasantry. The only changes which have been made in recent years have tended to increase the academic flavour of agricultural education: more subjects, longer hours, more examinations.

But, as has been hinted in Chapter III, the real trouble lies farther back. To quote the opinion of one master in a French agricultural school, which was re-echoed in similar words in many other places: 'It is impossible to instil any knowledge into pupils who come straight from elementary schools; their minds are so unformed that they cannot grasp the subject matter put before them.' It is *general* education which is lacking. It is no use forcing adolescents to learn parrot-like the formulae of chemistry unless they have previously acquired a notion of why knowledge is useful, a curiosity about the outside world and a desire to master something of the science of farming.

This sounds utopian, and it certainly cannot be achieved in the few brief years before a child leaves a country school at the age of thirteen. But if we glance for a few moments at how the Danes have solved this very problem, it may provide some guide as to how the future of agricultural education should be tackled.

In Denmark the farmers and smallholders have attained a higher general average level of culture and intelligence than anywhere else in Europe. They appear to have achieved this not by concentrating on better and better post-primary education, but by the unorthodox step of postponing the secondary education of the farm population until after adolescence. The Danish Folk or People's High Schools, and likewise the agricultural schools, do not accept pupils under the age of eighteen. Bishop Grundtvig (1783-1872), founder of the People's High Schools, maintained that 'in time of adolescence the young must not be shut up with pen and book and ink without any relation to practical life and nature. The best schools in these dangerous years of a man's development are the workshops of good artisans and the farms of clever farmers, where he can get an actual interest in the calling he is afterwards to follow.' This may not be sound modern educational theory, but it has worked with the rural population of Denmark. It has meant that children go out at fourteen and have contact with ordinary workaday life, and then decide from their practical experience whether they crave any further education, and, if so, of what kind and in what subjects. They can then go to a Folk High School or an agricultural school with some set purpose and an explicit desire to learn.

The second unique feature has been the curriculum of the High Schools themselves. Instead of providing merely an abbreviated, emasculated form of college training, the High Schools set out to substitute for book learning 'the living word'. There were to be no examinations. The students were forbidden to take written notes. When one of them protested, Christian Kold, the first headmaster of the first High School, replied: 'Don't worry, it is like that which happens out there in the fields. If we put drain pipes into the ground we must mark the place in order to find them again. But when we sow grain there is no need to drive in pegs, for it comes up again. You may be sure that whatever you have listened to with pleasure, whatever has found good soil in you, will certainly

come up again when you have need of it.'<sup>1</sup> There can be no doubt that the freshness, spontaneity and lack of learnedness in the lectures attracted the peasants; the vivid, pictorial method of approach to history and literature was a method they could understand. The schools have been criticized, particularly in recent years, for having created a certain superficiality and half-learnedness, but against this must be set the fact that they have aroused the people's curiosity and imagination, that they have stimulated thought and encouraged further reading.

The third and perhaps the most fundamental feature of the High Schools was their pronounced Christian basis; indeed, the whole High School movement was part of a Christian revival. In their lives as well as in their lectures the High School teachers have emphasized that a good life matters more than much learning, that deeds and behaviour count for more than words, and that 'love thy neighbour' means being as solicitous of your peasant neighbour's welfare as of your own. The Movement taught duties as well as rights; it made students conscious of the community in which they lived and alive to their responsibility for its well-being. That is largely why the cooperative movement took such good root and flourished so splendidly in Denmark. It grew up in a generation whose minds had been prepared less for gain than for service, whose watchword was 'community before self'.

It would be foolish and untrue to assign to the High School Movement all the credit for the intelligence, alacrity and technical proficiency of the average Danish peasant. Another factor, noted earlier, has been the extremely egalitarian character of Danish farming and Danish social life which made everyone feel equally eligible for knowledge and which enabled cooperation to develop smoothly. The cooperatives, too, have themselves added much by instituting breeding societies, milk-recording societies, book-keeping societies, and so on. Nevertheless, the High Schools have been the main formative influence, and though in setting up Denmark as a model and example one is inclined to exaggerate her good qualities and turn a blind eye to her failings, yet, with all possible qualifications, that influence is one which would be of the utmost value if only it could be reproduced in other countries.

But we cannot simply wave a wand and say: let there be a

<sup>1</sup> Begtrup, Lund and Manniche: *The Folk High Schools of Denmark*, p. 104.

great religious stirring in country  $x$ , let Folk High Schools emerge and let the people become devoted to the pursuit of knowledge and of each other's welfare. Institutions of this character are not articles for export. We cannot, if we would, reproduce elsewhere the historical and economic circumstances of mid-nineteenth-century Denmark. What then can we do? What kind of policy can be formulated which will produce good citizens and good farmers?

There is no need to apologize to the reader for stressing first and above all the need for some religious or ethical basis. Merely to make everybody proficient in pursuing self-interest and profit will not make a happy world. Yet if, as seems the case in most countries, Christianity no longer possesses the compelling force it had in Grundtvig's day, some other moral appeal must be found instead. The totalitarian States have fostered the concept of the State or 'the Community' to which everyone must dedicate his life and work: the German Nazis coined the slogan: '*Gemeinnutz vor Eigennutz*'.<sup>1</sup> The Russians also have instilled into their people 'community before self', though, until forced into the present war, their 'community' or 'State' was a much less militaristic entity than the German. There would seem to be no harm in urging the citizen to put the State's welfare before his own, provided that the State is pursuing good ends, not bad ones, and provided that the State is not over-deified. Indeed, a spirit of community service ought to be even more compatible with democracy than with totalitarianism. Whatever form the moral sanction may take, its re-introduction into education is an urgent need. Modern economic society, particularly planned economic society, cannot work smoothly unless citizens have their sense of duties as fully developed as their consciousness of rights. Nor can peasant farmers cooperate together successfully. In an occupation like farming, with its millions of individual proprietors whose private interests must inevitably from time to time conflict, it would seem more important than in any other walk of life to foster good neighbourliness and devotion to the wider service of the community as a whole.

The second distinctive feature of the Danish system which probably deserves to be tried out elsewhere, is the injection of a period of practical work after primary education is completed. It is quite certain that primary schools as they exist today, at

.<sup>1</sup> 'Common welfare before private benefit.'

any rate in rural areas, do *not* fit their pupils for proceeding immediately to a period of technical training, and no reform of primary education has yet been suggested which would remedy this. Hence post-primary technical education is largely wasted. To be realistic we must admit that the village school of the Continent achieves no more than rather imperfect instruction in the 'three R's', part of which is quickly forgotten. In view of this, is there not much to be said for giving the adolescent his next span of experience in practical daily work? At this age are not 'the best schools the farms of clever farmers'? Why not postpone the next period of learning till the youth has found out through his work the kind of things he wants to learn? It has been argued that a break of two to three years between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two, even if the school courses last only half the year, may be too inconvenient for a young man who is just beginning to take responsibility on the farm. Yet the principle has been accepted almost everywhere for military service; and if youth can be taken at that age to learn to defend his country, why should he not also be taken to learn to work for his country?

Assuming that a State has decided to postpone the second phase of education till about the age of eighteen, the question arises: should the courses then offered be technical or general? Should there be agricultural schools or high schools? The answer probably is: both. There will be sufficient variety of inclination and aptitudes to make the provision of both worth while. There is ground, however, for believing that the majority of young people will gain more, and ultimately be better farmers, through choosing a general rather than a technical course. At any rate in Denmark the proportion of farmers' sons attending Folk High Schools has always been far higher than the proportion attending the strictly agricultural schools. Those who merely learn facts and figures soon forget them, but those who learn how to learn and acquire a taste for knowledge are in some measure equipped to go on educating themselves for the rest of their lives. What is wanted is for some characteristically agricultural country like Poland or Bulgaria to initiate a bold scheme of high school education for its entire rural population. The experiment should bear rich fruit.

What should the curriculum be: Here again a lesson may be learned from the Danes. It is no good offering young people



of eighteen or nineteen who have been earning their living for the past four or five years an ordinary 'secondary education' such as prepares for school certificate and matriculation, or their continental equivalents. Firstly, young people who left school at fourteen can only slowly acquire the art of learning from books; secondly, their chief interest tends to be in subjects more closely related to life than those of the 'secondary' curriculum. Those teachers will arouse the keenest interest who start from the actual experiences their pupils have had—on the farm, at the market, in reading the newspapers, and in listening to the radio. They will probably use direct methods—the radio and the film—more freely than hitherto, and will only gradually introduce the art of self-education from books at the final stage of training. There should perhaps be, optionally, some agricultural instruction at these High Schools, besides the courses at the agricultural schools; there should certainly be instruction in civics and in those aspects of economic affairs which will affect peasant farmers in their after-lives.

Apart from the other Scandinavian States which have to some extent copied the Danish system, there is scope in every continental country for experiments along these lines. As regards the already existing technical training, it is the agricultural 'middle schools' which have proved least satisfactory. The age of entrance to these ought to be raised from fourteen to eighteen and at the same time the syllabus should be radically simplified and made more practical.

But the tasks of education and guidance do not cease with the end of adolescence or with a visit to a Folk High School. The need for the continued dissemination of advice to farmers throughout their working lives has been generally recognized, and almost all European countries, to meet this need, have organized so-called 'agricultural advisory services'. For our present study the essential question is: how far have these services succeeded and what changes, if any, are to be recommended?

As organized up to the outbreak of war, the services ranged from the general, jack-of-all-trade advisers employed by the State, and attached to the local government authority, as in France, to the specialist advisers in crops, dairying, horticulture, book-keeping, etc., engaged and paid by the farmers' own cooperative societies, as in Denmark. Besides visiting individual farmers who desire assistance, these advisers

organize demonstration plots (to show the advantages of right use of fertilizer and selected seed), they contribute to the local farming press, they give lectures, in some countries they inspect the winter schools, in others they inspect fertilizers and feeding-stuffs to see that advertised quality content is observed, in yet others they act as agents for the government in administering agricultural subsidies. Not unnaturally those who are asked to perform all these functions find it difficult to perform any of them adequately.

Moreover, it is not easy to gain the peasants' confidence and get them to ask for counsel. The great majority, especially of the smaller-scale cultivators, distrust 'agronomists' and dislike being visited. Experience shows that distrust and dislike are most in evidence where the advisers are State employees and are men with a somewhat academic approach to farming problems. Peasants are most impressed by a man who has farmed successfully himself, preferably in their own locality, and above all by one whom they themselves have selected and whose salary they themselves cooperate to provide. In short, the most effective advisory services have been those growing spontaneously out of the farmers' own organizations, not those provided by the State.

This gives us a clue to plans for the future. Not that the State should stand aside from any provision of advice until farmers themselves build up a service. It cannot afford to desist so long. The task is rather one of transforming the character of those services which are too much State-controlled and of choosing advisers more in touch with day-to-day farming problems. It might, for instance, gradually transfer the selection and appointment of advisers to farmers' organizations, at the same time requiring from the cultivators a small contribution towards the cost of the service; for though the main burden of financing education and advice rightly falls on the State, farmers will be more readily induced to seek advice if they have been asked to share in its cost.

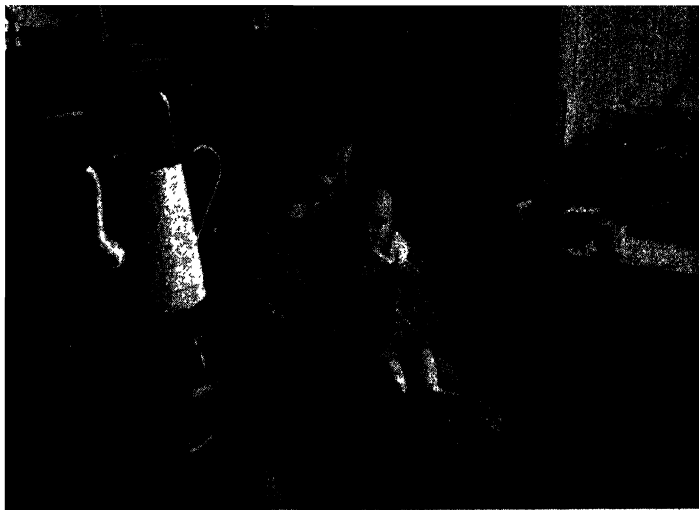
In most countries the number of advisers has hitherto been hopelessly inadequate. Considering the large number of records which the conscientious adviser keeps and the multifarious duties he has to perform, he cannot be expected actually to visit more than a very few hundred holdings in the course of the year. Now in Denmark there is one adviser, of some kind or other, to every 700 holdings, but in most other countries the

proportion is not one-tenth, no, not one-hundredth as high. If it is contemplated that European farming will continue to be run, for a time at any rate, by millions of small-scale producers, the extent of whose knowledge and training will inevitably be limited however successful any reforms in education may be, then it is absolutely essential to have an efficient and widely popular service of advisers, men versed in the problems of their district, men who have fully won the confidence of their clients.

In Western and Central Europe, where farms are larger and a greater portion of the output is marketed, one of the advisers' most useful functions has been the promotion of the habit of book-keeping. This, characteristically, has spread most in countries where the advisers are popular and trusted, notably in Denmark, the Netherlands and Switzerland. In Denmark nearly one in every twenty farmers keeps accounts; in France only a few hundred out of millions. Yet more than anything else book-keeping shows a farmer how to make the most of his resources, how much fertilizer it pays to buy, what feeding-stuffs it is best to use, at what age cows should be discarded, and so on. It is a technique which quite small-scale and simply-educated cultivators can acquire, as Swiss experience shows. It is one which after the war will have to be spread far more widely, particularly in the Latin countries and in Eastern Europe.

Yet when all has been said about the value of book-keeping and learning to think in money terms, the fact remains that the future of farming prosperity does not lie solely or even mainly in an appeal to self-interest, in promising to help each farmer to maximize his individual profit. In an industry such as farming, with such a multitude of small producers, it is more than ever true that the well-being of each lies in the welfare of all. The peasant community will progress not to the extent that each fights for himself, but in the measure that each learns to cooperate with his fellows; together they can attain objectives quite beyond the reach of any one acting alone.

It should be the purpose of rural education in the post-war era especially to foster this spirit, and especially in those countries where an obstinate individualism has characterized peasant life. The moral content will be as important as the technical content. The Danish Folk High School movement and the Danish cooperative movement, which together have



## VIII. HOME AND CHURCH

1. BELGIAN PEASANTS' KITCHEN (*Black Star*)
2. SLOVAK PEASANTS AT PRAYER (*Paul Popper*)

contributed so much to their rural prosperity, both had their roots in a deeply experienced religious revival. To generalize such a spirit might, it is hoped, result from the educational proposals put forward in this chapter.

## CHAPTER IX

### EUROPE AND OVERSEAS

WE have travelled through many lands since we came down from our mountain at the end of Chapter III. We have discussed many problems and sketched out various solutions. There remain to be considered certain matters of external policy: the relationships of European countries with each other and the relationship of Europe to other continents. Let us set out for another mountain, choosing this time a Pyrenean peak whence we can look across the Atlantic to the Americas and consider how Europe is to be fitted into a wider world-picture.

The impact of the outside world on European farming will be felt immediately any post-war relief schemes begin to come into operation, and will at once raise important problems of adjustment. But before considering these we must ask: how will European agriculture look at the end of the war?

It has been the Nazis' aim to make Europe self-sufficient in food supplies, but all they have been able to do is to secure self-sufficiency in *bread* supplies, and that only at a very low level of rations; they have not been able to grow fodder as well as bread-grain, consequently livestock numbers—farmers' most treasured capital—have had to be cut down. Even crop production has been subnormal: shortage of seeds and fertilizers, too drastic mobilization of men from the land, requisitioning of farm horses, lack of repair parts for implements and of all miscellaneous requisites, have contributed to a general reduction in crop yields. South-east Europe has ceased to provide grain surpluses for Germany because too many men were sent to the front and because the peasants, being unable to purchase consumption goods, have lost interest in producing more than they need for themselves. The Ukraine has failed

to become the granary of Europe because the Russians removed the tractors which alone can cultivate those vast areas. Europe's food output, even when the voracious Nazi armies have gone, will be insufficient to cover even minimum rations. It is impossible to visualize how serious will be the breakdown of essential services and food supplies, but even if some measure of order be maintained there will be millions of people close to starvation to whom the United Nations are pledged to bring immediate relief.

The Allies will have to rush in large supplies of wheat, meat and fats; dried milk and cod-liver oil for the children; medical supplies and clothing; possibly vehicles for food distribution and the necessary petrol to run them. Meanwhile European farming will be urgently requiring the essentials for its own rehabilitation, and concurrently with the importation of relief supplies the Allies will have to take to Europe, so far as shipping allows, seed for resowing the land, breeding stock for reconstituting herds, fertilizers, machines and implements of all kinds to replace what could not be replaced or repaired in wartime, and last but not least feeding-stuffs for the half-starved livestock. The Allies will eliminate the wartime distinctions of food standards which the Nazis have built up—one diet for the masters, another much lower one for the conquered peoples. Their principle will be to relieve where the need is greatest, without distinction of race. Obviously the practical application of this principle will involve many real difficulties; there will be competing priorities between claimant countries and different commodities; but probably 'the only hope of achieving rough justice in the allotment of priorities would be as far as possible to regard Europe as *a whole* from the beginning'.<sup>1</sup> There will have to be one single agency responsible for buying, for shipping and for distribution; also for such intra-European trade as is still possible, otherwise there may be a recurrence of situations such as at the end of the last war when Vienna was starving while Slovakian and Hungarian peasants could not sell their grain and butter.

There is not space here to enlarge on the problem of relief. What must, however, be emphasized is that the operation of relief schemes will almost immediately raise long-term pro-

<sup>1</sup> Royal Institute of International Affairs: *Relief and Reconstruction in Europe*.

blems of European and world trade. With the peasant's delight at being able to obtain things denied him for so long, there is likely to be mingled a fear lest the overseas countries exploit the occasion of relief to snatch from him markets which he had counted on keeping as his own. To have access to articles from abroad will be very welcome, says he, but may not the flow become a flood? Will not the overseas exporters attempt to go on sending their foodstuffs to Europe after the immediate relief period has ended, at prices with which the high-cost European producer cannot possibly compete? Have not United Nations' statesmen, in the U.S.A. for example, publicly deprecated the tariff policies of Europe? and will they not attempt, in the commodity control schemes which they intend to establish, to insert clauses reducing the protection granted to, say, the wheat and sugar-beet growers of Europe? The protected peasants of Western Europe—in countries such as France and Italy—will fear lest pressure will be exerted to cut tariffs and force them out of business; the even more poverty-ridden peasants of Eastern Europe will fear for their export markets, knowing that hitherto unrestricted competition drove the prices of their export articles down to starvation levels.

From the peasants' point of view, the one attractive feature of Nazi domination has been security of market. The price was fixed in advance, and whatever the peasant produced he could sell at that price. It would be difficult to overestimate the value which he attaches to security of this kind. He will expect the régime of guaranteed prices to continue, and he will count on the maintenance of much the same *level* of prices as before. To him it will seem anomalous that on the one hand the United Nations profess such solicitude for his welfare whilst on the other they appear to insist on trading arrangements between Europe and overseas countries which threaten rapidly to ruin him. The peasant of Western Europe will be unimpressed by the arguments of nutritionists and agricultural economists that he ought to abandon (protected) wheat growing and devote himself to livestock farming on the basis of imported feeding-stuffs, for he cannot change his farming system overnight, and meanwhile, so he argues, he will be plunged into poverty. Equally, the peasant of Eastern Europe cannot agree that his export of cereals, even if produced at high cost, is uneconomic, for what else can he sell to obtain the minimum necessary cash? As for livestock products, even if he could produce

them, which he cannot as yet, who would be able to purchase them? These arguments contain a substantial element of truth, and they will undoubtedly carry much weight with governments whose task it is to reconstruct peasant countries.

Nor is this the end of the argument. There is another consideration, of overriding importance, which governments will have to take into account. When the war ends many European countries will face a large adverse balance of payments, and though some of them may for a time be recipients of relief on lease-lend terms, sooner or later they will have to try to balance their accounts. Put in general terms, this means boosting exports and restricting imports, or, as far as agriculture is concerned, for Western Europe a curtailment of imports of food and for Eastern Europe a desperate struggle to expand exports of food. The governments concerned will not see how these particular objectives could be achieved by a policy of lowering trade barriers all round. The West will want to pursue import restriction by means of tariffs or quota regulations; the East, being unable to stand in open competition with overseas grain, will want to seek markets for her produce through bilateral agreements—with other debtor countries.

It is essential that European countries should not be forced into solutions of this kind. Otherwise we shall drift into an era of restrictionism worse than anything of the inter-war period. Special measures can and must be taken to redistribute the shares of international trade and to bring trade balances into equilibrium again with a minimum of delay. (This will involve some international machinery for clearings and for readjustment of foreign exchange rates.) Once equilibrium is restored the emphasis in international trade can again be on expansion.

But the expansion of the future must be correlated with a positive programme for European farming. It would only arouse hostility to adopt a negative approach towards the peasantry, saying: 'You must stop growing the things of which you are a high-cost producer; you must give up wheat and cease cultivating sugar-beet.' That, if put into practice as matters now stand, would merely aggravate rural poverty. The peasants of France, for instance, have adjusted their technique over a period of many years to a certain structure of costs and prices, and they cannot quickly or easily alter the character of their output, determined as it largely is by the layout of their farms, the buildings and the equipment.



The positive and constructive approach will be for European governments after the war to say to their peasants: 'It is by intensification of agricultural production, coupled in some cases with relief to overpopulation, that your welfare can be improved; we will therefore initiate schemes which will make it increasingly possible and attractive for you to go in for live-stock farming and horticulture. Because of the assistance in money and in kind which we shall give on the production side and because of the remunerative prices we shall guarantee for the final product, you will more and more eagerly devote your efforts to these lines of production and will become progressively less interested in and dependent on the crops which can never yield you a reasonable livelihood'. Get the peasants moving busily in the direction in which we want them to go, promote a high degree of new activity in intensive farming, and then the problems of high-cost products and overseas competition will fall into place.

There can be no question but that ultimately, as the farmers of France, Germany and Italy intensify their cultivation and become principally interested in livestock and horticulture, they will wish to import cheap feeding-stuffs on a large scale, just as British and Belgian farmers do. Equally there can be no question but that the governments of those countries, whatsoever they may be after the war, will strenuously resist any proposals which demand a *sudden* reversal of their traditional policies; for suddenly to remove, for instance, all import duties on grain would merely bankrupt many hundreds of thousands of cereal producers and, instead of giving them a chance to turn to dairying or some other farm enterprise, would drive them out of agriculture altogether. The essence of successful change is gradualness. Remembering that we want a positive not a negative programme for European farming, the agricultural policy in countries such as France, Germany and Italy should be to make the intensive enterprises so attractive and profitable that the peasants of their own accord increasingly give up growing grain for sale as being insufficiently remunerative. In short, the change should be effected not by beggaring half the peasants but by deliberately increasing the prosperity of the other half.

The possibilities for more intensive production depend in turn, as we saw in an earlier chapter, on policies designed to promote urban prosperity and a rise in consumer demand for

the protective foods. Given success in this sphere, livestock production can be expanded and, as that proceeds, the disparity between domestic and world prices of such commodities as wheat and sugar can be progressively reduced.

If that is the line of development for the erstwhile protectionists of Western Europe, rather different problems arise for the grain-exporting countries of Eastern Europe. However energetically schemes be put in hand for intensifying their farming systems, they will still for many years to come need an export market for their wheat and barley. These are commodities for which, in contrast to the protective foods, there is unlikely to be any expansion in consumer demand, since the decline in cereal consumption in countries where bread is too much eaten will not be offset by the small rise in demand for grain as fodder. Indeed, the long-term trend in demand for these cereals will probably be downward. By what means can a measure of market security be vouchsafed to the peasants during this interim period? One method will undoubtedly be the development of international commodity-control schemes. Already a provisional scheme has been formulated for wheat. When it comes to be more permanently established after the war, the countries of South-east Europe will have to be granted a fair share in the export quotas, and no doubt they will press for the establishment of maximum and minimum prices so that they may have some insurance against a repetition of the wild fluctuations of the inter-war period. But this will not be enough: it leaves out the most essential item—namely, the size of world exports as a whole. There is no great value in having a fixed share in a market if the market itself may at any moment suddenly disappear. There must be some undertaking by grain-importing countries not to reduce their imports suddenly, but to spread gradually over a period of years any changes they feel compelled to make. Whether they control their trade by tariffs or by quantitative regulation, they might undertake not to increase duties or decrease permitted quantities by more than  $x$  per cent in any one year.

But while the marketing of wheat may be facilitated by arrangements of this kind, most of the agricultural products traded in Europe will not be the subject of international commodity controls, at least not for some time. What can be done about these? Undoubtedly, the only real way of securing the maximum advantage both for peasant producer and for

urban consumer would be to establish something approaching free trade in Europe. The republics of the U.S.S.R. and the States of the U.S.A. enjoy very important advantages by being each members of a great Customs Union. Their farmers specialize from region to region in different products, exploiting to the full the local variations in soil and climate. The U.S.A., for instance, has its cotton belt, its corn-hog belt, its wheat belt, its dairying belt. Similar freedom to specialize within a wide market is essential to agricultural progress in Europe. We saw in Chapter I that the different European farming regions in no way correspond with national boundaries. We saw in Chapter IV how the development of the Danube basin necessitates a big regional scheme overlapping several frontiers. In the same way, to secure adequate markets for East and West alike, for Rumanian barley and equally for Danish butter, Europe needs to be treated as a single unit.

She will certainly have to be treated as one unit in the period of dislocation and relief immediately following the war, and it may not be too much to ask that, as the work of the relief and reconstruction organizations begins to come to an end, some central All-Europe organization should be retained for specific economic functions. One of its tasks would be to see that the no-tariff feature of the relief period was continued, at any rate as regards essential foodstuffs, and to prevent the reimposition of import duties. The adherence of France, Britain and others with imperial responsibilities could be secured provided they were allowed to accord similar tariff concessions to their overseas territories. Not that the aim should be to fence off Europe (plus imperial territories) from the rest of the world by a specially high tariff. That would be contrary to all the principles of expansionism by which world prosperity can be developed. A comparatively low schedule of duties should suffice. It is sometimes urged that to create another large free-trade bloc of Europe in addition to the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. would be to sow the seeds of economic warfare. This appears an unduly cynical view. If an immediate jump to world free-trade be considered impractical, as it must be, then surely one low tariff for Europe as a whole is better than twenty tariffs round twenty European States.

No too-exclusive emphasis, however, should be laid on the tariff issue. Even with no tariffs at all, nation-States can nowadays find innumerable ways of protecting their producers;

in fact, these other ways are becoming the rule rather than the exception. In pre-war Britain, for example, though no duty was levied on imported wheat, home producers received a higher price financed out of a tax on flour-milling. The subsidy may be still more indirect—*e.g.* grants for ploughing-up grassland, special payments to producers on marginal land, cheap distribution of fertilizers, rebates on transport costs, and so on. In many European countries there are devices such as these which would keep internal agricultural prices much above the world level, even if import duties were abolished. Moreover, peasant farming has become adjusted over the years to these particular price levels, and any attempt suddenly to reduce them to a uniform basis would cause, as has been pointed out earlier in this chapter, dislocations of the gravest character. It can, and should, however, be the aim of policy *gradually* over a period to reduce these inter-State artificially maintained price differences. Efforts in this direction will be quite as important as efforts toward preventing the re-establishment of European tariffs. In both cases success will depend in large measure on the degree to which agricultural activity can be fostered in other enterprises. The more that expansion can be engendered, the less the need for protection.

The question of trade is not the only one which raises inter-State and inter-continental problems; there is also the question of migration.

If difficulties such as the above have to be anticipated in the evolution of the trade relationships of European countries, equal if not greater difficulties must be expected in the sphere of migration. We saw in Chapter IV the gravity of the overpopulation in many regions of Eastern Europe and how the problem could only be solved by being tackled from several different angles simultaneously: by establishment of new industries, by intensification of farming, and by migration. The possibilities for migration proved so meagre in the inter-war period that many people have come to despair of its ever being resumed. Yet in principle it appears quite preposterous to have to make expensive efforts at industrialization in order to raise the standard of living in overcrowded countries, when a higher standard of living could be attained at much less cost if part of those populations could be set down in sparsely peopled territories rich in natural resources. Moreover, it is now clear that the peoples overseas will never, by their own natural

increase, fill up their open spaces; in most cases their populations are ceasing to expand. It might therefore be expected that they would seek to augment their numbers in the future by developing policies of immigration.

What, in fact, are the prospects for the resumption of migration likely to be at the end of the war? It must be at once admitted that in most directions the atmosphere will be in a high degree unfriendly. Some British Empire countries—*e.g.* Australia and New Zealand—may wish to have a limited number of immigrants, but they will only want them from the countries of North-western Europe, where populations will be beginning to decline and where consequently there will be little enthusiasm for emigration—except perhaps to a small extent in Belgium and the Netherlands, which are both over-populated. The U.S.A. may want to receive rather more than in the inter-war period, but only if she succeeds in maintaining conditions of full employment at home; in any case she will not be accepting numbers on the pre-1914 scale of hundreds of thousands per annum. The continent where prospects look rather brighter is South America. Industrial development on a substantial scale has been undertaken in many South American countries during the present war, and many hitherto unknown natural resources of great value have been revealed. The opening-up of these countries may well continue at an accelerated pace after the war, and it is not impossible that parts, at least, of Latin America may be destined for a development as rapid and sensational as that of the U.S.A. in the latter half of the last century. If this expectation were fulfilled there might come from those countries a really urgent demand for large numbers of immigrants. It may be remarked, too, that South America would find it comparatively easy to assimilate the peoples of Southern and Eastern Europe, where population pressure is greatest.

However events may turn out, the one certainty is that this problem of migration, with all its intricate political and social complications, can only be dealt with in so far as an impetus comes from the demand side. Unless the overseas nations feel a need little can be done; they cannot be forced to open their doors. But immediately they say 'We want people', people will be found to go. It is equally certain that any future migration will have to be carefully prepared, organized and regulated, probably under the supervision of some Interna-

tional Commission; but the elaboration of that question would lead us too far from our main theme. What matters from the point of view of the future of European farming is the extent to which demand from overseas may develop. A vigorous demand for immigrants during, say, the thirty years following the war would greatly relieve the difficulties of a Europe in transition and facilitate the execution of the policies outlined in earlier chapters of this book.

This discussion of trade and migration problems has demonstrated how closely the destiny of Europe is linked with the destiny of the world. To attempt to isolate itself from the stream of world intercourse would be fatal for the European continent, still more so for any one part of it. It will be essential to plan for a unified European economic development aiming at developing trade inside Europe and levelling up the economic disparity between East and West; but this development must be organically related to a planned world economic expansion, based on a resumption of intercontinental migration, trade and investment. In all these fields and many others—for nothing has been said here about problems of political security—the future well-being of any region such as Eastern Europe depends most intimately on the character and machinery of *world* intercourse which can be built up. Whilst regional groupings may create a valuable framework for certain local developments, it would be dangerous to regard special arrangements for Europe or parts of Europe as substitutes for the far-reaching economic changes upon which the easement of world problems depends.

## CHAPTER X

### FREEDOM FROM WANT

**T**HE United Nations are pledged to succour the weak and to bring prosperity to the poor. Recall President Roosevelt's Message to Congress of 6 January 1941, when he laid down the four essential human freedoms, of which

“The third is freedom from want—which, translated into world terms, means economic understandings which will

secure to every nation a healthy peace-time life for its inhabitants, everywhere in the world.'

Recall also Points Four and Five of the Atlantic Charter in which the President of the United States and the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom affirm that

'They will endeavour, with due respect to their existing obligations, to further enjoyment by all States, great or small, victor or vanquished, of access, on equal terms, to the trade and to the raw materials of the world, which are needed for their economic prosperity.'

and that

'They desire to bring about the fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field, with the object of securing for all improved labour standards, economic advancement and social security.'

These are pledges which the United Nations remain determined to implement; they will use their utmost endeavour to bring economic well-being to all peoples, and especially to those who hitherto have had the least share in prosperity.

It is, above all, the peasant communities, everywhere in the world, which ever since the Industrial Revolution have been exploited and depressed; whilst others have advanced, they have stood still; whilst industrial workers enjoyed rising wages and the amenities of town life, the farm population remained the lowest-paid section of the community. It is, therefore, particularly to the peasantries that the United Nations have incurred an obligation to bring 'freedom from want'.

This obligation falls into two parts. First, it is an obligation on the governments of each individual country so rapidly to foster the well-being of their farming communities that the gap in standards of life between land and factory worker is significantly reduced and, so far as is possible, closed. Secondly, it is an obligation on the governments of the wealthier nations to raise the living standards of the backward, which are principally the peasant, countries. This is a general objective, overriding in its character, which should inform and influence all post-war reconstruction plans and all schemes for furthering economic collaboration between the nations. Public opinion is

becoming increasingly intolerant of the abject poverty of millions. There has *got* to be some levelling-up.

As regards the obligation of governments to their own peoples, an outline has been given, in Chapters IV-VIII, of what ought to be done in Europe. This many-sided programme, involving industrial development, intensification of agricultural production, and the improvement of peasant efficiency and intelligence, will not be completed in a year, nor yet in the three or five years of a so-called reconstruction period. It is a programme for a generation; if it is to succeed it will have to be persevered with unremittingly and it will need to enlist the skill, ingenuity, devotion and enthusiasm of the foremost men and women of Europe. Nothing further need be said here; when the guns cease firing, the work will be waiting to be begun.

But something remains to be said concerning the obligation of prosperous countries to less prosperous ones. As a general principle this has already been accepted by, for instance, Britain in respect of her colonial territories. The British Government has set up a Colonial Development and Welfare Fund under which direct grants are made from the British Exchequer for the improvement of the public services in the colonies, though the scheme has necessarily had to be suspended during the war. The question arises: should not a similar sense of trusteeship be felt by the advanced nations in respect of other backward territories, even where there is no colonial bond? It can be argued with some force that these poorer nations have, almost like colonies, been exploited in the past by the richer nations, so that some restitution is due; but, apart from this, general considerations of social justice require that positive attempts should be made at levelling-up internationally.

This point of view finds increasingly wide acceptance among responsible people in Washington. Vice-President Wallace and his Reconstruction team have no desire 'to put the world into pawn' to America after the war; they are formulating plans for 'the little man' in all the continents, but most of all in the poorest; they believe that the United States can and must play a large part in translating 'freedom from want' into practical deeds.

The plans which they are sketching out range, of course, over three continents. Nevertheless, the countries of Eastern



Europe will clearly be among those which qualify for assistance. We have seen how urgent will be their need for capital: in order to establish new industries, in order to build a network of roads and railways, in order to reorganize and intensify agricultural production, and, lastly, for big regional development schemes such as the D.V.A. It would be insincere to pretend that all the investment in schemes of this kind will be profitable for British or American capitalists, in the traditional sense of 'profitableness'. The whole point of the Tennessee Valley Authority was that it was not a profit-making venture but a public works scheme for a depressed area. If the same attitude can be adopted for the depressed areas of the world, there is illimitable scope for investment, but if criteria of commercial profitableness are applied, then little or nothing can be done, for these countries will not be able to afford repayment at high rates of interest. The need is for interest-free loans or loans at extremely low rates—1 per cent or  $\frac{1}{2}$  per cent; Mr. Milo Perkins speaks of indefinitely long-term credits.

Those of the 'Wallace School' believe that the wealth and material which might be provided for these purposes will be a sort of 'pump-priming' both for the world and for the Allies' own domestic economies. It would help to solve the difficult problems of maintaining full employment which will arise when British, American, Russian and German war industries are being converted back to peace production. Yes, even the German war industries; for there is no reason why Germany should not be told to pay part of her reparations in the form of capital equipment which her heavy industries are so well fitted to produce and which the Eastern European countries will so badly need. Indeed, since the payment of reparations in kind (as all payments must ultimately be) to such countries as Britain and the U.S.A. might create employment difficulties, it may prove more convenient to make Germany work off her obligations by sharing with the United Nations in equipping the backward regions.

It is sometimes argued that the immediate post-war period will be an inopportune moment for initiating large schemes of development; that Britain, for one, will be much too poor even to pay for a pre-war level of imports, let alone contemplate grandiose plans of foreign lending. This argument rests on a misconception. The difficulty which Britain may experience in paying for her imports will not be one of production but of

marketing. To increase her exports by fifty per cent above their pre-war volume would require an increase in the total national output of only seven and a half per cent, an amount of no consequence; the problem will be to find purchasers for the goods. But this problem does not arise in connection with schemes of long-term credits to backward nations; since we shall be giving the goods (for the time being), the only question is how much we can spare. Given normal technical progress and the steady annual increment in national output which it makes possible, there should be quite substantial amounts to spare. Indeed, taking a share in equipping backward areas may well be, in a period of transition, the most effective form of pump-priming to ensure a maintenance of prosperity at home. The more we give, the more we shall have. Thus it would be wrong to become too obsessed with the idea of our own post-war poverty.

It may be hoped that some kind of International Investment Board will be used as the intermediary agency for the international development schemes which have been proposed, and indeed for all foreign lending in the future. For one of the most objectionable features of foreign lending in the past has been its intimate association with political power; a lending country obtained great influence over a borrowing country, and often misused its advantage. The most recent example has been Germany's economic penetration of the Danubian countries, which led to almost complete political domination. In the future, weaker countries must be safeguarded against this kind of occurrence; they must be made to feel that when they borrow such a menace no longer exists. If loans could be negotiated through an International Investment Board whose membership would be open to all nations, this would gradually come to provide a sufficient guarantee against political pressure. At first the functions of the Board might not go much further than the giving of formal approval to proposed loans, but in the course of time it would be likely to acquire considerable influence over both the direction and the terms of foreign investment. The countries of Eastern Europe will especially value international protection of this character, for even if they were able to join together in some form of federation they would still be a comparatively weak unit in the society of nations; the danger of their falling under the political domination of another power would be substantially lessened if their

financial structures had the stiffening of international support.

In concluding this survey of the future of European farming it is pertinent to ask: how will all these various proposals affect the daily lives of Pierre, Andrej, Franjo, Ivan and Hans? What personal difference will it make to them? Where will they begin to notice any improvement in their fortunes? Let us take a glimpse ten years into the future.

Pierre now has a new house half a mile out from the village, with his land grouped in a single block. Though he grumbled while it was being done, he is enormously pleased with the result. But the best of all is that prices have vastly improved, especially for milk. His village *syndicat* got a subsidy from the government and set up a milk-collecting depot where the entire supply is pasteurized before despatch to the town. Milk is so profitable that he has bought two extra cows and is planning to get two more. In order to feed them he has had to put more land under fodder crops and keep less under wheat; but the change pays. Also, he has made use of the oilcake and barley meal which are distributed to farmers at very low prices; they come from abroad, so he hears. His eggs and asparagus fetch much better prices nowadays, and though the grading which he is now obliged to do is sometimes tiresome, he is thinking of expanding both these enterprises.

Andrej still lives on his farm at Stebnik, but there is more room to move about than there was. One of the boys has gone to America, the other two are away working at the big dam they are making down at the Iron Gates. His eldest daughter has married Josef's son and they have quite a large farm of sixteen acres; his second daughter works at the new cheese factory at Zborov; the youngest has become a village nurse in the State Health Service. His sons have sent back to him some of their savings, with which he has been able to build the new house he has always longed for. Now that there are fewer people to feed in the village the peasants have been able to re-arrange their cropping. They have turned some of the poorest land into permanent pasture, and they grow clover instead of keeping so much of the land fallow between the corn crops; so the cows are better fed and give more milk, and Andrej is able to keep a third cow. The milk is collected every day and goes to the cheese factory. All the peasants can now afford to buy

enough grain to nourish themselves and most of them no longer have to sell their pig but can afford to keep it for their own use; indeed, they eat meat once or twice a week.

Franjo still lives on the same farm where we last visited him, but it is hardly recognizable. Both stables and farmhouse have been rebuilt; water is laid on everywhere; electricity has become so much cheaper that Franjo has two electric motors for driving various bits of machinery which he has about the place. Out in the fields the crops look quite different. The wheat and maize yields are fifty per cent heavier, partly because of that great irrigation scheme which has banished for ever the fear of drought, and partly because Franjo now uses artificial fertilizers and also conserves the farmyard manure more scientifically. But though he grows more, he sells less grain than formerly; he finds it pays better to feed the maize to pigs, together with part of the wheat and barley returned from the cooperative mill. Thanks to irrigation he uses more land for growing fodder, lucerne, and even fodder sugar-beets, which seem to do well. He has increased his pigs and poultry so much that he actually has to buy extra food for them. His latest attempt is to try to keep simple accounts, to see whether he is laying out his money wisely. The government set up an agricultural school in the county town especially for grown-up working farmers, and Franjo spent a winter there picking up these new-fangled ideas. But though his neighbours scoffed when he went, they have now to admit that the methods he learned seem to work very well in practice.

Of Ivan there is little to relate. Some five years ago he heard that a big factory had been set up to make plastics out of lignite; so, though it was a long way from his old home, he decided to give up slaving for the moneylender. He packed up and took his whole family to live near this factory. They have a modern cottage with water and electric light and half an acre of land on which to grow produce. Two of his daughters also work in the factory, while his wife and their eldest son look after the piece of land. This summer he went back out of curiosity to look at the old home, but it was gone and nearly all his neighbours are gone too. Instead, there were only half a dozen shepherds looking after enormous flocks of sheep, belonging to a cooperative, they said. The upper slopes of the mountain had been taken over for planting by the State Forestry Department.

Hans has probably changed his environment least of any of

them. He still has his cows and pigs and two men working for him (not the same two, for they got farms of their own long ago). He still sends his milk to the cooperative dairy and his pigs to the cooperative bacon factory. He has eliminated tuberculosis altogether from his cows and gets the higher price for tuberculin-tested milk. There was a time during the last war when he and his fellow-farmers had greatly to reduce their livestock and feared that Danish specialization was dead for ever. Even after the war the Danes wondered whether it would not be wise to remain less dependent on exports. Somehow things have turned out differently. Trade in bacon, butter and eggs has beaten all previous records, so great is the demand from the industrial centres both of Britain and of the Continent. True that competition is increasing, as other countries turn more to dairying, but Denmark still enjoys a good lead in efficiency. True that nobody can say war is banished for ever, and one may be a little sceptical of how this new international police force might work if an emergency arose; yet it seems effective enough so far. On the whole, Denmark feels (says Hans to his wife over the morning paper) greater security, both political and economic, than she did in the first half of the twentieth century.

These then are the sort of changes which individual peasants have a right to expect within a period of about ten years. Their lives can be made happier, more secure; their children better nourished and better educated. Given a moderate amount of constructive imagination and imaginative construction by the United Nations, European farming can become progressive and prosperous, while Europe's urban populations can enjoy an adequate standard of nutrition.

The task does not end here. Although this little book has been about European countries, it must always be remembered that these will not be the only candidates for assistance. There are other communities in the world much poorer and some of them much larger. Indeed, by any absolute standards of comparison the claims of India and China must be reckoned much more urgent. It is to be hoped that sooner or later T.V.A. programmes will be planned for those sub-continent too; and though the funds required will be gigantic, the moment may well come sooner if the advanced nations succeed in organizing their own economies for maximum production.

Peasant welfare is no small concept; it is not just a matter of building a few pigsties and establishing a few cooperative dairies. Nor is it merely a matter of removing kulaks and landlords from the agricultural scene. The revolution it needs will be far more comprehensive than that. It involves nothing less than an onslaught on the abject poverty of two-thirds of the population of this planet. It is an ideal which can be realized in practice by our generation, because ours is the first generation which has felt fully conscious of the vast potentialities of power over nature and natural resources, over economic and social environment which man now possesses. 'Peasant welfare' is a slogan which, if it is to be materialized in achievements, will demand all the technical resourcefulness of scientists, all the productive capacity of industry, all the organizing faculties of administrators, on a scale which will make the progress of the nineteenth century look puny by comparison. It is a programme many times more difficult than victory in war, and one which will take many times as long to accomplish. It is a duty of mankind to humanity.

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