

Agriculture by Nora Hamerman and John Sigerson

German organizes American farmers

Helmut Eichinger is a farmer from Bavaria who supports Lyndon LaRouche and fights free trade.

Helmut Eichinger—who raises wheat, field corn, sugar beets, and bulls on a farm in Triffling near Regensburg in Bavaria, Germany—has been touring the American farm belt since Jan. 30 to forge an international movement to save family farms. Speaking for the Schiller Institute, Eichinger has addressed a variety of rural groups in Oklahoma, Arkansas, Kansas, and Nebraska—everywhere challenging his listeners to join a permanent organization to combat free trade.

Mr. Eichinger encourages listeners to do just as he has been doing around Regensburg. With his son driving the car, he and his wife have been working outward from his own area, visiting people who he believes will be receptive to the idea that it's worthwhile to mobilize for a policy which will save their own farms. Eichinger put great emphasis on the need to keep families together, since this is the only way not only to keep the farms going, but also to successfully organize others.

Eichinger's obvious maturity, in contrast to the "hotheads" who prevailed in the U.S. rural movement in the 1980s, is making an impression, as well as his insistence that the Schiller Institute is the only *international* organization capable of defending sovereignty. While some farm groups, for example, are strongly against GATT—the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the global vehicle for free-trade looting—and are for a parity pricing system, they have been engaged in rear-guard actions, such as complaining that the

USDA calculates the cost of production for various farm goods too low by excluding many categories.

The German recounted how the cartels destroy agriculture by enforcing prices which are way too low. One big German meat concern, Moxel, was able to buy up huge amounts of pork in Germany's new eastern states, at only 85 pfennig for a kilo. Through the existing EC support mechanism, it got a government payback of 80 per kilo for the meat. Thus in effect, Moxel was able to sell the pork on the world market for only 5 pfennig, or about 3 cents a kilo!

He described the problems east German farmers are having in getting a start after having been enslaved by the Communist collectives for 40 years. Not only were the farmers deprived of their land, but over the 1950s they were forced to pay additional per-acre payments to the collectives, to pay for capital investments. Now, these farmers have to go to the courts in order to get their land and their money back. Meanwhile, the Bonn politicians are telling these farmers that they shouldn't bother trying, since after all, their farms will be too small to compete.

But as Eichinger strongly stresses, exactly the opposite is true: It will be the huge collectives-turned-cooperatives which are bound to go under because they are so poorly administered, whereas small private farms have the best chances of survival.

In many of the newly democratized countries, "model farms" are being set up, where many people come to see how it is possible to farm

profitably in their area. But in many cases, he said, the opposite is being achieved by not doing anything to stop the undercutting of prices by the international cartels. People come to see the model farms, try out their methods on their own farms, and then simply blame themselves when they are unable to survive. This only reinforces their tendency to give up farming altogether.

In an Arkansas meeting, one farmer said that he had been at the tractorcades, and big farm demonstrations in Washington in the early 1980s, and that nothing came of it. Eichinger strongly disagreed, saying that he recalls the television reports about those demonstrations; and that it would be a very good thing today if European farmers saw American farmers in motion again.

But Eichinger warned that demonstrations could be futile without a very firm set of demands in line with the proposals of Lyndon LaRouche—whose U.S. presidential candidacy he backs—for a parity pricing system for each sovereign nation. A case in point: A newly formed European Farmers' Association held tractor demonstrations simultaneously in nearly every big town in Europe last year, but only asked for a few hand-outs. The European Commission bureaucrats granted some additional funds in order to ease the high costs of food warehousing and storage. The cruel twist is that almost all of the storage is run by the cartels, not by private farmers. In effect the farmers had waged a successful campaign to put more money into the pockets of the giant cartels!

What is going on in GATT worldwide, Eichinger said, is occurring within the European Community in the small. The only way out is to change the ground-rules and get away from free trade.