

Original Paper

The Small-scale Peasant Economy in the French German Peasant Problem

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Received: October 13, 2022 Accepted: October 30, 2022 Online Published: November 2, 2022

doi:10.22158/sss.v3n4p95

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.22158/sss.v3n4p95>

Abstract

Capitalist socialized mass production has continuously squeezed the production environment of farmers, increased productivity and bankrupted farmers have also increased, and more farmers come to the city but can not stand firm in the city. In this regard, Engels believed that small-scale peasant household production was no longer suitable for the needs of economic development. He wrote the "French German Peasants' Problem" to discuss his ideas about farmers taking the road of cooperative production, leaving valuable inspiration for the development of farmers, rural areas and agriculture in today's social development.

Keywords

French and German farmers, Cooperative, Enlightenment

1. Peasant Thought in Western Classical Philosophy

1.1 Xenophon's Thoughts on Agriculture

Xenophon, who is famous for his emphasis on agriculture, played an important role in the field of agriculture in ancient Greece. Based on his own experience and observation of society, Xenophon believed that agriculture was the foundation of the whole society, the mother of other industries, and everything could not be separated from agriculture. The success of Xenophon was that it saw the basic role of agriculture under the level of social productivity at that time.

Xenophon (about 430-354 BC) was born in a rich peasant family on the Greek peninsula. He was well educated when he was young, so he has a certain knowledge reserve and vision. As an adult, he participated in the political struggle between the Persian prince and his brother. Because Xenophon supported the oligarchy represented by the Persian prince Cyrus the Younger and opposed democracy, he turned to support Sparta, which represented the oligarchy, after Cyrus the Younger failed. Later, Athens clashed with Sparta and the famous Corinthian War broke out. In this war, Xenophon opposed

Athens and supported Sparta, The final war ended with the victory of Athens, so Xenophon was sentenced to life exile by the Athenian Citizen's Congress. During his exile, in order to compensate Xenophon, the king of Sparta gave him some farmland near Olympia as gifts. At the same time, he bought some land and developed a large-scale farm. At this stage, while operating the farm, he wrote the experience of farm management into a manuscript for future generations to borrow. The Economics is the work of this period. Xenophon's thought of attaching importance to agriculture has also been inherited along with the spread of his works.

1.2 Quesnay's Thought of Attaching Equal Importance to Agriculture and Commerce

Fran çois Quesnay became the founder of the French physiocratic school with the thought of attaching equal importance to agriculture and commerce, which is closely related to his life experience. Francois Quesnay (1694 - 1774) was born in a lawyer's family. He became famous in France for his superb medical skills when he was an adult. At first, he was the doctor of the Marquis of Pombador. Later, his articles on surgery attracted the attention of the French medical community, so he was invited to Versailles to become the imperial doctor of Louis XV himself. Quesnay's knowledge not only made great achievements in medicine, but also in philosophy, politics, law and other fields. Therefore, after becoming the king's imperial doctor, he had more opportunities to make a thorough and detailed analysis of the national conditions. Because he was knowledgeable and often expressed some opinions different from the secular world, his thought of valuing agriculture was particularly attractive, which attracted a group of like-minded people. Under the influence of this social environment and rich life experience, Quesnay then created the Economic Table, which has an impact on later generations. The Economic Table adopts a life support function similar to the blood supply in the human body, and explains how the net production cycle generated by the peasant class maintains the economic operation with the help of powerful graphic methods. In fact, the theoretical essence contained in the Economic Table and the digital examples it tries to prove and support clearly express the reform proposals of the physiocratic school. These reform suggestions have an important ideological enlightenment on Engels' creation of the French German Peasants' Problem.

1.3 Hesiod's Agricultural Thought

Hesiod, originally from Asia Minor, was born in Askera village in Biosia, Greece, in southern Europe. He was an ancient Greek poet. From an early age, he made a living by farming. Hesiod was originally an Ionian of Asia Minor. Later, he followed his father and moved to Askera Village in Pootia, Greece. His job was to herd livestock and cultivate fields. However, because of the unique marine resources in ancient Greece, Hesiod often chose to take a boat trip to the sea in the slack season to engage in commercial trade, which accumulated practical experience for his later thought of attaching equal importance to agriculture and commerce. Hesiod also had a younger brother named Perseus. His younger brother was exquisite and was appreciated by the local lord Basilius. Perseus not only gained a fortune from the lord, but also took away a large portion of his father's inheritance. But because he did not work hard and was lazy, he soon fell into a very poor state and was heavily in debt. Hesiod was

eager to persuade his younger brother to be diligent in farming. In order to adapt to the agricultural time and let the world learn from it, he wrote the long poem "Work and Time". Work and Time uses a lot of ink to exhort Perseus to turn back in time. It does talk about the risks of maritime trade, but it is not a theoretical work "based on agriculture" and "sideline" as agricultural characterizers say. On the contrary, although Hesiod was born as a farmer, he did not despise commerce in his ideas. He believed that agriculture was one of the sources of wealth, while maritime trade was the key to making wealth more abundant and living a richer life. Therefore, Hesiod's thought is also about agriculture and commerce, and agriculture and commerce complement each other.

2. Engels' Thoughts on Peasantry Problems

2.1 Importance of Safeguarding Farmers' Interests

Any thought is to stand on the shoulders of predecessors and forge ahead. Engels' profound understanding of the social environment at that time and his in-depth analysis of the small-scale peasant economy when he wrote the French German Peasants' Problem can easily be seen that Engels absorbed the heavy agricultural thinking of Xenophon, Quesnay and Hesiod. Because the peasantry has two sides, it is natural for him to support whoever safeguarded his interests, and the makers of the Nantes Program fell into the wrong path of defending farmers and uniting farmers to transform farmers. The makers of the Nantes Program will fall into the dilemma of maintaining or uniting. The reason is that they do not fundamentally respect farmers and see their power. Engels defended the interests of the peasants not only because he saw the tremendous energy of the peasantry in the revolutionary war, but also because he was a firm follower of the revolution, and also because he sincerely thought of the peasants. The makers of the Nantes Program should not be hypocritical just for the peasants' votes but fail to fundamentally safeguard the interests of peasants. The peasants who lost their land entered the factory and became the proletariat. The peasants have a natural connection with the proletariat. The peasantry is the proletariat's best friend and a revolutionary force that is oppressed and urgently needs its own land. The fundamental interests and goals of the peasants and the proletariat are the same, and they both use their hard work to create their own products and make a living, without exploiting others. At the same time, they also oppose the existence of the exploiting class.

2.2 Engels' Thought of Safeguarding Peasants' Interests in Criticizing the Nantes Program

In the 19th century, France and Germany, as capitalist countries, had the trend of transition to imperialism, and economic development led to the development of democratic politics. Capitalists urgently needed the spokesperson party to safeguard their own interests. Facing the contradiction between capitalism and the peasantry in this period, if they obtained the votes of farmers in elections to ease the contradiction between the classes, it became the primary problem that the leaders of France and Germany needed to solve. At this time, the leaders of the French and German parties, in order to win the votes of the peasants in parliament, made unprincipled concessions to some of the peasants' fantasies and private ideas, and even allowed the exploitation of the rich rural class. These erroneous

views were mainly reflected in the land program adopted and supplemented by the 10th Congress of the French Workers' Party in September 1892 and the Nantes Congress in September 1894. For this reason, Engels wrote the French German Peasants' Problem, systematically expounded the basic theory on the farmers' problem, and elaborated his thought of safeguarding the farmers' interests. In the introduction, Engels discussed the peasant problem and the importance of the I peasant alliance in the proletarian revolution, analyzed the role of peasants in European history, and pointed out that peasants were very important factors in population, shovel and political power. The development of capitalism is causing the decline and demise of small farmers and making farmers an active political force. Yu big land occupiers also claim that they are fighters fighting for the interests of small farmers. Therefore, proletarian political parties in European countries must adopt correct policies to reveal their true colors, unite with the broad masses of farmers, and make them reliable allies of the proletariat. Engels pointed out that the proletariat "in order to seize political power, this party should first run from the city to the countryside and become a force in the countryside" to establish a consolidated worker peasant alliance. In the first part, Engels analyzed the situation of different classes and strata in the countryside and criticized the Nantes Program of the French Socialist Party. First of all, from the point of view of class analysis, it analyzes the economic status and political attitude of the small farmers, pointing out that the small farmers are the dependent force of the proletarian revolution. The great development of industrialization continuously squeezed the living environment of small farmers. A large number of farmers went bankrupt, but they did not need so many farmers. The population moved closer to the industrial intensive cities. How to correctly understand and treat the small farmers was Engels' problem. In the end, Engels believed that small farmers should be led to the socialist road.

2.3 Ways to Safeguard Farmers' Interests

Engels in "The French German Peasant Problem" said that the central point of the peasant problem is to strive for the union between the peasants and the working class. The Socialist Party's seizure of power has become a matter of the near future. However, "in order to seize political power, this party should first run from the city to the countryside and become a force in the countryside" First of all, we should care about farmers, but we should analyze specific problems. Farmers are a very large group. There are small farmers, middle peasants and rich peasants. We should adopt different attitudes towards different classes of farmers. We should not adopt a one size fits all policy towards farmers for the sake of votes, as in the Nantes Program. Engels emphasized the small peasant class, which has the least assets and is the most revolutionary and active owner and tenant of small plots of land. They are different from their ancestors. They are inevitably involved in the market economy, and they are irretrievably heading for extinction. He is the proletarian of the future.

As a future proletarian, he should have been willing to listen to the propaganda of socialism. However, his deep-rooted concept of private ownership temporarily prevented him from doing so. The small farmers firmly hold on to his small piece of land and struggle hard to keep it. In this way, the small farmers will reject the idea of handing over the land to the collective as proposed by the Social

Democrats. The withdrawal of the small-scale peasant economy from the historical stage is an inevitable result, so Engels proposed to combine the declining small-scale peasants into cooperatives, “and gradually turn these cooperatives into a part of the national large-scale production cooperatives with equal rights and obligations, so that the exploitation of wage labor can be eliminated more and more in such cooperatives” Labor saving is one of the main advantages of large-scale operation. The establishment of an agricultural cooperative society makes a part of agricultural labor surplus. The saved labor will try to find another way to create wealth, or the government will provide them with new jobs to find jobs for these labor forces. Engels not only pointed out that agricultural cooperative economy is the fundamental way to transform small farmers, but also clearly pointed out the basic principles that the proletarian party must follow in guiding farmers to cooperatives.

3. The Contemporary Enlightenment of the Peasant Theory in the French German Peasant Problem

Agriculture has played an important role in Chinese history, and rural governance and the improvement of farmers' living standards are also the fundamental direction to solve the problem of rural development dilemma. China's agricultural and rural areas have a wide area, a weak foundation, a weak party organization, different voices for ten miles, different customs for hundreds of miles, and different regions and even different villages. It is very difficult to rely on the strength of the countryside itself to generate integrated autonomy. With the improvement and development of the market economy system, the household contract responsibility system has turned rural agricultural production into a fragmented and fragmented production pattern, which limits the further development of agriculture. However, specific analysis should be made in the specific implementation process of cooperative promotion, respecting the local special geographical environment and adapting to the local socio-economic development. In the historical process of China's agricultural development, agriculture has always been the top priority. We can get the following inspiration from the “French German Peasants Problem”. First of all, we should adhere to the fundamental position of agriculture. Agriculture is the industry on which human beings depend for survival and the foundation of other industries. We should firmly put our jobs in the hands of the Chinese themselves. Secondly, we should adhere to the ideological transformation of farmers to adapt to the development of socialism with Chinese characteristics. Engels' thoughts on agricultural cooperatives in the French German Peasants' Issues provide valuable ideas and references for the establishment of rural cooperatives in China. Engels discussed “the demise of the small-scale peasant economy and the inevitability of its replacement by the farmer cooperative economy.” The development of the cooperative economy should also be realistic and based on the actual situation. Finally, we can see the importance of adhering to the integration of urban and rural development from the French and German Peasants' Issues. The reason why the article “The Problems of French and German Peasants” was written by Engels was that the urban development was much faster than the rural development at that time, and the imbalance between

urban and rural development led to the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the peasantry, resulting in the plight of the peasants in bankruptcy life. At the beginning, China's social development was also for industrialization, ignoring the development of agriculture. The emergence of urban-rural dual structure was not conducive to China's economic development.

In the past hundred years, we have combined Engels' thought of worker peasant alliance with China's reality in the land of China, and won one victory after another by closely relying on the people in practice and innovation. In this process, we must fully recognize the significance of the issue of farmers' interests for the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. It is a fundamental issue for China's social and economic development in the new era to deal with the issues of agriculture, rural areas and farmers. The Chinese nation can not get up, get rich and become strong without the worker peasant class.

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