

THE APPEARANCE OF COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT IN EUROPE AND ITS INSIGHT IN ROMANIA

APARIȚIA FENOMENULUI COOPERATIST ÎN EUROPA ȘI PATRUNDEREA LUI ÎN ROMÂNIA

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Abstract. *Cooperation in agriculture represents a necessity dictated by the characteristics of activity from this field of production, by its position within the market economy. Cooperative movement has gained a large acknowledgement in the agriculture of developing countries, being in a continuous growth and multiplying its forms of manifestation as a reaction to adaptation to the evolution and economic flux features which agriculture develops together with the growths of productivity in agriculture.*

Rezumat. *Cooperarea în agricultură reprezintă o necesitate dictată de caracteristicile activității din această ramură a producției materiale, de poziția ei în cadrul economiei de piață. Mișcarea cooperatistă a căpătat o largă recunoaștere în agricultura țărilor dezvoltate crescând continuu în amploare și multiplicându-și formele de manifestare ca o reacție de adaptare la evoluția și trăsăturile fluxurilor economice pe care le dezvoltă agricultura cu ramurile din amonte și aval de ea, alături de creșterea productivității în agricultură.*

MATERIAL AND METHOD

Cooperative movement and its forms of manifestation have been topics for discussions in the European countries even before their appearance. This study tries to make a short presentation of their appearance in Europe and especially in Romania. For this purpose, we have looked in statistic documents and specialized literature for statistic data referring to the appearance and content of different forms and methods of cooperation in agriculture, the causes and factors that determined their appearance, as well as their area of spreading.

In order to process and interpret all these data we have used the methods of techno-economical analysis, among which: the method of comparison, statistic grouping, division and monograph method. Processed data have been interpreted using the inductive method, together with the deductive method.

The results obtained are presented in the next chapter.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

These aspects mark the passing from subsistence agriculture to exchange agriculture, where they produce in order to sell and they sell in order to produce, which equals the intensification of economic fluxes and the appearance of new characteristics.

In the countries with a developed agriculture, cooperation has appeared as a way of diminishing all these consequences and in order to have the exploitations as private property and to maintain a healthy climate of competition.

Cooperation can be achieved within some simple structures, which facilitate and administrate more a system of relations, usually of contractual nature or can have as holder an organizational structure which has a capital due to the contribution of adhesive people, in this case being called “cooperative association”.

As a consequence, cooperation requires the appearance of some relations between agricultural producers which can determine the growth of the objective of the propriety under conditions of a minimum erosion of the right of individual propriety.

The most important aspect which has to be mentioned is represented by the contribution of cooperatives to the concentration of offer of agricultural products and the regularization of their prices.

A direct domain of application of some forms of cooperation and association is turning to good account the field. An incomplete and irrational utilization of land has negative consequences on the level of production obtained and, at the same time, of the offer of products and on the way of responding to the consumers' request.

Among the great supporters of small peasant farms are: V. Madgearu, R.C. Stere, N. Cornăţeanu and others. V. Madgearu stated that “the evolution of agriculture follows its own way”, while R.C. Stere was saying that “facts showed that the laws for the industry were not valid for agriculture”.

Cooperation and association can generate many advantages for those who have chosen such modalities of turning to good account the resources of production or running other activities which can be connected to agricultural exploitations.

The modern cooperative phenomenon was born from the need of mutual-aid of pauper classes of the society and had unique and famous initiatives such as the Pioneers of Rochdale, Schulze-Delitzsch, Raiffeisen. All these have amplified, crystallized and diversified in many countries and even on the level of the European continent. Cooperation and integration is achieved in many different types of agricultural stations, between the agriculture and the connected industries, as well as the private stations or associated farms or farmers.

From what we have already mentioned, there are three main systems of organizational practice of cooperations: the Rochdale system, the Schulze-Delitzsch system and Raiffeisen system.

Among the derivate systems which appeared in this period we have often encountered we can name: the Danish system, the Hass system, the Luzzatti system and Wollemborg system.

The Rochdale system was set up in 1857, as consequence of many meetings of some weavers from the town of Rochdale, who reached the conclusion to make an association in order to improve their moral and material status. The association took its legal form by joining as a mutual-aid association, as the “Rochdale Society of Echitable Pionners”.

The Schulze-Delitzsch system was invented by H. Schulze-Delitzsch who, in order to put to practice his ideal and influenced by the ideas of economical and political liberalism of Fr. Bastiat and J. H. Carey, started from the ground that the report between labour and capital is only a economical problem and, as a consequence, the solutions

can be only economical and they can be solved only under the conditions of non-intervention on the behalf of the state.

The F. W. Raiffeisen system that was stipulated by F. W. Raiffeisen groups the associations on regions, in unions of associations. The associations founded by F. W. Raiffeisen wanted, according to the conception of their founder, to remake the unity of the German state, affected by the liberal ideas and the market economy which make themselves known at the middle of 19th century.

If we have in view other derivate systems, we can name:

The Danish system. In Denmark, cooperation grew up, like in all countries, under the pressure of specific economical conditions of that country. As norms for association we can notice in the Danish cooperation: the idea of mutual aid of those who join; the solidary trust which can be limited or unlimited according to the cooperation; they don't have their own capital; the reach of the cooperations is limited most of the time to one village; the applicability of the principle "open doors"; entrance is free; the associates take from the benefice only the part that corresponds to the quantum of operations they did with that cooperation; they have the reserve fond, but with small amounts; the associates are equal as regards the administration of the cooperation.

The Hass system comes from Wilhelm Hass who lived in Germany among 1839-1913. He borrowed his ideas from Raiffeisen and Schulze-Delitzsch. The first cooperative of this kind appeared in 1872. This system had the following norms: it is based on the idea of own help which is used in the action of strengthening of agriculture; it is against the cooperations with multiple uses.

The Luzzatti system. These cooperations have social capital; they collect a tax of joining which is relatively high; in Luzzatti's conception, the reserve fond could overcome the whole social capital charging itself from the joining taxes, shares from benefits which could go up to 20% and from the capital of associates who degrade from the quality of associate; responsibility is limited; it is not excluded the help from the state, and , finally, the cooperations from this system can make operations also with persons outside the association.

The Wollemborg system. The norms of this system were the following: small range of activity; small social capital; unlimited mutual responsibility; credit only on production; carrying out the functions is free; cooperation works in the rural system.

In Romania, the cooperative thinking has evolved approximately in the same way as the other European countries and we can see also the steps which can be considered the phases of the crystallization process of the cooperative doctrine.

Ideas of mutual aid appear in the Romanian culture in the first half of the 19th century, among the youth who did their studies in western Europe, as well as through the western literature, especially the French one. Among those who spread ideas of friendly societies in their writings and political facts, we can name: Teodor Diamant, Ion Eliade Radulescu, Ion Ghica, Ion Ionescu de la Brad, Cezar Boliac, Nicolae Balcescu, Petru S. Aurelian, Spiru Haret.

The appearance in our country of the first cooperatives of credit under the name of popular banks, imposes the need of creating laws in order to run those activities. This request was formulated on the parliamentary debates regarding the setting up of some institutions of agricultural credit.

Making the unitary national state created the favourable frame for a powerful development of cooperative movement.

In the period of land reform of 1864, the number of bondsmen was evaluated to be of 445.019, of whom 17,49% were frontrunner peasants (villagers with 4 oxen and a cow), 48,46% middle peasants (villagers with 2 oxen and one cow) and 33,60 poor peasants (villagers with at most one cow). According to the Land Law of 1864, 408,119 bondsmen were appropriated, 59.721 non-bondsmen were appropriated in the middle of the village and till 1878, 48.342 newly-married men.

According to the law of 1864 and the removal of Al.I.Cuza, there followed a period when there were issued many land laws (1881-1889), but the Law of 1864 appropriated a large number of families (516,2 thousand) and gave the greatest area of land (1994,6 thousand). Instead, the average area per family was the most reduced (3,86 ha in comparison with 5,12 ha in 1889), and on average of 4,08 ha indicates a rather large fragmentation of lands, an area that couldn't ensure a decent living for a family. Also, after the 1964 Reform, the need of money of the peasants determined a passing from natural economy to the money based one, which determined first a development of cooperation in the direction of rural credit and popular banks.

CONCLUSIONS

Cooperation in agriculture represents a necessity imposed by the characteristics of the activity from this branch of productivity, by its position within the market economy.

In Romania, the cooperative thinking evolved approximately in the same way as other European countries and we can notice the steps which can be the phases of the crystallization process of cooperative doctrine.

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