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XXXXXXXXXXXXX Agency
928-30 No. Third St., Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

July 8, 1943

Mr. Charles J. Coe
Editor Farm Research
39 Cortland Street
New York City

Dear Mr. Coe:

It has taken me sometime to digest the contents of your letter and its various inquiries. I shall not attempt a categorical answer to your questions but counter with an exposition of personal of opinion.

I am also sorry that I did not meet you in New York. I agree with you that the Southern Counsel of Human Welfare will be an important meeting. I believe that you and Joe Storm of "Spade," National Press Building, Washington, D. C., could come to some splendid conclusions following the proceedings of this conference. I believe that he could suggest some excellent liberal minded people in and out of Government who could make a worthwhile contribution to this conference.

I would suggest that you communicate with him. Now to get down to the difficult subject. Agricultural planning--When a farmer was destitute back in 32 and 33, agricultural planning was directed to the survival of agriculture, today, agricultural planning is much more difficult because you have a full grown and healthful human animal craving for inflationary food for financial and moral obseity. When agriculture is well fed, farmers are more difficult to plan for and reason with. For this reason, I believe it is wise to make observations in the field where farmers welfare as well as that of workers is finally exploited.

It is a worthwhile observation, I am sure that James B. Selvage of Princeton, New Jersey was loaned by the National Association of Manufacturers to the Republican National Committee. The realists in the National Republican Committee learned that the novelistic experience of Bud Kelland gave him considerable grip over the imagination of the people but gave him little ability to cope with the real problems that faced big business and the Republican organization.

Selvage, it appears is a young man with a good deal of realism. I wish I could get more information on his background. I know that he was the Public Relations Director of the National Association of Manufacturers and that he promoted the idea of giving to industries, Army and Navy "E" flags.

This was the first constructive attempt made by anyone to glorify big business. Following the last world war, Senator Gerald P. Nye conducted an investigation into the records of big business to prove that corporate interests of the day knew no loyalty to country but spread their influences beyond international boundary lines and developed Cartel agreements for the distribution of benefits to member organizations without regard to national safety or for international good will.

These investigations by Nye definitely broke the confidence of the American public in the good intentions as well as the patriotism of big business organizations. The Roosevelt Administration rode into power on the crest of a wave of contempt rolled up by the revelations of the Nye report. The collateral effects of the depression followed in the wake of the abuses that Nye exposed at that time. The thing that is most paradoxical to me today is that Nye is strangely silent about the revelations of his old committee because the same cartels and the same combinations are at work today as were in the last World War and should be the subject of investigation and exposure again.

Mr. Selva has been extremely successful in glossing over this sordid history, with an Army and Navy "E" flag in the foreground and a background of belching chimneys of the factories throughout the nation. Mr. Selva has painted a picture of patriotism on page after page of paid advertising media, glorifying the efforts of big business to win this war. The bill is charged to Uncle Sam in war contracts at cost plus figures. Advertising is a legitimate factor in figuring war contracts. People who oppose farm subsidy never seem to realize that the press is completely subsidized to this type of government paid advertisements.

It is little wonder that the national magazines see to it that their editorial policy follows the bait in the Selva plan. The freedom of the press is merely the ability of the editors to follow the gravy trail to the publisher's desk.

Mr. Selva, it appears has been quite versatile in reaching the agricultural press. Naturally, the great steel companies find a very potential market among the manufacturers of tractors and farm equipment. These gentlemen have found occasion to spend government money in the advertising pages of the National farm journals. One big industrialist, Joseph M. Pew discovered that he could make some profit and at the same time grind a political axe by purchasing the Farm Journal. He exploits the thoughts of the Chemical Trust and the affects of Chemurgy upon the unsuspecting farmers.

Mr. Selva found that certain marketing organizations became so closely associated with marketing processors that they soon assumed the attitude of the manufacturer rather than the attitude of the producer. These organizations lent willing ears to propaganda, setting forth the business of the manufacturers. This is especially true of the New York milk shed. He also learned that cooperative associations handling large quantities of feed as farmer organizations became so closely associated with the great milling interests of the

West and the grain exchanges that they became big businessmen and were willing to join the big business thinkers with their propaganda mills.

Accordingly, the Dairymen's League and the GLF Exchange set up an agricultural research office in Ithaca to promote the interest of big business. With Cornell University as the brain trust division, they established Agricultural Service at Washington, D. C. This set up¹⁸ a national sounding board for the speeches of Charles Holman, Ed O'Neill, Jim McConnell, and Albert Goss. They set the stage of Herbert Hoover who is a national authority on food and they called again the great oil man of Kansas, Alf. Landon as the national food expert. The sole purpose of which was to magnify the blunderings of the wide eyed bureaucrats of Washington and to play up¹⁹ the short memory of farmers toward the inflationary period of the old-world war. They even assumed that none of us would have insufficient memory of the inflationary period of 1917 to remember that we had a very serious food problem without any nationally planned surplus or ever-normal granary to extend abundance over to a period of scarcity. Mr. Selvage and his followers from Cornell brought up statistics to prove that labor was the favored child that wage earners were favored in excess of the benefits received by farmers under our war economy. Mr. Selvage and his associates did pretty well in applying the microscope to industrial strikes.

The planning I would apply to agriculture would follow pretty well the Selvage plan for industry. I do not know if Selvage belonged to the Gallup organization in Princeton or not. He might have belonged to such an organization or even a better one in so far as his drifts of thinking are concerned. He is methodically following a course that must have been born in one of these surveys' factories.

I know of no survey's factory for farmers but with intuition (possibly) I sense the drifts of farmer thinking pretty much by my association and life among farmers. My planning therefore would follow these trends:

1. Glorify the farmer by awards. Our Indiantown Gap ceremony last January was one of these events. We tried to get the Army and Navy to grant "E" awards to farmers but were turned down. Our certificates to farmers grew out of our Indiantown Gap ceremony but the fault of these certificates is that we had no glamour such as was shown in ceremonies and in newspapers and magazines throughout the country when industry was honored.
2. Glorify farm women by awards and recognition. The women listen to the radio and read the local papers. Publicity will follow the giving of local awards without arousing Congressmen to complain that mails are cluttered with government propaganda and consequent waste of paper.
3. Advertise for agriculture as the Treasury does for bonds. The food program should carry advertisements locally sponsored and these should carry pictures of farmers at work, soldiers fighting, man working at forges or furnaces, women sacrificing at work or home. Humanity should always be in the forefront of the picture and material and equipment in the background. We must glorify men and women and not material and capital.

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4. We must resurrect the Nye reports and get another investigation into cartels going. It would make the Dies report look like small change. Farmers hate grafting corporations. We must break this glamour spell. Some crusading Congressman or Senator must be found for this job.
5. We must take the offensive. Wickard is good as a symbol but weak as a crusading hard hitting realist. He looks like a farmer and is generally liked by farmers but with a realist like Selvage and specialists like Meyers of Cornell making medicine for Dewey and the opposition, we need a clever slugger in our corner. That slugger is no where in sight right now. We have abundance of brains in the Department of Agriculture. We have facts and figures galore but no one in Congress or out of it to hand them out forcefully. Maybe Franklin D. Roosevelt will go to slugging, now, to expose the racket. I surely hope so.

All the above are observations I have made unofficially. Because of the recent action of the appropriation committee, I may not be quoted on any of the above because I am not permitted to speak except as an individual farmer. Your reactions will be appreciated.

Very truly yours,

John A. Smith, Secretary
State AAA Committee

JAS:mv

cc: Emma Guffey Miller ✓
Joe Storm

*Now is GOP publicity man.
Main-minded the Grass Roots
movement in '36, for NAM.
Went into the Dept. from N.A.M.*