

# ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОГО Исполнительного РАБОЧИХ И СОЛДАТСКИХ ДЕПУТАТОВ

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Въ виду созыва въ теченіи ближайшихъ дней Второго Всероссийскаго Крестьянскаго Депутатовъ, крестьянь-делегатовъ при первомъ Всероссийскомъ Съезде Советовъ Рабочихъ и Солдатскихъ съездовъ остаются для участія въ работахъ этого съезда.

## ДЕКРЕТЪ О ЗЕМЛ

### СЪЕЗДЪ СОВЕТОВЪ РАБОЧИХЪ И СОЛДАТСКИХЪ ДЕПУТАТОВЪ

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M. SUKHANOV

As  
LENIN  
Planned  
It

*(NOTES ON THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE)*

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## *1. INTRODUCTION*

The world has always paid a great deal of attention to the changes that have occurred in the Soviet agricultural economy.

This interest in the life of the Soviet village is quite natural since the Soviet Union was the first country to solve the agrarian problem to the advantage of the peasant and to engender and develop such unprecedented forms of agricultural economy as collective and state farms. Small-scale private ownership gave way to large-scale public ownership; the small farmer became a member of a collective.

Generations of Russian peasants had waged a persistent, courageous but vain battle for land, freedom and the right to live like human beings. It was only in alliance with and under the leadership of the working class that their fight was successful. Their innermost hopes and aspirations were realized with the victory of the October 1917 Socialist Revolution which gave the land to them.

The expropriation of the landowners' holdings opened the way to a new life for the peasants;

the second and decisive step was the transition from small-scale individual farming to large-scale collective economies.

The radical changes that were effected in the Soviet village were no simple matter. Unparalleled in scope and content they were wrought by the pioneers of socialism.

What was it that influenced the builders of a new life? What principle guided their activities? Was it their personal desire or the objective necessity of social development? What did collectivization give society and the peasant? Is there such a thing as labour incentive among Soviet farmers working in cooperatives? Is the collective farm right for our times? What are the relations between the working class and the collective farmers? What are the relations between the state and the collective farms?

Answers to these and many other questions concerning life in the Soviet village can be found in books by Western writers. Though these differ, they invariably leave the impression that the authors prefer to squeeze present-day reality into obsolete patterns rather than study and comprehend the actual situation. In the opinion of R. Schlesinger, editor of the British journal, *Soviet Studies*, the distorted picture of agricultural development in the USSR as presented by another journal, *Eastern Europe*, shows that its writers try to tailor facts to fit their pre-set notions and this prevents them from thoroughly analysing and understanding what is taking place.

My task is to tell readers about the Soviet village, to show its past and present in a true light and show the real state of affairs in the Soviet countryside. This is not an all-embracing study

but it is an account by an eye-witness of and participant in the making of the Soviet village.

## 2. LEGACY FROM THE OLD WORLD

Paging through some books recently I came across a statement by the French historian Ch. Lodjinsky which should be challenged. He claimed that the agrarian policy of the tsarist Government, especially the Stolypin agrarian reform, revitalized the rural economy and considerably improved the lot of the peasantry.

In reality the Stolypin agrarian reform brought in its wake acute social stratification. It resulted in a concentration of huge masses of impoverished peasants and farm labourers and a numerically small rural bourgeoisie, known as the kulaks. On the basis of statistics collected by the district councils Lenin in his article *Is the Condition of the Peasants Improving or Worsening?* showed precisely what "boons" the village received from the Stolypin reform. Within the six years between 1907 and 1912 four million peasant families improved their situation, 7,600,000 families became poorer and 8,400,000 families remained as they were, hovering on the brink of destitution. There are figures to show that following the enactment of the Stolypin legislation the living standards of the overwhelming majority of Russian peasants steadily declined. The reform gave impetus to capitalism in the rural economy but did nothing to destroy the remnants of serfdom and left all the contradictions intact.

Among the most acute problems new Russia inherited from the old world were the extreme

economic backwardness, hopeless penury and almost total illiteracy prevalent in the Russian countryside. Suffice it to say that hoe farming which had been introduced more than two thousand years before and the use of such a primitive implement as the planting stake were widespread in tsarist Russia. The wooden plough and scythe were also in wide use. The 1910 Census gives the number of farm tools owned by peasants as:

Wooden ploughs and scythes	7.8 million
Wooden harrows	17.7 million
Iron ploughs	4.2 million

Seeding and mowing machines were a rarity.

I was born and brought up in a Ukrainian village on the Don. Here the land was better and the peasants' holdings larger than in Central Russia. My grandfather was regarded as a middle peasant, but the iron plough was all that he had in the way of twentieth century farm machinery. Modern farm tools were beyond his means. Sowing was done by hand, wheat was cut with a scythe and threshed with a stone rolling-press. Under these conditions high yields were out of the question. Poorly tilled land resulted in poor crops. The peasants lived from hand to mouth; they were in constant dread of drought, which brought ruin to hundreds of households. The impoverished peasants left their homes in search of a better lot.

On the eve of the revolution Russia had over twenty million peasant households, divided by their property status in the following way:

Poor peasants	13 million
Middle peasants	four million
Kulaks	three million



Of all the peasant households:

six million did not have a horse;  
6,800,000 had no farm machinery;  
three million sowed no crops.

Two million poor peasants annually left their homes to work as farm labourers on the estates of the landed gentry and kulaks in the southern regions of Russia and the Ukraine, for they could not grow enough to satisfy even the meagre needs of their families.

Most peasants were hungry and impoverished because their plots were too small or they had no land at all. And all this in a country of huge areas and vast possibilities. In tsarist Russia 30,000 big landowners held a total of 189,000,000 acres, i.e. an average of 5,400 acres for each estate, while 10,500,000 poverty-stricken peasant farms shared between them 197,500,000 acres, i.e. an average of about 19 acres for each farm. Many landowners owned hundreds of thousands of acres. The estates of a certain Rukavishnikov, for example, occupied an area of 2,600,000 acres and those of Prince Golitsin, over 2,700,000 acres. Most of the peasants had about six acres.

The agrarian problem was one of the most acute to beset tsarist Russia. It involved the vital interests of the peasants who constituted more than 80 per cent of the population. In his *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, which Lenin started to write at the age of 26, he exposed the hopeless situation of the small peasants and explained the need for an alliance between the

working class and the peasantry in the struggle for a better future.

Lenin often returned to this subject. He devoted much time to elaborating the agrarian programme of the Bolshevik Party of which he was the founder. The Party Programme adopted in 1903 demanded that the holdings taken over by the landowners when serfdom was abolished should be returned to the peasants. In 1905 the Party adopted a decision to support all the peasants' demands including the confiscation of the huge estates of the gentry. In December of the same year the programme was developed further: it upheld the revolutionary demands of the peasants to confiscate all estates. The decision of the Party adopted in April 1917 demanded the immediate and full confiscation of all landowners' estates, the transfer of these estates to the peasants without delay and the abolition of private ownership of land.

All this shows that from the time of its emergence the Bolshevik Party displayed constant solicitude for the peasantry. It was understood that only the staunch alliance of the toiling peasantry and the working class under the leadership of the latter would make it possible to perform the vital tasks of reorganizing the social life of old Russia along new, socialist lines.

By pooling their efforts the workers and peasants were not only to take power but to do away with the grim legacy of the past and to turn a new page in the history of Russia. One of their first achievements was the solution of the land problem.

### 3. HOW THE LAND PROBLEM WAS SOLVED

Our neighbour brought the news to my native village of the overthrow of tsarism. The air seemed to be full of trouble and apprehension. Near the grocery store, around the local management office and on the village outskirts groups of men stood talking. They were soldiers demobilized because of war wounds and peasants who had escaped mobilization due to old age or illness. Around them, getting in everyone's way, romped the village boys. Our neighbour, on his way home from the market, halted his horse, climbed out of his wagon and cast a glance at the crowd. He caught my eye and beckoned to me with his finger. Then, handing me a carefully folded sheet of paper he said, "Go ahead, read it."

This was the Manifesto on the abdication of Tsar Nicholas II.

I read it and a deep silence followed. Then each of the men rolled himself a cigarette and resumed smoking. Only one of them, a peasant with a large family and a small plot of land, gave a deep sigh. "Now our day will come," he said with a significant look at the landlord's estate which stretched way beyond the river as far as the eye could see. He must have spoken the men's common thought, for all of them turned to look at the land. Most of the village peasants had small plots and their families lived a hand-to-mouth existence.

Hopes that "the day" would soon come rose higher when the village learned that the Socialist Revolutionaries, better known as the S.R.'s had been given seats in the Provisional Government.

“The S.R.’s are for the peasants,” explained the local grocer. “They want to nationalize all the land and hand it over to those who till it.”

The village waited but the expected day did not come. What came was the news that Maslov, the S.R. minister, had submitted a bill that envisaged the retention of landowners’ estates. This was soon followed by a rumour that, on the orders of the Provisional Government, a punitive detachment had been sent to a village where the peasants had decided to take matters into their own hands and implement the alleged demands of the S.R.’s to confiscate landowners’ estates. There, by means of whip and lead, the peasants were given an explanation of the S.R.’s policy.

Experience showed that S.R.’s words and reality were quite different things.

Only Soviet power brought a solution of the agrarian problem. One of the first decrees of the young Soviet Republic was the Decree on Land which was drawn up by Lenin and passed by the Second Congress of Soviets a few hours after the victory of the October Revolution. It reflected the basic provisions of the agrarian programme of the Bolshevik Party; it proclaimed the confiscation of all landed estates, abolished private ownership of land and handed it over to the peasants without recompense. Out of a source of wealth for the few land became a source of welfare for all.

Nevertheless, such Western Sovietologists as M. Wren and L. Lowton among others, claim that the agrarian problem was solved long before the October Revolution and that at the time of the Revolution more than 90 per cent of all landed

estates had been turned over to small peasant households.

I who witnessed the events of those days can say that on the eve of the October Revolution my landlord was none the poorer and his fellow villagers—none the richer. It was the same all over the country. As shown by the 1917 Census more than 13,000,000 peasant households in 38 regions of European Russia held only 408,442,000 *desyatins* (one *desyatina* = 2.75 acres), i.e. an average of seven or eight *desyatins* for a farm, whereas 78,800 big landowners had a total of 23,447,000 *desyatins*, i.e. an average of almost 300 *desyatins* for each estate.

The peasants were not reconciled to such a state of affairs and demanded a radical solution of the agrarian problem. The Provisional Government registered 900 peasant outbreaks; in several districts peasants seized the landowners' estates.

It is quite natural to ask the Western historians: if the agrarian problem had been solved before the October Revolution, then what accounted for the mass peasant actions, which acquired such scope that Nikitin, Minister for Internal Affairs in the Provisional Government, proposed that cavalry detachments be called back from the front to "give the peasants a lesson" and to defend the old feudal order. The peasants' actions were put down by force.

The October Revolution proclaimed and put into effect the right of peasants to land.

The Decree on Land gave the peasants over 150,000,000 hectares of land for their use rent free. They were also freed from having to pay rent to the landlords, amounting to 700,000,000 odd roubles a year, from the huge expenses in-

volved in renting and purchasing land and from their debt to the Peasant Land Bank of 1,300 million gold roubles.

It was economically indispensable to achieve a radical break-down of old forms of landowning and pave the way for the productive forces that were developing in the countryside.

The long-cherished dream of my fellow villagers finally came true. The toilers on the landlord's property became masters of their country's land.

The Decree on Land, more than anything else, showed the peasants who was their true and disinterested friend. In the Soviet State and the working class they found a reliable leader capable of understanding and fighting for their interests. The Decree brought the working class and the peasantry closer together; it strengthened their alliance and made their friendship indestructible.

In my village, as in thousands of others throughout the country, the toiling peasants welcomed the victory of the October Revolution.

People everywhere were in high spirits. The general feeling can be seen in the peasants' letters to Lenin. Here is an extract from one written by the peasants of a village in the Kursk Region: "We see that you are really for the liberation of poor peasants. It is the Bolshevik Party that is the real fighter for socialism. We did not know who the Bolsheviks were at first. When we learned about them it turned out that we, peasants, are all Bolsheviks." From the peasants of the Tambov Region came the following: "Though we are not Party members, we are Communists at heart and in spirit." The peasants of the Rachin village in the Ryazan Region adopted and sent to Lenin the

following decision: "We citizens of the village of Rachin welcome the policy of our Soviet power and are always ready to rise in its defence."

The peasants welcomed Soviet power as something very dear to them. They immediately felt the benefits of the new order: the landlord system was abolished, they were given the opportunity to work for their own good and to have better food, they enjoyed actual freedom and were aware that their needs and wishes were respected and taken into consideration.

The agrarian reorganization changed the social structure of the village: the number of poor peasants fell sharply in favour of middle peasants. The number of kulaks also decreased.

	Before the Revolution	After the Revolution (1927)
Total of peasant households (millions)	20	25
those of poor peasants (per cent)	65	35
those of middle peasants (per cent)	20	60
those of kulaks (per cent)	15	5

Life in the village quickly improved. Many farm labourers and poor peasants became middle peasants. The average land allotment of each peasant household almost doubled (from seven to 13 hectares). Grain output per farm also increased. Property distinctions were less pronounced than before. Nevertheless the village still had its poor peasants. Poverty was one of the greatest hangovers of tsarist Russia. Many peasants had no tools with which to work the land they had been

given. Agriculture lagged behind the rapidly growing industry; it was unable to satisfy the growing demands of the population for food and of the light industry for raw material.

The entire life of socialist society, the interests of its further development demanded an immediate solution to lift the country out of this backward state.

#### 4. THE WAY THE PEASANT SOUGHT

The main result of the agrarian reorganization effected in the Soviet village is concentrated in one short word, the *kolkhoz* (collective farm). Taken by itself, it reflects all the hopes and aspirations of the Russian peasant, his search for a better life, his firm resolve to be rid of poverty and ignorance.

It was not easy for him to exchange his small holding for membership in a large collective farm. To make this step, the peasants, and they made up the bulk of Russia's population, had to give up a way of life that had through the ages become part of their flesh and blood, a life which, poor and miserable though it was, had become a habit. From being petty proprietors they had to become members of an association based on public ownership and collective labour, something the world had not yet known.

Many historians, economists and politicians felt certain that the reorganization of the village along socialist lines would end in failure. The peasant, in their opinion, was by nature an individualist and a petty owner, a complete stranger to collective forms of labour.



The peasant is, certainly, an owner; an owner of what his land produces which he sells on the market. But being a producer he is a toiler. Lenin laid particular stress on the dual nature of the peasant. As a toiler, he turns to socialism and the working class which he regards as a true and reliable ally in the building of a new and better life. As a petty owner he holds on to his farm and is extremely wary of revolutionary changes in the village.

Despite tormenting doubts during their transition to collective forms of labour, peasants had sought these forms long before the October Revolution, and not in Russia alone. Life itself, and, first of all, the necessity for economic development, forced this quest upon them.

In the 19th century, Europe and North America witnessed the emergence of producers' and consumers' units, known as *phalanges* which were elaborated in the works of the great French utopian socialist and precursor of scientific communism, Charles Fourier. However, there is a vast difference between Fourier's *phalange* and the collective farm. The latter's activities are in keeping with the Soviet system, they are part and parcel of the socialist order, of socialist planned economy. The *phalange*, on the other hand, was a voluntary union of enthusiasts who set themselves up in opposition to the surrounding world where egoism and exploitation reigned supreme. They naively presumed that their participation in collective labour would change the world.

In 1840 the Brook Farm *phalange* was founded in the USA. Nathaniel Hawthorne, the famous American writer, was among its many members,

and worked on the land as an ordinary farmer. In *The Blithedale Romance* he gave an account of the time he spent on Brook Farm. The purpose of the *phalange* was to replace the system of egoistic competition by fraternal cooperation. Hawthorne was carried away by this idea but later realized that there was actually no place for a rationally organized unity in an unreasonable world, that before long it would become submerged by general egoism which would impose its own laws.

His prophecy soon came true. The *phalange* degenerated into an ordinary element of its environment characterized by the spirit of selfish rivalry. The fate of Brook Farm confirms Lenin's well-known thesis that, in capitalist society, any form of cooperative enterprise must inevitably be a capitalist institution. The case is different under socialism where private ownership has given way to public ownership and where a cooperative enterprise is a socialist form of economy.

Lenin regarded agricultural cooperatives as the only way to deliver the countryside from ruin and poverty. In his pre- and post-revolutionary works he showed beyond argument that the small farms, which were uneconomic and prevented a rational exploitation of land, were doomed. The entire course of historical development and life had shown the need to replace small farms with large-scale collective farms. The small farms, wrote Lenin, would continue to wallow in poverty. That is why in principle he was against equal distribution of land among the peasants. A scattered peasant economy was economically unprofitable and could not meet the needs of social development. It became an urgent economic necessity to do away

with all obsolete forms of landowning, including both peasant and landlord ownership of land.

Why then were the peasants' demands on the equal distribution of land included in the Decree on Land? Here is Lenin's answer to this question: "As a democratic government, we cannot ignore the decision of the masses of the people, even though we may disagree with it. In the fire of experience, applying the decree in practice, and carrying it out locally, the peasants will themselves realize where the truth lies."

The adoption of the principle of equal distribution was a concession to the peasants, showing them that the proletarian state respected their wishes.

Lenin did not hurry events, he strongly opposed any semblance of foisting decisions which were still beyond their grasp upon peasants, although, in fact, social progress demanded the implementation of these acts. Nor can it be said that Lenin deviated from the idea of reorganizing agriculture along collective lines, or that he shelved it in anticipation of better times, as is claimed by several Sovietologists.

How the peasants were faring was constantly in Lenin's attention. He was always aware of their aspirations and problems and never begrudged time to study life in the village, to receive messengers from the peasants of different regions, to make trips into the countryside. Lenin corresponded with those who had earlier gone abroad to escape hunger, poverty and oppression at home and who wanted to return to their native land. Lenin spoke at peasant congresses and conferences, worked out laws and resolutions on financial and material aid to the countryside, elaborated

ways of combatting illiteracy and ignorance among peasants, contributed to the spreading of education and agrarian culture in the village. He obliged all the local organizations to make regular reports to the Government on the situation on peasants' farms, state farms, communes, artels, agricultural associations and other organizations formed by the peasants during the first years of Soviet power.

Lenin did not overlook a single aspect of rural life.

Why did Lenin, a proletarian revolutionary, devote so much time and effort to the peasantry? The point is that the working class struggle for liberation was closely linked with the struggle of all oppressed and exploited members of society. In this struggle the peasants were the closest allies and friends of the working class.

Among the many political parties functioning in Russia there were several that called themselves peasants' parties. However, only the Party of the working class made a reality of the peasants' age-old dream of getting the land and enabled them to do away with poverty and ignorance.

The establishment of socialism in the countryside was largely dependent on the implementation of the Lenin cooperative plan. Based on Marxism, this plan envisaged a voluntary transition of peasants to cultivating the land collectively as the only means of improving their lot. The main idea of the plan was to reorganize the countryside along socialist lines through setting up cooperatives which under the Soviet system, when the instruments and means of production are public property, become socialist forms of

economy. The cooperatives were to lead the peasants to new collective forms of labour. The transition was to start with the organization of the simplest forms of cooperatives, first of all consumer, supply-and-marketing cooperatives and then on to producer cooperatives and their highest form, collective farms. The cooperative plan envisaged all-round assistance from the state—financial, technical and cultural—to the countryside.

The peasants, Lenin suggested, shall convince themselves in practice of the advantages of collective farming. Only then would it be possible to draw peasants into collective farms gradually and on a voluntary basis.

How was the Lenin cooperative plan carried out?

### *5. A TRUE GROWTH OF THE NEW SYSTEM*

Cooperatives were set up in the countryside on an extensive scale from the first days of Soviet power. Consumer societies and credit associations, marketing and purchasing cooperatives and associations for processing agricultural produce mushroomed. At the beginning of 1918 there were 54,900 cooperatives. By 1920 this number had grown to 82,000 uniting some 26,000,000 peasants. Local and All-Union cooperative centres were established with the support of the state: Central Union of Cooperatives for the Sale, Purchase and Processing of Seed, Grain and Bread Products, Central Association of Fruit and Vegetable Growers, All-Russia Purchase Union, etc.

The peasants could buy goods at lower prices

at the cooperative shops than at the privately owned ones. The cooperatives also paid them good prices for their produce. The cooperatives benefited the peasants; on the other hand, through the cooperatives the peasants helped the state to solve the important problem of supplying the towns with food. Thus their personal interests were tied up with those of the entire society.

Collective farms, which were the highest form of cooperatives, emerged almost simultaneously with the birth of the Soviet state. They were primarily associations of poor peasants and farm labourers. The first collective farm was established by the peasants of Prishibino village in the Astrakhan Region in October 1917, the month of the Revolution. That same year artels and communes were organized by the peasants of the Moscow, Tver, Kostroma, Petrograd, Tambov and other regions. In 1918 the Peoples' Commissariat for Agriculture of the Russian Federation registered 1,579 collective farms.

The young Soviet Republic was experiencing great hardships at the time. The First World War had left the country on the brink of ruin. The Civil War that followed made it very difficult to develop the economy, and in the meantime the state was acutely short of funds. However, everything possible was done to help the collective farms. The state provided them with cattle, farm implements and loans. In 1918 the Council of Peoples' Commissars allocated over one thousand million roubles for the development of agricultural cooperatives.

What brought the peasants to collective land cultivation, to collective labour? Certain Western historians claim that this was achieved only by

the use of force and coercion. But here is the answer of those who organized the first collective farms. History has preserved many important documents to this effect. Among them is the decision of the general meeting of peasant representatives from the Ostashev district of the Tver Region in 1919 which reads in part: "We have understood that we, poor peasants and toilers, cannot improve our impoverished life and protect ourselves against kulak exploitation individually. . . . We definitely state that our salvation and the welfare of all the toiling people can be achieved only by entering into an agricultural association for collective land cultivation."

The producers' cooperatives had a variety of forms, many of which were, naturally, far from perfect. The peasants had no model to show them how to go about large-scale production based on collective labour and public property. They were the trail-blazers of collective agricultural enterprises.

The embryo of producers' cooperatives was the *supryaga*, a temporary association of several poor, sometimes middle peasants, who pooled their draught animals and farm implements in order to sow and harvest their crops. There were permanent associations for joint working of land known as TOZ. Artels and communes were higher forms of producers' cooperatives where, contrary to the TOZ which retained private ownership of the means of production (these were pooled only during collective field work), the principal means of production (basic farm implements, draught animals, farm buildings) were socialized and all farm operations were performed by collective labour. The income of the artel was distributed

among its members according to work done while TOZ paid its members according to their work and share (number and nature of implements contributed for collective field work). TOZ was organized on the basis of both collective and private ownership with the latter still playing an important role whereas the artel was based entirely on public property, and at the same time, preserved the individual interest of its members. This is explained by the fact that their personal welfare depended on the state of the collective economy; the members' earnings rose with the farm's income. Besides, each farmer retained his personal subsidiary farm, cattle, poultry, small farm implements and his house. In organization of production and distribution along socialist lines, TOZ was behind the artel. The commune, on the other hand, deviated from the conditions of real life. It socialized both the means of production and the personal farms of its members. Its income was distributed equally among the commune members irrespective of the amount of work each member performed. The equalization principle weakened and actually reduced to zero a most important stimulus—the peasants' material incentive—to develop social production. This hamstrung the economy of the communes and the welfare of its members.

Experience confirmed the correctness of Lenin's thesis that a new life should be built not on enthusiasm alone but on the principle of material incentive with the help of enthusiasm.

The artel was much nearer to the peasant than the commune. Though the latter played a predominant role in the first post-revolutionary years, in 1921 it accounted for no more than 15 per cent



of all collective economies. In the years that followed all the communes were gradually reorganized into agricultural artels.

Although the first producers' cooperatives had many organizational shortcomings due to lack of experience they immediately won the support of the peasants, for they showed them in practice the advantages of collective labour. Crop yields rose and living standards were much higher than on the individual farms. A vivid example to this effect was the *Soglasiye* (Concord) collective farm established in August 1918 by the poor peasants in the Tver Region. The first year brought its members the unheard of income of 200,000 roubles.

In 1918 Soviet Russia had 1,579 collective farms, in 1919—6,188, in 1920—10,509 and in 1927—14,800.

State-owned farms emerged side by side with the peasants' first cooperatives on lands on which there were no peasants' holdings. By 1921 the country had 5,356 state farms.

At that time the collective and state farms played only a modest role in the economy of the countryside. In 1927 collective farms accounted for only 0.8 per cent of the country's peasant farms, and the crop yields of state and collective farms for that year did not exceed 580,000 tons against 10,000,000 odd tons produced by the whole country.

However, there were other aspects, besides the economic, to justify the existence of the first state and collective farms—the moral and educational aspects. Speaking at the Congress of Agricultural Communes and Artels in 1919, Lenin stressed that their task was to show the peasants in prac-

tice that "although it is still a small and feeble growth, it is nevertheless not an artificial, hot-house growth, but a true growth of the new socialist system."

Combatting hardships and shortcomings, the first collective and state farms blazed the trail that was to become the highroad to socialism for the entire peasantry.

## 6. A RADICAL CHANGE

Collective farms steadily increased in number every year. This was best proof of the viability of the collective-farm movement which embraced ever broader masses of peasants. It was led by the Communists, true reformers and reorganizers and the heart of the movement. The 15th CPSU Congress, held in December 1927, appraised the obtaining situation and determined the main task of future social development in the countryside: the transition of the small peasant farms to big socialist agricultural enterprises, the collective farms.

This was a timely decision, well in line with the interests and frame of mind of the peasants who by that time realized the advantages of the new system. The results came in fast enough. While in 1927, ten years after the establishment of Soviet power, there were 14,800 collective farms, by July 1, 1929 there were 57,000 collective farms which united over a million peasant farms. From July to December 1929 nearly 3,400,000 individual farms had gone into voluntary association. The Soviet peasants were making a sharp turn from individual to social labour.

In 1929 there was a radical change in the life of the countryside when the mass organization of collective farms began. Now not only the poor but also the middle peasants joined them. Whole villages and districts were joining the collective farms.

The Communist Party, while actively supporting the peasants' movement to set up new collective forms of labour stressed at the same time the principle of voluntary entry into the collective farms and warned against attempts to "decree" the movement from above. It demanded that particular attention be paid to the varying degrees of readiness for collectivization in the different regions of the country.

Early in 1930 the Central Committee of the Communist Party adopted a decision on the rate of collectivization and on measures of the state to facilitate the transition to collective farming. The territory of the USSR was divided into three groups of regions. In the first group were the most important grain-growing regions—the North Caucasus and the Middle and Lower Volga—where there were more big collective and state farms, more tractors and other machinery and greater experience of collectivization; these regions were, in the main, to complete collectivization by 1931. The second group of grain-growing regions—the Ukraine, the Central Black-Earth Regions, Siberia, the Urals and Kazakhstan—by the spring of 1932. The third group which included all the other regions, territories and republics was to complete the task by the end of 1933.

The decision proposed that the peasants choose the artel as the basic form of collectivization, for

it successfully blended the social interests of the collective with the personal interests of a member of the collective farm, yesterday's individual farmer.

The choice of the artel showed a sober and materialist approach to solving the complicated revolutionary problem of transforming the countryside. That approach implied taking into consideration the people's historical experience, the age-old habits of millions of people engendered by the existence of private property. These habits could not be brushed aside and done away with by means of decrees. That approach created favourable conditions for overcoming old habits, developing a new socialist attitude towards labour and turning the peasant into an active builder of socialist society. The correct choice of this form ensured the success of the collective-farm movement.

Large-scale collectivization developed at a record rate. By 1930, 23.6 per cent of all peasant households had joined the collective farms, as against the 3.9 per cent of 1929. In many parts of the country, such as the Volga regions, the North Caucasus and the Ukrainian steppe lands collective farms united more than 70 per cent of the peasantry.

Such an impetuous movement could not be free from shortcomings and even mistakes. In some districts local Party and Soviet workers, in their desire to speed up socialist development in the countryside, ignored the Party instructions and Leninist principle of voluntary collectivization. There were also cases of communes being organized instead of artels. Local conditions were often disregarded.

Enemies of the Soviet state believed that the mistakes and distortions of policy by local organizations would alienate the peasants from Soviet power. These hopes were born of their subjective desire to see collectivization fail. The self-appointed experts on the "mysterious soul" of the Russian *muzhik* could not, or rather, would not open their eyes to objective reality. Paraphrasing Baruch Spinoza, one can say that ignorance is no argument. Recognition of the actual state of things would have enabled historians from the West to see that Soviet power rested on the time-tested alliance of the working class and the peasantry, an alliance steeled in the struggle for a common cause, which enabled the peasant to cast off the yoke of tsarism and the landowners and which effected a solution of the age-old land problem vitally important for the peasants. Such an alliance could not be impaired or torn apart by the errors of individual Party and Soviet workers no matter how grave they may have been, for they had nothing to do with the official policy of the Communist Party and the Soviet state. The Party exposed and resolutely condemned the mistakes and took speedy and decisive measures to correct them. The decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of March 14, 1930 obliged local Party organizations to put an end to forcible methods of collectivization, which should be carried out on the Leninist principle of drawing peasants into collective farms on a strictly voluntary basis, and to discharge workers who failed to correct their mistakes. Another decision taken somewhat later freed the collective farms and farmers from taxes on cattle for a period of two years. Collective farms were given free seed. More

tractors and other machines were sent to the countryside.

From the autumn of 1930 onwards collectivization grew apace. Peasants who had succumbed to anti-collectivization propaganda and left the collective farms surged back in thousands. They were followed by those who had been in doubt.

The advantages of the collective system were evident from the start. By merely pooling their personal implements the collective farmers were able to raise the efficiency of their farms. Collective crop yields were 10-15 per cent above those of individual farmers. The welfare of the farmers improved. A selective investigation carried out in the Central Black Soil Region showed that the total income per collective farmer amounted to 119.58 roubles as against 66.61 roubles per individual farmer.

Not coercion but logic of life brought the peasants into collective farms. This did not escape observation in the West. A *Daily Herald* reporter who visited the Lower Volga and the Northern Caucasus in September 1929 to see how collectivization was being carried out, described its main feature as the penetration of ideas of cooperation into the countryside and mounting evidence that the peasants, especially the poor peasants, could not continue to follow the old way of life.

This was a realistic and correct assessment of the actual state of affairs with only one significant correction to make: the middle peasants also decidedly refused to live the old way. In 1930 the collective farms supplied more than half of the country's marketable grain. They with the state farms became the chief food producers.

The number of collective farms grew steadily and by the end of the thirties united nearly all the peasantry.

The state farms, the state agricultural enterprises, played an important role in developing the Soviet village. The Soviet state put before them two tasks: to supply the towns with high-quality but cheap agricultural produce and facilitate the transition from small individual to large-scale collective farms.

From the outset good-neighbourly relations based on comradesly aid and cooperation existed between the state and collective farms. The state farms helped the collective farms at ploughing time, provided them with high-yielding varieties of seed, gave advice on how to grow good crops, raise animal productivity and organize collective labour.

They organized machine-and-tractor teams to service the collective farms. In 1928 one of these teams gave rise to the first machine-and-tractor station (MTS). The state farms helped the farmers to establish and develop the system of collective farming. Their chief task today is to develop and improve collective-farm production.

Collective and state farms, the two forms of socialist farming, have their specific distinctions.

A collective farm is a cooperative voluntary peasant association governed by the farm management board and its chairman. They are elected by the general meeting, the highest governing body of the collective farm. The collective farm's property and output are owned in common by the collective farmers. Collective farms are based on cooperative or group property, only land which is public property and has been given by the

state to the farmers for use in perpetuity, is excluded. The collective farm's income is distributed according to work-day which is evaluated in conformity with the economic status of each farm. In 1967 the collective farms went over from payment in kind to guaranteed wages.

State farms are state agricultural enterprises whose implements and produce are owned by the state, by the entire people. Although the farm manager is appointed by the state, workers on state farms play an important role in farm affairs. Workers' meetings discuss current, yearly and long-term production plans, standing production conferences have the deciding vote on all production matters. This is in line with one of the principal theses of the Party Programme adopted by the 22nd CPSU Congress (1961) which stressed that socialist democracy in managing state farms would be further developed and the role of workers and employees, general meetings and production conferences would be heightened to decide economic, cultural and everyday problems.

Workers and employees on state farms receive wages and for overfulfilling production plans, bonuses. The system of wages on state farms is constantly improved in order to combine the personal interests of the workers and the interests of social production. This will be discussed in greater detail in the chapter, "Production and Labour: Problems and their Solution."

The most important feature of collectivization in the USSR was that it was carried into life by means of persuasion and example and not by sheer administrative measures and coercion as certain Western "experts" on Soviet reality claim.



## 7. WHY COLLECTIVIZE?

The answers to this question are many and diverse, especially in the West where the problem of collectivization has long attracted the minds of historians and economists. One of the answers attributed the reorganization of agriculture to a blind adherence to the Marxist dogma on the superiority of large-scale agricultural production.

As is known, a dogma is an unalterable concept that disregards specific historical conditions.

The size of this book does not permit the author to dwell on the advantages of large-scale agricultural enterprises over petty farms or to produce data showing how small farms go bankrupt in societies where private property predominates because they cannot compete with big ones. Marxist dogma, the term used by some historians for Marxist theory, is based on actual facts and experience which undoubtedly are known to the Western historians and economists.

The Communists always stressed that small-scale peasant economy could not save the countryside from poverty, that only large-scale socialist farming would bring economic and cultural progress to the village. The truth of what they said has been borne out in practice. The Revolution brought into the life of the Soviet peasants deep-going changes: they became equal citizens, masters of their own land. However, it could not automatically solve the major social and economic problems of rural life. Stratification of the peasants continued to divide them, to a lesser degree though, into the rich and poor; farm production and, particularly, grain production de-

veloped at an extremely slow pace. Even the most back-breaking labour could not ensure a high rate of production, strengthen the rural economy or improve the life of the peasantry. Small-scale peasant economy had, in fact, exhausted its capacities.

Petty, scattered, individual farming lagged far behind the rapidly developing socialist industry. Though it made certain headway it could not satisfy the country's demand for bread and other foods. Although the total volume of farm produce topped the pre-war level, the total grain yield for 1927 amounted to only 95 per cent of the 1913 level. Marketable grain output was only 37 per cent of pre-war production. Such small marketable surpluses were the result of the predominance of semi-natural, poor and middle-peasant farms.

Before the Revolution the big landowners and kulaks produced more than 70 per cent of all the marketable grain. The Revolution abolished landlords' ownership of land and cut kulak land holdings by 50,000,000 hectares. These lands were handed over to the working peasants which enabled them to increase grain output. But the peasants consumed the bulk of this grain themselves leaving only eleven per cent for the market. Grain was in short supply throughout the country. The landlords had been eliminated as grain producers, the kulaks produced only one-third of what they had done, the state and collective farms turned out only in insignificant amount.

The food situation became particularly bad in 1928 when the general grain shortage was accompanied by crop failures in the Southern Ukraine and the Northern Caucasus. The country experi-

enced great hardships in supplying the people with bread and the industry with raw materials.

In 1928 the kulaks made a second attempt to destroy the Soviet state by withholding their produce (the first attempt was made in 1918 when the new-born state of workers and peasants was waging a life-and-death struggle against foreign interventionists and inner counter-revolution). They had huge stocks of grain, but they preferred to let it rot than sell it to the starving Soviet state and used terror against the middle peasants when they tried to do so.

Large pits filled to the brim with rotten wheat, kulaks with shot-guns lying in wait for those who fought to save the grain and give it to the hungry people—these were typical pictures of rural life in 1928.

Where to get grain, how to satisfy the country's demand for bread was the burning issue of those times.

A return to the former agricultural system based on big landed estates and kulak farms was out of the question.

As is known, the agrarian system of tsarist Russia was maintained through the brutal exploitation of peasant labour. Hunger and poverty were always present in the Russian village. The hopeless state of the Russian peasantry was described by Andrei Schingaryev, a prominent figure in the bourgeois Constitutional-Democratic Party (Cadets) and Minister in the Provisional Government—a man who was a staunch supporter of the monarchy. When working as a country doctor he wrote a book about two villages in the Voronezh Region—Novozhivotinoye and Makhovatka—and called it significantly *The Dying-Out Village*.

These two villages, wrote the author, suffered from abject poverty and were swamped in human grief that "rendered every word pale and every thought unfinished." In the preface to the second edition (the first came out in 1907) he wrote: "The six years that have gone by since the time I wrote my book have brought no changes for the better. One can say without doubt that life here has changed only for the worse... it has come to that final stage after which comes extinction." This was true of the huge masses of the peasants under tsarism.

Thus there was no way back to the world where the few benefitted while the masses suffered.

The bread problem awaited another solution. It came in the form of collectivization which was not called into being by subjective desire or based on dogmatic belief, but came as an objective historical necessity.

After the October Revolution the country was faced with the task of building a new socialist economy based on public ownership which precluded all exploitation of man by man. The Soviet Republic set about building and developing its industry in conformity with this historical task. There was an obvious contradiction between the two main branches of economy—large-scale, centralized industry based on public ownership and petty individual farming. Large-scale industry developed along planned lines, whereas small-scale farm production was influenced by market fluctuations. Socialist industry had no room for exploitation of man by man, whereas small-scale peasant economy by its very nature engendered exploiter elements. Socialist industry gave each person equal opportunity to work and to receive

equal pay for equal work. The peasant's income was determined not only by his work but also by his property status: peasant stratification still existed in the countryside. Finally, in large-scale industry the use of modern machinery resulted in rapid progress, while petty, scattered, individual farming precluded the use of modern highly productive machinery and the introduction of scientific management of farms; it was incapable of increasing agricultural output and returned an insignificant amount of marketable produce.

Agriculture was putting a brake on the country's economy. Its backward character had to be overcome as quickly as possible, but in such a way so as to satisfy the growing demands for agricultural produce and at the same time to ensure a steady improvement in the peasant's welfare. Collectivization proved to be the way to do this.

The collectivization of the countryside was carried out in a bitter class struggle, particularly against the kulaks who put up fierce resistance. Some historians in the West allege that the kulaks were peasants of the highest cultural level who were embittered by Soviet power. However, opinions vary. Long before the Revolution Ivan Nikitin, a 19th century Russian poet, described the kulak as a beast who was always "hungry and thirsty for the property of others." This savage instinct which had from the start turned the kulaks against Soviet power and against the builders of a new world became even more acute during the years of collectivization. The kulaks who continued to exploit hired labour were well aware that the collective farms would prevent them once and for all from exploiting the labour

of others, that they would be forced to work for their own living.

The new social forms paving the way to the future were bitterly resisted by those that had already become obsolete. This moribund force employed every means, from provocative rumours to the murder of active Soviet and Party workers in the countryside. Logically this bigoted force was doomed, and its doom was sealed in the process of mass collectivization. The collective-farm movement destroyed the economic base that engendered and nurtured the kulaks, one of the most numerous exploiter classes in Russia. The elimination of the kulaks as a class was carried out by the broad peasant masses. Decisions depriving the kulaks of their property were adopted at peasants' meetings and plenary meetings of the village Soviets.

The kulaks' attitude to the new order decided their fate. Those who were particularly hostile to collectivization were exiled to remote parts of the country; those who showed less resistance were merely sent out of the region or district; kulaks who did not resist to the changes were allowed to stay in the village and even to enter the collective farm if there was someone reliable to vouch for them. During the period between 1930 and 1932 the number of exiled kulak families reached 240,757 which represented less than one per cent of the total number of peasant households and about one quarter of all the kulak farms. There was no question of annihilating the kulaks physically.

The Soviet state helped the exiled kulaks with credits, farm implements and draught animals, allocating for this purpose some 8,000,000 roubles

and 15,000 horses in 1930 alone. Where they settled the kulaks were given homes; new collective farms were set up with their direct participation; many went to work in industry. All this played a substantial role in re-educating the kulaks and turning them into honest workers. In May 1934 former kulaks who had showed themselves to be honest toilers were given the franchise. In 1936 the vote was returned to all ex-kulaks. Many of them waged a selfless struggle against the German fascists during World War II and won honours on the battle-fields.

The landowners were given the same humane treatment by the Soviet state. It did away with landlords' ownership of land, but gave the landlords the opportunity to work for the community; those incapacitated by old age were given pensions. A decree of the People's Commissariat for Agriculture of the Russian Federation of September 16, 1918 permitted local Land Departments to allot holdings to former landlords who had not taken part in counter-revolutionary activities. A month later the People's Commissariat suggested that all incapacitated persons who had been deprived of property as a means of subsistence apply for pensions to the local people's court or the People's Commissariat for Social Security. And it was no fault of Soviet power that only an insignificant number of ex-landowners availed themselves of the opportunity to earn an honest living. Most of the former landowners' attitude to the workers' and peasants' state was one of hostility. They supported counter-revolution and foreign intervention in the hope of restoring the old order.

As a result of the collectivization the socialist

system prevailed both in town and countryside. It demanded the building of a new material and technical base.

## 8. *MANUAL LABOUR MAKES WAY FOR MACHINERY*

The French historian Charles Bouvier considered that in this era collectivization was much too premature, that the Soviet Union lacked the necessary technical base for it.

It is true that the Soviet Union did lack much of what was needed to effect an immediate transition from manual labour to large-scale machine production, but from its first days the Soviet state began to build the necessary base so that agriculture could develop along modern industrial lines. The provisions on building socialist agriculture and the measures to be taken for its implementation, which were adopted by the All-Union Central Executive Committee in February 1919 envisaged employment of the latest developments in science and technology in the rural economy. At a time when the country was locked in battle with counter-revolutionaries and foreign interventionists, when its economy was on the brink of ruin, Lenin dreamed of the country having 100,000 tractors and machine operators.

In the following year, at the Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, Lenin advanced the famous GOELRO plan for the electrification of the Soviet Republic, the long-term, scientifically substantiated programme for rebuilding the national



economy, including agriculture, on a new technical basis for modern large-scale production.

Early in 1923 the Soviet Government adopted a decision on starting the production of tractors, which envisaged a yearly output of 3,400 tractors by the Leningrad *Krasny Putilovets* plant and the Kharkov Locomotive Plant among others. These were the tractor industry's first steps. The Government also allocated special funds from its limited resources for the purchase of tractors abroad, but this was no way of solving the problem.

Industrialization had to be carried out. The state allocated the bulk of its funds for reconstructing demolished enterprises and building new plants and factories. Industrialization made particular headway during the First Five-Year Plan (1928-33), when the stress was on heavy industry which produced the means of production. Among the first plants were such big enterprises as the Stalingrad, Kharkov and Chelyabinsk Tractor Plants, the Saratov Combine Harvester Plant, the Rostov, Gomel and Tashkent Agricultural Machinery Works. The first Soviet factory to turn out tractors, the Stalingrad Tractor Plant, was opened in 1930 at the height of mass collectivization.

Gradually the tractor ousted the horse from the fields. In 1928, on the eve of mass collectivization Soviet farms had 27,000 tractors at their disposal. This number increased to 531,000 in 1940 and to 1,700,000 in 1966.

In 1916 the power capacities in agriculture amounted to 23,900,000 h.p. while in 1966 they reached 250,100,000 h.p. Today power available

per 100 hectares of crop area amounts to 100 h.p. as against 20 h.p. in pre-revolutionary times. During this period power available per farm worker went up more than 15-fold from 0.5 to 7.7 h.p. One should also take into account the capacities of agricultural aviation which wages an incessant chemical war against weeds and pests on some 60,000,000 hectares of land, though it is not taken into account statistically.

Radical changes have been effected in the character of power capacities 98 per cent of which is accounted for by machinery. Gone are the days when draught animals were the only motive power on the farms.

The huge supply of modern machinery that was sent to the countryside within a relatively short period established an industrial basis for the collective-farm system. This machinery was available to all collective farmers. Mechanization of Soviet agriculture was carried out on a nation-wide scale and was immensely facilitated by the machine-and-tractor stations (MTS) that were set up by the state. The MTS provided services to the collective farms on a contractual basis; they ploughed the land, took in crops, trained peasants for work as machine operators, drivers and for other industrial occupations; they spread agricultural knowledge and persuaded the peasants to give up obsolete agricultural traditions for the more productive scientific farming, taught them how to organize and manage large-scale collective economies based on machine production.

The MTS blended to the full the initiative of the farmers and the organizational and technical

aid given by the state.

In 1957 the MTS were reorganized into machine-and-repair stations and their equipment was sold to the collective farms, which by then had sufficient experience both organizational and economic.

Industrially the Soviet village is steadily becoming stronger. Nearly all the basic field operations—ploughing, sowing and harvesting—have been mechanized. Yet all-round mechanization of agriculture has still to be achieved. Potato planting, inter-row cultivation of vegetables, hay-stacking and other field jobs and gardening operations have not yet been fully mechanized. Much remains to be done in this respect in animal husbandry.

Why is agriculture, and particularly livestock breeding, still short of the necessary machinery and farm equipment? To answer this question one must always take into account the unusual technological and economic backwardness of tsarist Russia. In order to mechanize agriculture the Soviet state had to establish an industry capable of reorganizing the rural economy. Nor should the heavy losses inflicted by the Nazi invasion be forgotten. During the war thousands of industrial enterprises were reorganized for war-time production; many plants lay in ruins. The tractor fleet of collective and state farms was reduced from 531,000 tractors in 1940 to 397,000 tractors, mostly in poor repair, in 1945. The entire economy had to be built anew. Plants had to be rebuilt and the tractor industry revived.

There were also other, subjective, reasons for the shortage of farm machinery, such as the un-

justified cuts in investments in agriculture and its mechanization, in particular, that were duly condemned by the 23rd CPSU Congress.

Having overcome all these hardships and shortcomings the country has made far-reaching plans to develop and strengthen the industrial base of the countryside in the current five-year period. Between 1966 and 1970 the villages will receive 1,790,000 tractors, 1,110,000 motor-cars, 550,000 combines and various other machinery. Making allowances for machinery that has fallen into disuse, the number of tractors on collective and state farms will rise to 2,490,000 which is 50 per cent more than in 1965. Within the same period the number of grain combines will go up by more than 50 per cent and that of lorries by 37 per cent.

Technological progress in Soviet agriculture can be seen in the radical improvement in the quality of farm machinery and the introduction of comprehensive mechanization and automation. There is a greater output of high-powered five-nine km.p.h. tractors in place of the former three-four km.p.h. machines. Higher powered tractors (9-15 km.p.h.) with high-speed multi-row combined planters and reapers are under construction. New devices have been installed on the popular CK-4 grain combine enabling the machine automatically to take account of the field structure and to keep to the prescribed level in crop harvesting; a light and sound signal system checks the state of the basic machine parts. For areas subject to soil erosion due to frequent winds, machines are provided with flat-plough attachments which prevent the turning-up of subsoil, and with special sowing machines. Water-sprinklers and

other irrigation equipment are modernized. Particular importance is attached to expanding the output of machinery for the comprehensive mechanization of live-stock farms.

Automation of agricultural operations is being introduced on a broad scale. It is introduced at multi-operation stations for cleaning and drying grain as well as in irrigation operations and on live-stock farms. Up-to-date automated devices are used for operating tractor attachments and self-propelled combines, for regulating the velocity of tractors according to their loads and stabilizing them during operation on sloping lands, among a host of other important processes and operations.

In the next few years state and collective farms will receive a considerable amount of other up-to-date machinery. A series of machines for the comprehensive mechanization of agricultural operations have been designed by Soviet scientists which take into account different agricultural technologies and the different soil and climatic conditions in the country. To achieve the comprehensive mechanization of all branches of agriculture, 851 types of machinery and equipment will have to be introduced on a nation-wide scale. More than one-half of the required types of farm machinery (451) are already being manufactured by the Soviet industry: some are in the process of being developed, while others still need to be devised.

The more modern the technique, the greater its economic profitability. Following a decision of the Soviet Government, prices for farm machinery have been considerably reduced as of January 1966.

The new Five-Year Plan envisages the allocation of more than four thousand million roubles for the building of some 80 new agricultural machinery shops and works.

The electrification of collective and state farms will be developing at a rapid rate. By 1970 these farms will receive 60,000-65,000 million kwh of electric power (a three-fold increase compared to 1965) chiefly from the state power grids. In 1967 the total electrification of all collective and state farms was completed.

With the mechanization of agriculture the countryside will have more workers with technical training. In 1966 collective and state farms employed more than 63,000 engineers and technicians with a higher or specialized secondary education and over 3,000,000 tractor and combine operators and drivers, or twice more as compared with 1950. Their ratio in the total number of farmers and farm workers has gone up from five to almost 12 per cent.

A reliable source of industrial power for the collective and state farms is the entire Soviet economy and above all heavy industry which was built by the entire Soviet people, including the peasants.

That the collective and state farms represent a progressive agricultural system can be seen from another standpoint. According to Western specialists the rational application of modern farm machinery requires a crop area of not less than 160 hectares. Now Soviet agricultural development has been marked by the introduction of large-scale mechanization, and thus the collective and state farm system which is precisely based on the cultivation of large crop areas (an

average of 2,800 hectares per collective farm and 7,300 hectares per state farm) has all the advantages that derive from the most efficient use of farm machinery.

Although Charles Bouvier speaks of the untimeliness of collectivization, he regards collective farming as a radical means of mechanizing and raising agricultural production. By carrying out the mechanization of agriculture and securing a steady increase in harvests, collective farming helps to solve one of the key problems of our time.

## *9. TRANSFORMING THE LAND*

Far and wide stretch the boundless ploughlands of the Soviet farms. Following the October Revolution their area has been enlarged by some 100,000,000 hectares and in 1967 covered more than 224,000,000 hectares of the country's territory. Fifty years of Soviet power brought nearly as much land under the plough as all the preceding ages of agricultural development in Russia.

One need not delve into the remote past to see what painstaking process was the development of new lands for the Russian peasant. Even in the last century the cultivation of undeveloped areas was a slow process, and only easily worked lands were cultivated. The feather grass steppes of Siberia and Kazakhstan, the desert lands of Central Asia and the swamplands of Byelorussia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and North-Western Russia were left untouched.

The Russian peasants had neither tools nor means to exploit the vast riches that these lands

had in store. The small and scattered peasant farms, worked by primitive wooden tools, barely managed to cultivate their own meagre holdings, to say nothing of tackling swamp or desert lands. There was no one to look to for support; each farmer lived on his own scanty means, setting his hopes on sheer luck and wholly dependent on the whims of the elements.

Even today the conquest of nature remains a wish. Such baneful effects as those of droughts often decide the fate of crops in many parts of the country. But the achievements of modern science and technology have made it possible to reduce and in some cases to neutralize the pernicious influence of the elements. The socialist system of agriculture gives the Soviet farmer boundless opportunities for action against unsuitable natural environment; he has learned to remake nature, to make it serve the needs of his farm and his people.

The natural and climatic environment of the greater part of Soviet farmlands is far from being ideal. Only one per cent of the country's crop areas lies in zones with sufficient rainfalls (over 700 mm per annum), whereas in the USA 60 per cent of all the ploughlands has adequate precipitation. Forty per cent of Soviet farmlands suffer from insufficient rainfall (less than 400 mm per annum) as against 11 per cent of US crop areas. The sub-tropical zone on the Caucasian Black Sea coast and in Central Asia, which accounts for a small share of Soviet territory, yields two or three harvests a year. On the other hand, crops sown on the huge stretches of Siberia and Northern Kazakhstan whose territory equals that of several European states barely have time



to ripen before the early winter snow begins to fall. In the west the lands have to be drained of excess water, while in the east the parched soil cracks for want of rain.

The land is a boundless source of national wealth, the basis of agricultural production. Immediately after the Soviet state came into existence it showed great concern for the country's farmlands and undertook measures to improve the soil and to make the correct and rational use of crop areas. A clear example of this concern was the decree allocating 50,000,000 roubles for irrigation, signed by Lenin in 1918, when the young Republic was encircled by a ring of fire and engaged in repelling the attacks of interventionists as well as counter-revolutionary elements inside the country. Even at the height of the struggle with its enemies the Soviet state found ways of helping the farmers with machines and seed. In the grim year of 1918 when the country was salvaging every bit of metal for the defence of its gains, four hundred plants worked to supply the countryside with farm implements.

After defeating the interventionists and the White Guards the Soviet Government set about the task of rehabilitating the country's industry and agriculture whose state was particularly deplorable. In 1920 Red Army soldiers returned to their native villages and took up the plough. They had a great and difficult task before them. In 1922 Soviet crop areas covered only 77,700,000 hectares which was about 40,000,000 hectares less than in 1913. The farmer, however, was not left alone with his troubles; he had the support of the working class and the Soviet state. The town increased deliveries of machines to the country-

side with the result that in 1923 the village had twice as many iron ploughs and more than double the amount of seeding-machines than in pre-revolutionary times. In 1925 the country increased its ploughlands to 104,300,000 hectares.

With the victory of collectivization crop areas began to grow apace. In 1932, two years after the introduction of mass collectivization, they covered more than 134,000,000 hectares and in 1940—150,600,000 hectares. In 1945, following the Hitlerite invasion, ploughlands were reduced to 113,800,000 hectares, but in 1953 the pre-war level was topped by over 7,000,000 hectares. Since then they have steadily increased.

New lands were continuously being brought under the plough. In the fifties huge areas of virgin and fallow land were developed in the eastern part of the country. They amounted to 45,800,000 hectares in 1953 and 89,000,000 hectares in 1964; the output of marketable grain increased threefold within the same period.

Virgin and fallow lands became an additional source of agricultural produce.

Much has been written in the West of the hardships endured by the Soviet people in developing the new regions. Forecasts were made of the inevitable failure of virgin-land farming, which, however, has thrived and continues to score new victories. Of course it was not all plain sailing. There were shortcomings, and mistakes had been, unfortunately, made. Thus, for example, light soils were brought under the plough without adequate consideration of local conditions; spring crops were sown for years at a stretch; fallow lands and fields under perennial grasses were

unwisely sown to crops. All these mistakes, however, were brought to light and rectified.

The Lenin Academy of Agricultural Science held a special session in Tselinograd to discuss the problems of agricultural development in the virgin lands of Northern Kazakhstan and Western Siberia and worked out rational agricultural methods for these regions.

Numerous scientific recommendations have been put into practice. Flat ploughs have been introduced in many parts of Kazakhstan; more land has been given over to perennial grasses and left to lie fallow. Everything is being done to restore and raise virgin land fertility. And man's labours are generously repaid. In 1966 the state and collective farms of the Kazakh Republic sold the state 17,000,000 tons of grain, an eightfold increase over the 1950 harvest. Another bumper crop was taken in the following year.

Thousands of state farms equipped with modern machinery and having modern housing have been organized in the newly developed regions. Huge areas that had been wastelands until recently are now crisscrossed with railways and highways, electric and telephone wires. The efforts of Soviet workers, farmers and scientists have brought to life millions of hectares of land, and the wealth of this land has been placed at the service of man.

Nowhere in the Soviet Union is the problem of water so acute as in Soviet Central Asia. There is an old saying that is still common in these parts: "Where water comes to an end life stops." Temperature in the desert rises to 50°C, while the temperature of the sand reaches 80°C. Such heat is fatal to protein—the basis of every living cell—

and leads to its coagulation. The sky is cloudless nearly all the year round; the average annual precipitation does not exceed 100-150 mm. But unirrigated farming requires a minimum of 250 mm. Thus for ages lay the slumbering deserts waiting for the miracle that would bring them to life. That miracle was the waters of the copious Asian rivers: the Amu-Darya, Syr-Darya, Vakhsh and others, which turned the barren sands into fertile plains.

Irrigation is the key to agricultural development, to prosperity of the farmers and all the people. And it was to the construction of irrigation systems that the collective farms of Central Asia and Kazakhstan applied their resources. The irrigation campaign made great headway in 1939 when thousands of volunteers from among the farmers, workers and intelligentsia pooled their efforts to speed up the job. "People's Construction Sites" was the name given to canals under construction. The first of these was the 32-kilometre Lyagansk Canal in Uzbekistan, which was laid at record-breaking speed in 17 days instead of the contemplated two years. Thirty thousand farmers made short work of the first irrigation system that was to bring new life to the desolate stretches of land.

The next was the Great Ferghana Canal, a 330-kilometre-long excavation built in an astonishingly short period of 46 days (between August 1 and September 15, 1939). It took 200,000 volunteers less than two months to erect an irrigation system more than ten times the size of the 30-kilometre Hungry Steppe Canal which took the tsarist government eleven years to build.

The first canals were rather simple construc-

tions built exclusively by hand, the chief tools being the spade, the iron hoe with a long wooden handle and the wheelbarrow. The state rendered considerable aid to the builders and later took full charge of irrigation construction. Manual labour was ousted by machinery. Today canal builders have at their disposal the entire stock of modern building machinery including excavators, scrapers, bulldozers, suction dredges and automatic electronic devices that operate excavating machines. TNT breaks the way through rocks and mountains. Many original hydro-technical projects have been accomplished by Soviet builders.

The 800-kilometre Kara-Kum Canal between the Amu-Darya and Ashkhabad, the capital of Turkmenia, has been built in the Central Asia desert. The Canal will further stretch to the Caspian Sea thus becoming the world's longest man-made river (1,300 km). Among other hydro-technical projects built in this area are the new Farkhad hydro-electric station and reservoir, the chain of power stations on the river Chirchik. The Nurek power plant and several other hydro-electric and thermal power stations with high aggregate capacities using natural gas are under construction. The strengthening of the power base with the help of highly efficient modern machinery has made it possible to irrigate lands situated in the mountain foot-hills and upon high plateaux that were formerly difficult to reach. The newest technology in mechanized watering has been applied, while a ramified water-collector network and drainage system prevent salinity. As irrigation is being applied on a broader and broader scale, new advantages gained by the use of machinery in agricultural production become apparent.

Irrigation systems are expanding on a nationwide scale. Water reservoirs and canals have changed the face of arid Central Asia and Southern Kazakhstan, the Transcaucasus and the draught-ridden steppes of Russia and the Ukraine. They have led to the birth of new towns and villages; lands that have long lain waste bring in bumper crops of cotton and grain; orchards and melon-fields, gardens and vineyards have turned these regions into a paradise for man.

In the north-western part of the country, in Byelorussia, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, the Smolensk Region and other non-black soil parts of Russia, and in the Kolkhida lowlands of Georgia, man has launched a struggle against swamps and marshes. Drained of excess water these areas yield abundant crops: 30-40 centners of grain, 300 centners of potatoes and 400 centners of sugar-beet per hectare.

The victory gained over the desert lands and marshes has had a great impact on the wellbeing of collective farmers. This is a key requisite for the development of new lands, a process that is constantly under way in the Soviet Union.

Under Soviet rule the area of irrigated lands has gone up from 4,000,000 to 10,000,000 hectares. Drained lands have increased threefold and today amount to 10,600,000 hectares.

This is only a prelude to the colossal projects envisaged for the near future. The programme designed by the Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee in May 1966 contemplates an increase of meliorated lands by an additional 22,000,000-24,000,000 hectares in the next 10 years (by 1975). The area of swamp and desert

lands reclaimed within this time will represent the greatest achievement in the entire history of irrigated farming in the country. Scientists have estimated that the country's land and water resources are sufficient to provide for an increase in the total area of irrigated land to 70,000,000-80,000,000 hectares and the improvement of millions of hectares to serve as ploughland, meadows and pastures. Field-protecting forest plantations will be set up to combat erosion and protect crops against dry winds.

Considerable funds and material and technical equipment will be allocated for accomplishing this nation-wide task. Between 1966 and 1970 alone some 15,000 million roubles or an average of 3,000 million roubles yearly will be spent on melioration and development of new lands. The latest achievements of technology will be applied for this purpose. These are the greatest investments ever made by the Soviet state in the reclamation of land as the basic means of raising agricultural production.

Up till now irrigated lands were used exclusively for growing cotton and other intensive crops, notably industrial crops and vegetables. While the area under industrial crops will be steadily increased, there will also be an increase in the cultivation of grains, and above all of wheat, rice and maize, on irrigated and reclaimed lands. In 1967 wheat crops were sown on more than 1,000,000 hectares of newly developed ploughland. By the end of the current five-year period this area will yield some 16,400,000 tons of grain, and in the following five years (by 1976) 34,000,000-36,000,000 tons. Land reclamation measures will strengthen the grain economy of

the country, which will no longer be dependent on favourable climatic conditions.

The development of the virgin lands and the reclamation of deserts and marshes have not only expanded the area under crops but have altered the geographical features of many crop cultures. Thus wheat has spread to the north, while rice has made its way from Central Asia, Southern Kazakhstan and Transcaucasus to the Kuban, Don, Lower Dnieper, Dniester and other regions farther to the north. Maize, sugar-beet and sunflower have also moved to new areas. The world's northernmost tea plantations and tangerine groves are situated in Georgia. Thanks to the activities of the followers of Michurin, fruit orchards blossom in the environs of Leningrad and in Siberia.

Chemistry is also finding an increasing application in agriculture. The supply of mineral fertilizers to collective and state farms is on the upgrade. Their deliveries have gone up from 5,350,000 tons in 1950 to 27,066,000 tons in 1965, and will reach 55,000,000 tons in 1970. The increase made it possible to use the fertilizers not only in the growing of cotton and other industrial crops but also in grain production. Fertilizers and chemical weed and pest killers enable farmers to make more effective use of each hectare of irrigated or drained land.

There has been a considerable improvement in the means of combatting blights, diseases and plant and animal pests.

Mechanization, land reclamation and chemistry have opened broad vistas for the development of agriculture and its intensification. The latter envisages the introduction of scientific methods into agriculture.



What is the organizational basis of agricultural science in the Soviet Union? How did it start and what are its achievements today? What problems does it face?

## 10. SCIENCE AND AGRICULTURAL PROGRESS

Kliment Timiryazev, the great Russian scientist, wrote that the peasant lived on the plant and not on the land; that is why the art of agriculture consists in delivering the plant and, consequently, the tiller from the "power of the land."

Man's struggle to deliver himself from the land's whims goes back to remote antiquity. To-day its results can be observed in the achievements of land reclamation, which has turned deserts and marshes into fertile fields, in the progress of agronomy, selection, soil science and physiology. Its achievements and successes are made possible by the unity of science and labour, theory and practice.

The seed of this alliance has long found favourable ground in Russia. Its first shoots came in the form of the peasant's spontaneous quest for knowledge. For ages his inquisitive mind sought to uncover Nature's secrets, to learn the intricate processes of plant and animal life. Ages of ignorance and oppression could not extinguish this insatiable thirst for knowledge. From the Russian peasantry rose a number of gifted personalities whose exceptional diligence and talents manifested themselves in the magnificent results of their creative work. One of these was Danila Bokaryov, a serf who lived in the 19th century in the village

of Alexeyevka in Biryuchansk district of the Voronezh Region. He turned the decorative sunflower into a food crop which became a source of valuable vegetable oil. Earlier in the same century Vasily Shishkin, also a serf, accomplished what Mikhail Dunin, a professor of the Moscow Agricultural Academy named after K. A. Timiryazev, called an almost scientific feat: Shishkin raised a new breed of horses known as the Orlov trotter, which was named after Count Orlov, the master of the talented serf and the owner of the stables where Shishkin carried out his experiments. The Count got all the credit for the achievement, while Shishkin remained merely an instrument. Despite the conditions in which he lived, the peasant continued to search for new methods of selection, to find better ways of crop growing. One can only regret that the names of these pioneers of agricultural science have fallen into oblivion.

The achievements of Russian pre-revolutionary science, however, were not made only by laymen. Many remarkable discoveries were made by outstanding Russian scientists of world renown, including Pavel Kostychev and Vasily Dokuchayev—the theoreticians of soil science, and Kliment Timiryazev, the founder of the Russian school of physiology of plants. Timiryazev welcomed the October Revolution and put his heart and soul into his work. It was then that he arrived at the idea of the unity of science and democracy and called upon scientists to bring education to the workers and peasants to bridge the gap between physical and mental labour.

A truly boundless gulf lay between science and the impoverished ignorant Russian villages. The number of scientific establishments concerned

with agriculture was ridiculously small. A country with more than 20,000,000 peasant households could boast only 44 laboratories and 170 experimental stations with a staff of 440. Today the Soviet Union has over 1,300 research institutions in the field of agriculture and forestry, which in 1965 together with the agricultural educational establishments employed more than 30,000 scientific workers, to say nothing of economists. Their work is guided and coordinated by the Lenin All-Union Academy of Agricultural Science.

The October Revolution gave new impetus to the development of agricultural science. Former estates were converted into experimental stations. Despite the critical economic situation the Soviet Government showed great concern for the development of agronomical education. In 1918 several million roubles were allocated to complete the building of the Voronezh Agricultural Institute which was started in 1913.

In the post-revolutionary years much was done by the scientists to raise the productive forces in agriculture. In an interview given to the author, Pavel Lobanov, President of the Lenin Academy of Agricultural Science, although himself an economist, started off with the successes of Soviet selection. He did so because they show most clearly the transforming nature of agricultural science. Soviet selection is relatively young: its foundations were laid by Lenin's decree on the development of seed-farming: organizing the production of high-grade seeds and supplying them to farmers. This was a complex task that involved the creation of new high-yielding varieties of crops and introducing them on a nation-wide scale.

Within a short period of time Soviet selectionists have produced high-yielding varieties and hybrides of grain for all the grain-farming regions of the country. Soviet seed varieties are used in cotton growing. In the last few years Soviet selectionists have produced 460 varieties of grain adapted to different natural and climatic zones, some 100 varieties and hybrides of maize, over 120 kinds of leguminous plants, numerous varieties of sunflower, sugar-beet and other cultures.

In pre-revolutionary Russia grain varieties were purchased abroad. Today the produce of Soviet selectionists is highly popular in many countries of the world. Five European countries have given over more than 3,000,000 hectares of land to winter wheat of the *Bezostaya I* variety. Six European countries and Canada cultivate Soviet varieties of sunflower.

Among the forerunners of Soviet selectionists were such prominent scientists as Ivan Michurin and Nikolai Vavilov, the first President of the Lenin Academy of Agricultural Science. Michurin worked out the scientific methods of selection and with these methods created over 300 new varieties of fruit and berry plants. Nikolai Vavilov is responsible for the unprecedented work which led to the vast collection of cultured plants from different parts of the world. He laid the foundation for the scientific introduction of plants into different natural environment and discovered the homologous series law. Vavilov's law enabled selectionists to distinguish the variety of forms and species of cultured plants, to systematize them and study their evolution, and select the most suitable forms for the creation of new varieties of cultured plants.

Vavilov's work enabled Academician Pavel Lukyanenko, a prominent Soviet selectionist, to achieve a radical transformation of winter wheat varieties cultivated in the Northern Caucasus, a large grain-growing region of the country. Yields that never went above seven to nine metric centners per hectare before the Revolution today amount to 29-30 metric centners.

Among Lukyanenko's achievements is the *Bezostaya I* variety of winter wheat, which as a rule brings in 52.6 metric centners per hectare and is popular for its outstanding bread-baking qualities. A new variety of winter wheat created in 1967 and known as the *Aurora* gives an average yield of 60.6 metric centners per hectare, is resistant to diseases and has a firm and resilient stalk. The new *Caucasian* variety, apart from being highly productive like the *Aurora*, is particularly suited to the conditions of irrigated lands.

Academician Fyodor Kirichenko deserves credit for creating a new crop, hard winter wheat which he produced in three varieties: *Michurinka*, *Novaya Michurinka* and *Yantarnaya* which yield up to 40 metric centners per hectare, are frost-resistant, have perfect bread-baking qualities, and what is most important of all, contain from three to four per cent more protein than soft winter wheat.

New varieties of sunflower created by Academician Vasily Pustovoit contain 52 per cent and, under particularly favourable conditions, 57 per cent of oil as against 28-33 per cent yielded by the usual varieties.

Soviet selectionists, including Avedikt Muzlunov and Nikolai Savchenko, have produced new varieties of sugar-beet with a four per cent higher sugar content. Such an increase may seem insig-

nificant, but on a nation-wide scale 0.1 per cent of sugar content amounts to more than 550,000 tons of sugar.

Another significant achievement was the creation of monoseminal varieties and grades of sugar-beet, which has made it possible to fully mechanize its cultivation. Intensive work has been recently carried out to create sugar-beet polyploids several hybrides of which have already been introduced into crop farming. They yield 60 centners of sugar per hectare, which tops the sugar content of the usual varieties by eight to ten per cent.

It would take a separate volume to enumerate all the achievements of Soviet selectionists, who are constantly faced with the task of solving new and often complex problems. Intensification of farming, the unprecedented rate of land improvement, extensive application of fertilizers and the improvement of agricultural methods have raised the demand for new varieties of crop cultures (particularly wheat) capable of bringing in high yields and having sturdy stalks to support the weight of heavy ears.

Today many other problems have arisen in farming. They have become an object of intense investigation by Soviet scientists. The results of their work are finding a broad application in everyday life. A ramified network of seedfarms provides collective and state farms with new varieties of crop cultures. The state and collective farms with their vast ploughlands and high level of mechanization have no difficulty in ensuring their output.

For all the importance of selection in agricultural production, its fullest advantages can be

brought out only by observing a set of conditions. These are created by agronomical, economic and organizational measures closely connected with the entire selection process. This set of conditions creates the scientific technology of agricultural production.

Soviet scientists and specialists have long worked out the basis of this technology—a series of scientifically-grounded farming schemes for 35 natural and economic zones of the country. These contain recommendations on the most rational, intensive, economically substantiated farming methods fully conforming to the local conditions of each zone.

Scientific recommendations are drawn up in close cooperation with practical workers in agriculture. These are far from being fixed recipes to be used indefinitely on each farm; always in line with the newest developments in science and the latest experience, they are designed to provide the main direction for agricultural production, which is followed by each farm according to its own specific needs.

Helminthology as a new branch of science has been created by a group of Soviet scientists headed by Academician Konstantin Skryabin. Its achievements are applied extensively in medicine, veterinary science and in plant-growing. Numerous vital problems are being tackled in livestock farming. Substantial achievements have been made in raising productivity of cattle through interbreeding. Scientists working in the field of mechanization have designed a series of machines for the comprehensive mechanization of agricultural production. Scientific investigations have greatly promoted land improvement.

Ever greater attention is being paid to economic problems. Scientists are bringing to light the mechanism of such economic categories as price, profit and efficiency and their significance for socialist agriculture.

Considerable experience accumulated in managing large-scale cooperative economies and extensive theoretical studies in the field of agriculture open broad vistas for the application of the achievements of modern science and advanced practical experience in agricultural production and placing it on a scientific basis. And a foremost requisite for the accomplishment of this task is the ever closer unity between theory and practice.

Many state and collective farms have experimental stations and centres where scientists and local specialists and farmers work side by side in solving various theoretical problems and introducing scientific methods into farming.

Besides working on everyday problems, scientists do research on more fundamental aspects of agricultural production. They conduct theoretical and practical investigations whose purpose is to evolve principally new ways and methods of increasing agricultural production and raising labour productivity. The problems studied include that of photosynthesis (whose theoretical foundations were laid by Kliment Timiryazev), or how to make the most efficient use of solar energy as the basic source of organic substance, the problem of heterosis, which enables to raise the productivity of agriculture and improve the quality of its produce through minimum labour and fund expenditure; the problem of raising soil fertility and developing selection with a view to producing crop varieties resistant to frosts and droughts, and special



species for irrigated farming; the problem of raising the quality of agricultural produce and bringing nearer the time when its value will be estimated by the amount of protein, oil, sugar, etc. yielded per hectare of grain, sunflower, sugar-beet, etc.

Of late a deeper insight has been gained into the vital problems of genetics. The achievements of modern physics and chemistry have made it possible to conduct new research into the properties of the living cell. Scientists now have the possibility of arriving at a better understanding of the role of its separate structures through control of the processes that take place in the structures. The former erroneous attitude towards the study of genetics hampered scientific and practical work in the field of selection and in stock breeding. Today research work in all spheres of biology is expanding; greater attention is being paid to the further development of the rich heritage left by such prominent scientists as Kliment Timiryazev, Nikolai Vavilov, and Ivan Michurin.

Science coupled with practical work is bringing closer the solution of a vital problem first pointed out by Lenin: to transform land cultivation from a spontaneous occupation to one based on the achievements of science and technology.

The development of science and technology has created the conditions for the change-over from extensive to intensive agriculture. Intensification, besides being a scientific and technological process, is at the same time and above all a socio-economic process. It is basically linked with the problem of agrarian overpopulation. The agricultural economy of the Soviet Union, by virtue of

its planned development, is secure from the baneful effects of intensification, which is developed in the interests of each farmer and the society as a whole.

How is agricultural planning effected in the USSR?

## *11. PLANNED OR SPONTANEOUS DEVELOPMENT?*

L. Litoshenko, an opponent of Lenin's plan for the socialist reorganization of the countryside, claimed that the village would continue to "grope along the road of spontaneity, that would finally lead to an agricultural system remote from all socialist utopias."

One can still come across such fifty-year old allegations in the works of contemporary Western authors.

To see which road held the greatest prospects for the Russian village, that of planned or spontaneous development, one must turn to history, to actual experience.

The rural economy of Russia consisted of a large number of small isolated farms. It was impossible to manage agricultural production according to a single national economic development plan, and the Soviet state did not consider this an immediate task. It exerted a systematic influence on the rural economy using commodity-money relations for the purpose. Industrial plans envisaged a steady increase in the output of farm machinery and implements, textiles, clothes, footwear and other commodities for the rural population. Deliveries of these goods led to a continuous

increase in food products for the town. The state system of finance and credit helped the farmers to set up consumers' and marketing cooperatives which protected them against profiteers and usurers. Contracts between farmers and state organizations in charge of purveyance ensured and guaranteed profitable marketing of farm produce. The state set up stations that let out farm machines for hire; it provided the village with a steadily growing amount of machinery, advanced seed and enhanced agronomical services in the countryside. All these actions were fully appreciated by the farmers.

State projects having a direct bearing on agricultural production were elaborated immediately after the Revolution. In 1918 the government drew up plans for the development of agricultural machine-building and the construction of irrigation systems in Turkestan. In 1920 the 8th All-Russia Congress of Soviets adopted a plan for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the national economy on the basis of electrification (GOELRO Plan), which envisaged alongside industrial development the improvement of agricultural methods, the building of irrigation and drainage systems, expansion of ploughlands and preparation for the change-over to large-scale mechanized collective farming.

Under the First Five-Year Plan (1928/29-1932/33) an extensive programme was developed for the reorganization of the village along collective lines. The achievement of mass collectivization led to radical changes in the rural economy, which was no longer based on private ownership and individual labour but on public ownership and collective labour. The gap between

socialist industry and individual farming had been bridged. Socialist agriculture became an integral part of the entire socialist economy. This transformation led to direct planning of agricultural development.

The planned management of agricultural production is based on a combination of centralized state planning with local initiative of collective and state farms, with extensive democratization of all economic activities. This democratization manifests itself during the elaboration of the national economic plan whose foundations are laid by all the collective and state farms. The state takes upon itself the task of planning the targets of state purchases and thus guarantees the sale of agricultural produce. As for the planning of agricultural production, it is the farms which decide on the types and amount of crop cultures to be sown, the specific distribution of land for different purposes, the number of live-stock to be maintained, etc.

The fulfilment of the plan is profitable to the state, the collective farm and to the individual farmer. By boosting the output of farm produce, the collective farm increases the country's food resources and thus also the income of farms and farmers.

Economic interest is also playing an increasing role in the plans of state farms. Here too the efficiency and profitability of the farm have a direct bearing on the workers' earnings. The worker on the state farm is not merely hired labour power with wages as the only bond between him and the farm. He is the co-owner of the people's property and particularly of the state farm where he works.

This feeling of ownership can be observed in the earnest attitude shown by the workers during the elaboration of the farm's production plan at farm meetings and in the competition to fulfil and overfulfil the plan.

The broad participation of farmers and workers in drawing up the collective and state farms' production plans accounts for the exceptional viability of the plans; each regards a plan as the result of their collective creative efforts, as something that is particularly dear to them and the realization of which is of vital importance.

The plans of collective and state farms go to the making of the national agricultural development plan. Their coordination begins in the farm district and then works up through regional and territorial bodies to the republican planning bodies; these latter bodies elaborate draft plans for the Union Republics, which are then submitted to the state planning bodies. The State Planning Committee of the USSR after coordinating the draft plans elaborated by the Republics, various ministries and departments with plans for other branches of the economy, produces a draft plan for the development of agriculture throughout the country. This draft plan is then considered by the USSR Council of Ministers.

The economic life of the country, including the development of each particular farm, follows the path mapped out in yearly and long-term (five-year) plans, which are elaborated on the basis of the latest findings in science, technology, and economics. The scientific foundation of planning ensures a continuous development of social production and the rise in the people's living standard.

The key task in planning is to determine the best and most efficient proportions and structure for the national economy and the most advantageous employment of economic levers in economic development. A characteristic example is the Eighth Five-Year Economic Development Plan for 1966-70. What the Plan aims to accomplish economically is to ensure a considerable industrial upsurge and high and stable rates of agricultural progress by making the fullest use of scientific and technological achievements and the entire industrial potential of the country and thereby create conditions for the fullest satisfaction of the material and cultural requirements of each Soviet citizen.

The level attained in the development of Soviet economy has made it possible considerably to increase the rate of agricultural progress and to bring this rate closer to that of industrial development. This is one of the targets of the Eighth Five-Year Plan. In this connection the national income has been redistributed in favour of agriculture, while priority development for the production of the means of production is retained. The basic production assets of the country will on the whole go up by 50 per cent, including a 60 per cent rise for industry and a 90 per cent increase for agriculture. State allocations for industrial construction and technical equipment for agriculture alone will amount to 41,000 million roubles, which is double the amount assigned in the preceding five-year period. Besides, there are investments by collective farms for the expansion of their economies, which total 30,000 million roubles. The economy of the collective farms has been considerably strengthened by such state

measures as raising purchase prices for farm products and improving the system of state purchases, cutting prices for industrial goods that are intended for the countryside and revising the system of credits for collective farms, introducing guaranteed wages for collective farmers and other means of material incentive to stimulate collective and state farm production.

Western writers often claim that all plans block initiative, particularly that of the farmers, that they are nothing but administrative orders from above. But is the work of a builder hindered by the architectural blueprint, or can a musician do without musical scores? The same applies to agriculture: is it not better to consider and plan beforehand what must be done in the economic sphere?

As in the case of anything that is new, the development of the Soviet economy along planned lines was not free of shortcomings. When economic planning was put into practice, subjectivism and voluntarism were sometimes substituted for scientific reasoning, purely administrative methods ousted economic methods of national development. These faults ran counter to the scientific basis of planning, which proceeds from the objective requirements and possibilities of social development.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union severely criticized the mistakes and shortcomings in planning and managing the agricultural economy and took steps to raise the scientific level of agricultural planning.

Agricultural progress is closely linked to the growth of the national economy as a whole owing to a single planned system. The rapid upsurge of

industry and transport called for additional manpower. The number of workers and employees in the country soared from 13 million in pre-revolutionary years to 24.2 million in 1932, 33.9 million in the pre-war year of 1940 and to 83 million in 1967. The country's rapid industrialization and the successful mechanization of agricultural operations brought millions of former farmers into industry. The administration of plants and construction sites often sent representatives to the countryside to recruit workers. The newcomers were freely taught various industrial trades. Everyone kept pace with life; there was work for all in the huge socialist economy that was forging full speed ahead.

Actual experience swept aside all doubts as to whether the village would tread the road of spontaneous or planned development. Within a short period the planned system effected a radical change in the countryside; large-scale mechanized collective farms became the basis of agricultural production in the Soviet Union.

There is, however, another factor, besides that of mechanization of farms, which is of key importance for the development of agricultural production: the material interest of the farmers in the results of their labour.

## *12. INCENTIVE: DOES IT EXIST FOR THE SOVIET FARMER?*

This question has led to much controversy among Western economists. Some claim that the Soviet farmer has no interest in working on a



collective farm, while others reject this point of view.

To find out who is right one must first become acquainted with the point at issue, that is, with collective-farm life, or better, with the life of a specific collective farm.

The collective farm described in this chapter is one in the making of which the present author had taken part. The *Pobeda* farm is located in the environs of the large southern city of Rostov-on-Don. It was set up in 1930 by the joint efforts of 20 families of farm labourers, 69 families of poor peasants and 208 middle-peasant farms. The state gave them 3,222 hectares of land for their permanent use and free of charge, which was tilled at that time by three tractors confiscated from the kulaks, 119 oxen and 309 horses. The dilapidated sheds were converted into live-stock farms for 27 cows and bull-calves and 11 pigs.

Soon the state set up a machine and tractor station which took over all the ploughing, sowing and harvesting operations. When the MTS were reorganized in 1958 the collective farm bought up its equipment and repair shop. In 1966 the farm had a fleet of 60-odd tractors, seven combines, some 40 motor cars and numerous electric motors. In the beginning the power capacity of the farm amounted to about 0.5 h. p. per farmer. Thirty-six years later it amounted to more than 10 h. p. per farmer. The number of households had doubled (from 297 to 600); the crop area had increased fivefold (from 3,222 to 15,000 hectares) and the land had become more fertile. Before collectivization 7 to 8 metric centners of winter wheat per hectare was considered

good. Today's wheat yields amount to 23-25 metric centners per hectare. In 1930 the farm produced 18 metric centners of grain per hectare for each working farmer, and in 1957 nearly 150 metric centners. Its well-equipped stock farms accommodate over 2,000 head of cows, bulls, sheep and pigs.

Wormwood wastelands that were formerly considered unsuitable for farming are now covered with orchards and vineyards. Not a single bit of land has gone to waste on the farm.

Seven agronomists and many other specialists work on the farm. Hundreds of farmers have gone to study in agrotechnical schools.

In 1966 the farm produced grain, meat, milk, vegetables, fruits and grapes for a sum topping 5,000,000 roubles, a sixteenfold increase over the 1930 figure.

The growth of social production is followed by a rise in the farmers' living standard. In the last seven years alone the personal incomes of farmers have more than doubled.

The farmer's personal income is not only the remuneration which he receives for his labour. The farm uses its public consumption funds to satisfy the various personal requirements of the farmers. They are used to maintain nurseries and kindergartens, to pay out temporary incapacity allowances, to provide farmers with holiday pay and with accommodation at sanatoria and rest homes, to contribute to the all-Union pension fund, to maintain the farm club and the library. The collective farm spends over 100,000 roubles yearly for these purposes. Like all Soviet citizens collective farmers enjoy free education and free medical services.

What does participation in social production give the farmer and his family? One can find out the answer by paying a visit to the author's fellow-villager, Andrei Mukhanko. Mukhanko is an old farmer, formerly a poor peasant. Old-timers still remember his tumbledown straw-covered hut.

There are seven in the family: Mukhanko himself, his wife, son, daughter-in-law and three grandchildren. Three of them are working: Mukhanko is the assistant manager, his son Vasily works as a loader, his daughter-in-law is a milkmaid. Their combined yearly earnings from the collective farm amount to more than 2,500 roubles, of which some 1,900 roubles are received in money and the remaining some 600 roubles in the form of various benefits from the farm's public consumption fund. In 1967 these benefits included free accommodations for Mukhanko in a sanatorium and for his son in a rest home, maternity leave pay for his daughter-in-law and sick-leave pay for Vasily, free year-round maintenance of the youngest grandchild in a nursery and a month's stay of the eldest grandchild at a pioneer camp.

Besides, the family derives an income from its subsidiary farm. The right of all farmers to have such farms is fixed by the Constitution of the USSR.

Mukhanko's personal farm plot includes a fruit orchard and a kitchen-garden. There are premises for poultry, a pig and a cow. Each member of the family likes to do a bit of work in the garden. But the family devotes most of its time to the collective farm which it regards as the chief source of its income. Cash income from the subsidiary plot does not exceed ten per cent of

the total income; the other 90 per cent is earned through work in social production. Most of the food products are provided by their subsidiary plot and this frees their budget for other expenses. Bread is purchased at the farm at cost price.

The family's income covers all the daily expenses and enables them to make savings. Thus the Mukhanko family managed to build a roomy brick house and to buy modern furniture.

The Mukhankos are not an exceptional case. All the members of the collective farm, and these include former farm labourers, poor and middle peasants, have attained prosperity.

The size of the farmers' income directly depends on the farm's economic growth, and the development of the national economy as a whole. The richer the farm, the wealthier the country—the higher the farmer's income. That is why collective farmers are personally interested in increasing the collective wealth of their farm, and hence the wealth of their country. The merging of personal interests with those of the society represents one of the strongest points about the collective-farm system. This is clearly shown by life on the *Pobeda* collective farm.

The Communist Party of the Soviet Union lays particular stress on raising the material interest of the farmers in the results of their labour. This is not a time-serving undertaking, but rather shows a deep understanding of the laws and requirements of the development of Soviet society. It was Lenin who taught the Party the materialist approach to the solution of social problems. Speaking in 1921 at the 10th Congress of the Communist Party, at which the situation in agricul-

ture was one of the key items on the agenda, Lenin said, "The important thing is to give the peasants an economic incentive."

Proclaimed nearly fifty years ago, this policy still holds true today and remains a key factor in the life of the new socialist village. Lenin's theses formed the basis of the propositions adopted at the March (1955) Plenary Meeting of the CPSU Central Committee and the 23rd Party Congress, which lay particular stress, in working out a firm economic basis for an upsurge in agricultural production, on the material incentive in labour.

Commenting upon the decisions of the March Plenary Meeting, Leonid Brezhnev, First Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee, said: "The Party holds that the tasks of achieving a further rise in agricultural production are essentially linked to the improvement of the farmers' welfare. Only by raising their incomes, living standards and cultural level can greater efficiency be achieved in agricultural production."

How is this policy implemented? What advantages does it bring to collective and state farms? What makes it a viable policy?

First, let us take the plans for grain purchases. It should be noted that formerly these plans were often altered in the process of production. Now they are adopted several years ahead and are not to be changed within this period. The collective and state farms know the exact amount of grain they are to sell to the state. For grain produced in excess of the amount specified by the plan, the state pays 50 per cent above the regular price. The regular prices have also changed. Those for wheat and rye have been raised by

15-20 per cent in some regions and by 50-100 per cent in others. Purchase prices for other grains have also gone up. Thus the price for one ton of unprocessed rice has been raised from 220 to 300 roubles. There have been 18-70 per cent rises in the prices for cattle. Purchase prices for milk have also been raised. All these measures have not affected the retail prices of these products.

Taxes are now levied from the net income of the farm and not from the aggregate income as was done formerly. This leads to many other advantages for the farmer. It has cut tax revenues by twice their former amount or by approximately 500,000,000 roubles.

A new credit system has been introduced for collective farms, which does away with all limits as to the size of a grant (previously restricted to 20-25 per cent of the costs of production). This practice is of great economic significance. When credits were limited the farms were obliged to keep in reserve a considerable sum of money in the bank, which was actually passive capital. In the Pskov Region, for example, each rouble that the farms invested in production yielded a profit of 46 kopecks, whereas each banked rouble brought in only half a kopeck.

The farms' incomes were raised by some 510,000,000 roubles owing to reduction of prices for motor cars, tractors, farm machinery and spare parts and of charges for electricity needed for production.

The growth of agricultural production, the raising of purchase prices for farm and animal produce, the cuts in income taxes and in prices for industrial goods have strengthened collective-farm economy. Despite the severe drought of

1965 which affected the chief grain-producing regions of the country, the farms' incomes went up by 16 per cent. A similar rise was observed in the labour remuneration of farmers in money and in kind. In 1966 and 1967 the farms' and farmers' incomes rose by another 20 per cent.

The interdependence between the growth of public wealth and personal welfare enhances material labour incentives and strengthens the bond between the farmers' personal interests and the interests of social production. The collective farmer is aware of the concern for his wellbeing not only on the part of his collective but on the part of the entire society, the entire state.

As the Soviet state becomes wealthier it is able to do more for the people's welfare. The law on pensions and grants to collective farmers which came into force as of January 1, 1965 has benefited more than 9,000,000 farmers. The pensions are paid out of the pension fund made up of state allocations and allocations by collective farms. Some half a million women farmers are paid maternity-leave grants. Of no less importance is the decision (of July 1, 1966) that guarantees the remuneration of collective-farm labour on a par with state farms. Collective farms which are financially incapable of ensuring a certain level of the farmers' earnings are provided with state credits.

Another important factor in raising agricultural production is the farmers' moral incentives, their enthusiasm born of the Revolution, their high sense of duty before society and the awareness that they are playing an important part in the building of communism. One has only to recall the first day of the Second World War when

thousands of farmers abandoned their personal subsidiary farms in order to save collectively owned cattle and other collective-farm property.

At a seminar organized by the *Komsomolskaya Pravda* at the *Lenin's Path* collective farm in the Kuban Region, the discussion centred on the question of incentive. Machine operator Vladimir Pervitsky, was the first to speak.

"We don't need any agitation of the one for all and all for one sort," he said. "It comes naturally to us."

When asked how much he earned, he replied, "An average of 200 roubles a month." Somebody remarked, "Doesn't it appear to you that you're whipping up your sense of duty with good pay?"

"You can't simplify matters in this way, or you'll be saying next that one's sense of duty is to reject pay," replied Pervitsky. "We're not money-grabbers, we're not out to make big money, we're paid what we earn. Our farm runs on a self-sufficing basis: the more we produce for society, the more we receive ourselves. This is what we call the socialist principle of remuneration for the amount of labour performed; it does not contradict communist consciousness but helps it to develop."

To work for society means to work for oneself—this is the gist of Pervitsky's reply. It shows a profound understanding of the direct bond between individual labour and the interests of society, of the collective.

The collective farm does not oppose individual interests to social interests; the two are in full harmony with each other. As for the "mysterious soul" of the Russian farmer, which is a subject of interest for many Western economists, it is



doing fine. Its best qualities, fostered through the ages, such as economic wisdom, gumption, zealousness have been brought out to the full by the collective farm, which gives boundless scope for the application of one's energy and knowledge. Here one has every opportunity to show one's creative abilities, display one's talent and take part in labour that brings material and moral satisfaction.

Material and moral incentives are an important factor in the quest for more efficient forms of production and labour organization. Scientists and agricultural workers engaged in this search strive to replace obsolete schemes with new discoveries, and it is more than often that practical workers outstrip those working in the field of theory.

### *13. PRODUCTION AND LABOUR: PROBLEMS AND HOW THEY ARE SOLVED*

When the peasants set up their first collective farms they brought with them their primitive farm implements as well as primitive forms of production that were typical of petty individual farming. They had no experience in organizing and managing subsidiary farms, and neither had those who were responsible for the establishment of state farms.

This could not but leave its mark on the organization of production and labour remuneration on state and collective farms. For some time their production set-up was a slightly altered and enlarged version of the peasant economy, char-

acterized by a diversified, non-specialized nature. The conditions of the peasant's life had forced him to do odd bits of work on the land and in the garden to support his family. Though such non-specialized nature was tolerated at the outset of collectivization, it gradually became clear that it contradicted the very nature of collective and state farms. For the latter represented large-scale machine production whose distinctive feature is specialization, and it was only through specialization that the highest results could be attained in farm production.

The builders of the collective and state farm system were pioneers treading on unfamiliar ground. They were faced with the immense task of working out scientifically-grounded specialization for each zone and for each individual farm. As mentioned in the preceding chapters, this gigantic task is nearly completed by Soviet scientists, who have been greatly helped by the experience of state farms, which are in the main highly specialized economies.

Their specialization is determined by natural-climatic and economic features. Thus the bulk of grain-growing farms is located in the Russian Federation, Kazakhstan and the Ukraine, where conditions are most favourable for this crop culture. The majority of cotton-growing state farms have been set up in Uzbekistan and other Central Asian Republics, while those specializing in dairy and meat products are found in Kazakhstan, Russia, the Ukraine, the Baltic Republics and Byelorussia; tea-growing farms are mainly found in Georgia.

Collective farms were much slower to specialize. Only the tea and cotton-growing regions and

areas engaged in vine-growing had a large number of such farms.

The further development and improvement of specialization of production is a key task of the five-year development plan for 1966-70.

Of late, specialization of farm production has not only gained in scope but also become thorough and comprehensive and this is particularly true of animal husbandry. This branch of agriculture is being stimulated by investments and through re-equipment.

There are several reasons to account for the attention to live-stock farming.

During collectivization the emphasis had been on field-crop cultivation, notably on grain-growing, for grain production was the key to the solution of all agricultural problems. Thus at that time it consumed the bulk of the funds and technical means allotted to agriculture, leaving what remained for stock farming. The stock farms were usually small and poorly mechanized; the herd was mixed, comprising meat and dairy breeds, sheep and pigs. Under this system the cost price of meat and milk was exceptionally high.

There was only one way out: to specialize in animal husbandry and to develop this branch along industrial lines.

Contrary to the former practice of specializing and mechanizing stock raising chiefly at the expense of the state, which established dairy, meat-producing, vegetable-growing and poultry-raising state farms in the environs of cities and large industrial centres, today specialization involves state and collective farms of whole districts and regions.

The start was taken by the Belgorod Region in

the centre of the Russian Federation. It has scored notable success in field-crop cultivation but was lagging behind in stock raising. The reason lay in the rule-of-thumb methods of work. The authorities of the region held a conference with the farmers and launched a joint campaign to introduce intensive specialization. The lead was to be taken by 39 collective farms which distributed their functions in the following way: ten farms specialized in the breeding of large-horned cattle, 19 in pig-breeding and ten others in the production of eggs.

Retaining their cooperative status and the principles of collective-farm democracy, they are now known as specialized farms. Of course their organization required considerable fund investments. The State Bank provides these farms with credits. But their specialization has brought in notable economic results. The cost price of pork has gone down threefold, and that of beef has also dropped. Live-stock breeding became highly profitable.

Specialization has been introduced on a particularly large scale in the Penza Region, the North Caucasus and the Stavropol Territory. It ensures rational, economically profitable conditions of production and is carried out not only on a regional or district scale but also within the framework of a collective farm. An example of this is the Kirov Collective Farm in the Petrov District of the Stavropol Territory. Prior to specialization each team was occupied with the cultivation of nearly all the crop cultures and was responsible for all the branches of animal husbandry. This practice accounted for the high prices of farm products. Upon reorganization agri-

cultural production was divided: 11 specialized units were set up for grain-growing, milk and meat production, vegetable and fruit growing, etc. This raised the farm's efficiency, created a high marketable surplus of products and brought down the cost of production. In 1963 the collective farm sold 5,130 centners of meat, in 1966 more than 9,000 centners and in 1967 more than in the preceding year.

Inner-farm specialization is carried out not only by dividing agricultural production into branches but by effecting specialization inside each branch of production. Thus, field-cropping teams distribute their functions according to various crops; there are units concerned with the growing of sugar-beet, maize, potatoes and fodder crops.

The development and improvement of production is closely linked with the organization and remuneration of labour. The latter question has long engaged the attention of farmers and scientists. One suggestion came from the farmers who have a direct interest in this question. Anna Cherepova, a team leader of the *Caucasus* collective farm in the Kurganinsk District of the Krasnodar Territory, proposed that the farmers of her team go over from the piece-rate system which measured their earnings according to the number of hectares ploughed, sown and harvested to remuneration according to crop yield, which is the result of all the preceding stages of labour. The team agreed.

This system enhanced the farmers' creative attitude to their labour, to land cultivation. The results were not long in coming. In four years wheat yields soared from 31.5 to 40.5 metric

centners per hectare, barley from 21.1 to 48.7 metric centners, maize from 27.9 to 39.7 metric centners. Despite unfavourable weather in 1967, the team harvested 40-odd metric centners of wheat per hectare—a worthy present to the Soviet people on the eve of its 50th anniversary.

Thousands of kilometres away in the steppes of Northern Kazakhstan the farmers of the *Enthusiast* state farm also pondered over forms of labour organization, searching for one that would be best suited to the conditions and requirements of highly-mechanized production. They had not been ordered or advised from above to consider the question; the initiative was entirely their own. They also arrived at the conclusion that labour should be remunerated according to crop yields. The new system of payment was introduced at the farm in 1963, at first only for the workers of the 5th team. The team was headed by an agronomist-organizer and a council elected by the machine operators. This raised the responsibility of each worker and brought out the economic talents of each farmer. After making certain calculations the team decided to retain only 13 tractors out of the former 27. During the first year their take-in was 1-1.5 centners higher than that of the other teams. The team's earnings also went up. The next year they were joined by another team and, in the spring of 1966 by all the remaining teams. The number of tractors engaged in field-crop cultivation went down from 286 to 184. Also, fewer combines are used. As against 1965, each tractor is able to cultivate an extra 100 hectares. Crop yields have gone up. The cost price of wheat has been brought down, while the state farm's incomes have greatly in-

creased. As for the workers' wages, they amount to a monthly average of 220-290 roubles during the cropping season.

The search for new forms of labour organization and remuneration did not come of itself; it grew out of the need for satisfying the requirements of collective- and state-farm production, the need for achieving the most efficient use of the vast material potentialities.

During Soviet years there has been a fivefold increase in labour productivity at collective and state farms as compared with the small peasant households and the landed estates of pre-revolutionary Russia. This is a notable achievement, but there are possibilities for still greater achievements. New forms of labour organization and remuneration will help to define these possibilities and use them for the good of the society. There is still much to be done in this sphere.

#### *14. COLLECTIVE AND STATE FARMS TODAY*

When fifty years ago the first collective and state farms laid the groundwork for mass collectivization that swept the country ten years later, little thought was given to the question of the most efficient size of the farm from the organizational and economic point of view. The size of a farm usually depended on the size of the village or the number of peasant households that had decided to go into voluntary association, or it was fixed at random by fencing in a section of the virgin steppe land. At first no harm seemed to have come of this practice. But as new tasks arose, such as that of raising the level of agri-

culture and finding the financial means for this purpose, that of mechanization, and that of economic and cultural development, it became clear that small farms were unable to cope with them. They could be accomplished only by joining small farms to form larger economic units and by introducing rational, scientific methods of management.

These steps were taken after the war, and this led to the considerable strengthening of the farm economy, as shown by the table below.

Basic indices of collective-farm development	1940	1958	1966
Number of collective farms (thousands) *	236.9	67.7	37.1
<i>Average estimate per farm:</i>			
a) households	81	275	418
b) arable land (hectares)	1,429	4,501	6,002
c) tractors (in 15-horse-power units) **	2.4	16	41
d) commonly-owned cattle of all kinds	297	1,880	3,183
non-distributable assets (thousand roubles)	11.8	358	1,018
cash incomes (thousand roubles)	8.8	195	636

\* The decrease in the number of farms is due to their amalgamation and to the transformation of some of them into state farms on the decisions of general meetings of farmers.

\*\* Data before 1960 includes tractors of MTS and tractor and repair stations.



As the table shows, there has been a notable rise in the farms' non-distributable assets indicating the growing prosperity of the farms. For these assets make up the economic and material and technical basis of the collective farms; they ensure the continuous expansion of production and the steady improvement of the farmers' living standard. Non-distributable assets comprise part of farmers' properties which became the properties of the collective farm when it was formed, entrance fees, yearly deductions from the farms' cash incomes, material wealth produced by the farmers, and funds and equipment given free of charge by the state. Today these assets are made up mainly from what was produced by the farmers' labour with the help of the state and not from contributions from the peasants made upon their joining the collective farm. Thus whereas in 1932 the non-distributable assets of the collective farms were evaluated at 470,000,000 roubles, in 1966—they were estimated to be 37,000 million roubles, which represents a more than 75-fold increase.

Formerly oppressed peasants who led a life of poverty have become the co-owners of large prosperous farms. In the past six years the farms' incomes almost doubled, amounting to 23,100 million roubles in 1966, while the average income of a farm has more than doubled rising from 305,000 to 636,000 roubles. The incomes of many farms are well over a million roubles. For example, the cash income of the Lenin collective farm of the Korenovsky District in the Krasnodar Territory now exceeds 4,000,000 roubles.

Certain critics of the Soviet way of life regard the growing prosperity of the Soviet village as

evidence that it has become bourgeois. It is hardly necessary to point out, however, that the bourgeois lives on the labour of others, whereas the collective farmers increase their communal wealth by their own labour, and that the greater this wealth, the better the farmers' life. It is common knowledge that the goal of communism is to create for all a life worthy of man; according to Marx, communism will flourish when all the sources of common prosperity begin to yield an unceasing flow of wealth.

The organizational structure of the collective farm is specified in the Model Rules for the Agricultural Artel adopted in 1935 by the Second All-Union Congress of Collective-Farm Shock Workers. These Rules strengthened the collective farms organizationally and economically; they helped to foster in the farmer a new attitude towards labour and to develop in him a feeling of collectivism by linking his personal interests with those of the entire collective. They define the democratic basis of the collective-farm system and constitute the legal expression of this basis.

According to the Rules, "the affairs of the artel are managed by the general meeting of artel members, and in between general meetings by the management board elected by the general meeting."

The general meeting is the highest body of management on the farm. It elects the management board, admits new members and has the authority to expel members; it adopts the yearly production plan and draws up the balance of income and expenditure; it works out the plan for agricultural operations and determines the amounts of different assets,

Since the adoption of the Model Rules in 1935 truly gigantic changes have taken place in the life of the collective farms. They have become large and highly mechanized farms. The cultural and technical level of the farmers has also risen. The entire life of the countryside is being re-shaped for the purpose of eliminating the differences in the economic and cultural levels which now exist between the city and the countryside.

Great headway has also been made by the state-owned sector of agricultural production, notably, the state farms.

Basic indices of state farm development	1940	1945	1956	1964	1966
Number of state farms	4,159	3,933	5,098	10,078	12,196
Tractors (in 15-horse-power units, thousands)	100	58	311	1,209	1,325
Sown area (thousand hectares)	11,600	6,600	31,500	87,301	89,062
Cattle of all kinds (thousands)	10,280	6,540	21,794	77,887	83,467

The number of state farms has notably increased since the development of the virgin lands. This quantitative growth has led to qualitative changes. From small and poorly equipped farms the state farms have grown into large-efficient enterprises making the fullest use of the achievements of science and technology. Suffice it to note that in 1966 state farms accounted for 47 per cent of the country's grain output as against eight per cent in 1940.

There has also been a notable rise in the farms' marketable produce. In 1966 state farms accounted for 54 per cent of the aggregate volume of marketable grain as compared with ten per cent in 1940. They have greatly boosted the marketable yields of potatoes, vegetables, meat, milk and eggs among other farm produce.

The further development of state farms is enhanced by the Decision of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the USSR Council of Ministers on the introduction of cost accounting at state farms and other state-owned agricultural enterprises.

Under socialism enterprises operating on the cost accounting basis combine planned guidance by the state with independent economic management. It is the task of each enterprise working under this system to use most efficiently the funds allocated by the state for increasing national wealth. The more efficient the enterprise, the higher its profits and, consequently, the larger deductions from its income which are to be used for promoting the material interest of the workers, for satisfying their cultural and every-day requirements, for expanding production, etc. This system serves to increase the material incentive of the staff as a whole and that of each individual worker to achieve the highest results with the least expenditure.

The basic principles of cost accounting also apply to state farms. Thus the farms have independence in management; they take a greater material interest in the results of their work and simultaneously carry a greater responsibility for the fulfilment of their production plan. Cost accounting increases the role of profits in the econ-

omic stimulation of production. According to the former practice, the state farm was able to retain only 12 per cent of its profits; the new system allows the farm to make deductions from the profits the following way: 15 per cent to the material incentive fund, ten per cent to the fund for cultural and every-day requirements and for housing construction and ten per cent to the fund for expanding and improving production. The remaining share of the farm's profits goes for bonuses and grants paid out to workers for outstanding production achievements in the All-Union socialist emulation, for increasing the farm's circulating capital, repaying credits and for other expenses. Bonuses from the material incentive fund are paid out over and above the usual bonus payments.

Besides increasing the role of profits, cost accounting enables state agricultural enterprises to enjoy greater independence in management. It has reduced the number of planned targets for state farms that are fixed by higher planning bodies to a minimum and allows the farms to plan the volume of their production and aggregate profits, to estimate labour productivity and the costs of output and so on.

Today the viability of the collective and state farm system has been fully demonstrated. Its strength and vitality point to a bright future in the years ahead.

## *15. OUR DAILY BREAD*

Western writings on the food question in the Soviet Union bring to mind the Italian maxim: "The eyes see what they want to see." The

French historian, Ch. Lodjinsky, for example, claims that Russia had no food shortage before the Bolsheviks came to power and that the food crisis was brought on by collectivization. Actually the food problem became serious at the beginning of World War I and reached a stage of crisis long before the October Revolution. According to Andrei Shingaryev, Minister of Agriculture in the Provisional Government, the state was depleted of its bread supplies before 1917.

Between 1909 and 1913 the average annual gross output of grain in the country stood at 72.5 million tons. It reached 86 million tons in the bumper crop year of 1913. Between 1961 and 1965 it rose to 130.3 million tons and in 1966 amounted to 171.2 million tons. The average grain yield per hectare was 8.2 metric centners in 1913 and 13.7 metric centners in 1966.

The quantitative rise was accompanied by qualitative improvement. The expansion of crop area and the increase in crop yields raised the output of wheat, the most valuable food crop. While the bumper-crop year of 1913 gave 26.3 million tons of this cereal, which is slightly above 30 per cent of the aggregate grain yield, in 1966 collective and state farms brought in 100.5 million tons of wheat, which constituted almost 59 per cent of the gross output of grain.

The expansion of crop areas under grains was accompanied by a rise in their quality. This was greatly enhanced by the achievements of Soviet selection and seed production.

Soviet scientists have produced over 60 brands of wheat, rye, barley and oats. This has enabled the Soviet grain producers to improve their work and to take in higher crop yields.

Despite the allegations of certain economic experts in the West, try as one may, one will not find any signs of stagnation to say nothing of a crisis in Soviet agricultural development. The output of grain and other produce is on the upgrade. Below are average annual data to this effect:

	1924- 28	1936- 40	1946- 50	1956- 60	1964- 65	1966
<i>Gross agricultural output</i>						
(in comparable prices, thousand million roubles)	22.0	23.5	27.3	46.7	52.3	61.5
<i>Output of key products</i>						
Grain (million tons)	69.3	77.4	64.8	121.5	130.2	171.2
Raw cotton (million tons)	0.6	2.5	2.3	4.4	5.0	6.0
Meat in slaughter weight (million tons)	4.2	4.0	3.5	7.9	9.3	10.8
Milk (million tons)	29.3	26.5	32.3	57.2	64.7	76.1
Eggs (thousand millions)	9.2	9.6	7.5	23.6	28.7	31.4
Wool (thousand tons)	157.0	129.0	147.0	317.0	361.0	371.0

These figures are additional proof that the systematic development of agriculture in the Soviet Union is directly related to the establishment and success of the collective and state farm system.

The task of raising the output of meat, milk and eggs was extremely complex. Animal husbandry suffered a sharp decline at the outset of collectivization, for a certain part of the peasantry, deceived by false rumours that their cattle would be confiscated, began to slaughter all the sheep, pigs and cows in their possession. During the four years between 1929 and 1932 the cattle population was reduced by more than 100,000,000. The country lost another 70,000,000 head during the Hitlerite invasion. It took much time and effort to repair these heavy losses. Only at the beginning of the fifties did the cattle population reach the 1916 level. Between 1957 and 1967 it increased by 75.1 million head to a total 296.1 million, which topped the 1916 level by 118.4 million head of cattle.

With the growth of the livestock and the raising of its productivity, the population became better supplied with animal produce.

The chief producers of livestock are the collective and state farms. In 1966 their herds comprised over 73 per cent (217,000,000 head) of the country's cattle population; the remaining 26.7 per cent (79,100,000 head) were personally owned by collective farmers, workers and employees. Under Soviet rule the country has considerably increased its production of sugar-beet, potatoes, vegetables, fruits and other foods.

New agricultural branches such as tea-growing on an industrial scale and the production of citrus fruits have been developed.

How is farm and animal husbandry produce realized?



## 16. FROM SURPLUS APPROPRIATIONS TO CONTRACTS

In January 1919 when the young Soviet state was waging a simultaneous battle against internal counter-revolution and foreign intervention, the Soviet Government took a series of extraordinary political and economic measures. Their aim was to uphold the weakened industry and to provide for the needs of the army that was fighting to preserve the gains of the people including the peasants' right to land. Among these measures were the introduction of state monopoly in the sale of bread and the compulsory delivery to the state at fixed prices of all surplus grain and fodder and later meat, butter, potatoes and other foods. Private trading was forbidden. This policy, which came to be known as the surplus appropriation system, was carried out with the active support of the peasant masses. This was an important manifestation of the military and political alliance between the workers and the peasants. The economic burden implied in these measures was mainly borne by the rich and well-off peasants and to a smaller extent by the middle peasants. The poor peasants were not only exempted from contribution but were provided with food by the state.

Born out of the difficult circumstances of war, the surplus appropriation system could not give the peasant any material interest in his work. When the Civil War was over, the system became a brake on agricultural progress.

In March 1921 taxes in kind were substituted for compulsory deliveries of surpluses by the

peasantry. The taxes were much smaller than the appropriation rates, for the aim of the new system was to satisfy the country's minimum requirements for bread and other foods and to allow the peasant to sell the surplus on the market. This led the peasant to take a greater interest in his work. As a result the area under crops was extended and the number of cattle increased. Commodity circulation between town and country grew apace.

As soon as industry was rehabilitated and began to manufacture enough goods to allow their exchange for agricultural produce, the Soviet state by a decision taken in 1923 partially replaced payments in kind by payments in cash. Subsequently the taxes in kind were replaced by purveyances of farm produce. Soon after the Civil War a system of contracts between the farms and the state, first for technical crops and from 1929 on for grain, was developed.

With the victory of collectivization a system of compulsory deliveries to the state and payments in kind to the MTS was introduced. This was later followed by the development of the system of state purchases at higher prices, chiefly for meat. Technical crops were sold on the already established contractual basis.

When the MTS were reorganized in 1958 the state completely switched over to the system of purchases at higher prices; beginning with 1961 purchases of grain, meat, milk, fruits and vegetables have been carried out along contractual lines.

This cursory review of the commodity circulation between town and country during Soviet years shows that the system of agricultural pur-

veyances has been steadily improved, with economic methods playing an ever-increasing role.

Much has been done in recent years to improve commodity circulation between town and country and to expand and strengthen its economic basis. The March Plenary Meeting (1965) which worked out a vast programme for further agricultural development devoted much attention to ways of improving the system of state purchases.

Beginning with 1965 all state and collective farms are provided with stable purveyance plans for grain and other farm products for several years in advance. Purchase prices have been raised.

The purpose of these plans is to guarantee the producers sale of their produce at prices that ensure a continuous rise in their incomes, and, consequently, the steady expansion of production and increase in payments for labour. Between 1958 and 1967 the aggregate income<sup>1</sup> of collective farms went up by 7,400 million roubles and in 1967 topped 21,000 million roubles.

Collective and state farms sell their produce through purveying organizations or directly to enterprises processing agricultural produce and shops, particularly in the case of perishable foods. In this way vegetables and fruit are often brought to the counter straight from the farm.

Surplus produce is usually taken to collective-farm markets where it is sold at market prices. At the market one can buy produce both from state and collective farms and from personal sub-

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<sup>1</sup> The aggregate income is the difference between the value of the farm's aggregate output and production outlays.

subsidiary farms of farmers and workers. The country has a total of 7,260 markets with refrigerators, trade equipment and hotels. The customers' interests are also taken care of: all foods undergo sanitary inspection before reaching the counter.

In accordance with traditions fairs are regularly held in large industrial centres and in small towns.

The forms of commodity circulation that have become established between town and country do not contradict the Soviet system of planned economy but have become an integral part of it, and the state gives them every support. Following the decision of the USSR Council of Ministers, the incomes of collective-farm markets are used to improve and develop their material and technical base.

But who is the chief provider of the country? Is it true, as has often been said by some Western Sovietologists that the Soviet people get most of their foods from the market and that half of all the meat, milk, eggs and potatoes consumed comes from the subsidiary farms of the collective farmers? No, this is far from being true.

For quite a long time the socialized economy of the collective and state farms has been the basic and the most reliable source of marketable farm produce, a source which is growing stronger with each year. Collective and state farms sell the bulk of their products to state and cooperative purveying organizations, and the steady growth of these products enables the latter to satisfy more fully the requirements of Soviet consumers.

The country's retail trade has increased five-fold in the last twenty-five years. Within this

time it has gone up sixfold in state and cooperative shops and has expanded by 70 per cent at collective-farm markets.

The collective and state-farm system has established a sound base for providing the Soviet population with agricultural produce.

Although their output is constantly growing the collective and state farms find no difficulty in selling their products. The reason for this is that in the Soviet Union the expansion of production entails an increase in the workers' wages, in their purchasing capacity. In 1966 the real per capita incomes of workers and employees went up by 140 per cent as against 1940.

Why is it, then, that while collective and state farms are steadily developing their production capacities, and while the people are constantly being supplied with more and better foods, the highest Party and state bodies and the Soviet press speak of the shortcomings of Soviet agriculture? Why does the Soviet Union purchase grain from other countries?

## *17. THE TEST OF TIME*

The development of the Soviet village on a cooperative basis has meant a constant search for better organizational forms, for ways of overcoming difficulties that inevitably accompany such a search. Many Western Sovietologists claim, however, that the Russian village had had no problems until the onset of collectivization.

We have discussed above the upsurge of agriculture and the radical changes in the peasants' life following the emergence of the collective and

state-farm system. This in no way contradicts the inability of the farms to keep pace with the people's growing demands for agricultural produce. There are definite objective and subjective reasons for this lag, which have been brought to light by the Communist Party.

In the first years after the October Revolution the Soviet state was unable to develop both industry and agriculture at an equally rapid pace. The years of the first five-year plans following the Civil War were devoted to the building of heavy industry—the base of the entire Soviet economy, including agriculture. Without an up-to-date industry the country would not have been able to effect a technological revolution in agriculture which facilitated the peasants' labour and raised its productivity.

Ten years after mass collectivization the Soviet Union was invaded by fascist Germany. The country suffered heavy losses at the hands of the enemy. Its rural economy was seriously disrupted: 98,000 collective farms, some 1,900 state farms, nearly 3,000 MTS and 70,000 villages were plundered and razed.

The Soviet farmers, together with the entire Soviet people, displayed unparalleled heroism in standing the severe test and made their contribution to defeating the perfidious and deadly enemy of the Soviet people and all progressive mankind. The collective farms supplied the front and the rear with foods while millions of farmers performed outstanding deeds of valour at the battlefields for the freedom of their Motherland.

Substantial money contributions were made by the farmers to provide additional armaments for the Soviet Army. The campaign was started by

the *Krasny Dobrovolets* collective farm in the Tambov Region. Within two weeks 40,000,000 roubles were collected in the region which went to the building of a tank column named the "Tambov collective farmer." The patriotic movement embraced the whole country. Between December 1942 and March 31, 1943 the Red Army received 7,041,320 thousand roubles, whereas donations made in the course of the four years of war amounted to 94,500 million roubles.

Such staunch support given to the Soviet state on the part of the masses is a clear evidence of their boundless loyalty to the Soviet system. The war was a severe trial for the collective farm system; it demanded tremendous efforts of the farms, which had to sustain huge losses. The war was one of the chief objective reasons for the lag in agriculture. Then in 1946 the most important farming districts were affected by a severe drought.

Let us now consider the reason for the USSR's grain purchases abroad.

These purchases were widely commented on in the Western press, which regarded them as evidence of the "weakness" and "inherent defects" of the collective and state-farm system. The system was said to be incapable of solving the food problem in the Soviet Union. Nothing was said, however, about natural calamities and their effect on agricultural production. We all know that man is not yet able to subdue the elements. Droughts may hit any field, whether it belongs to a collective farm or an individual farmer, to a small farmer or a big capitalist firm. But of course man is no longer as helpless before the destructive forces of nature as he was formerly.

And the better the organization of production, the greater the possibilities of controlling these forces.

We have already discussed the measures taken by the Soviet Government to combat the baneful influence of the elements, such as the improvement of farming methods, the planting of protective forest-belts and the large-scale development of irrigation. Nevertheless, the Soviet farmer works under extremely severe climatic conditions. Suffice it to say that in the last 65 years various parts of the country were hit by droughts 22 times in all. The droughts of 1963 and 1965 were particularly severe.

The aggregate grain yield for 1963 was 32.7 million tons less than that for the previous year; state grain purchases fell by 11.8 million tons. In 1965 the respective figures were 31 million and 32 million tons less than in the preceding year.

This was the reason why the Soviet Government increased grain purchases abroad in 1963 and in the following years. The Western press turned this into a sensation, whereas grain sales and purchases have always been part of the country's regular trade operations. The Soviet statistics show that even in the climatically bad year of 1963 the Soviet Union exported 6.3 million tons of grain, in 1965—4.3 million; and in 1966—3.5 million tons.

One cannot deny the positive effect of the grain purchases on Soviet economy. It should be noted, however, that the greater part of the grain consumed in the country had come from its own grain stock. The amount of grain purchased in 1963 constituted less than three per cent of that



produced in the country; in 1965—five per cent, and in 1966—slightly above 4.5 per cent. Today grain is an important item on the Soviet export list.

In pre-revolutionary Russia droughts often became nation-wide calamities, bringing poverty and famine to large numbers of peasants. Towns suffered from food shortage, while speculators thrived and prices soared. Nothing even resembling this happened in 1963 and 1965. Then not a single farm or farmer was ruined or became impoverished. Retail prices for bread remained unchanged.

The Soviet state and the collective-farm system give each farm, each household reliable protection against the blind destructive work of the elements. The state helped the farms to overcome the difficulties caused by bad weather; it supplied them with grain, increased deliveries of machines, fertilizers, and allocated greater sums for agricultural development. It saved the rural economy from decline and promoted its further and more rapid growth. The results of these measures may be seen in the harvest of 1966, which even *The New York Times* had to admit was a “remarkable victory.”

These achievements were due chiefly to measures recently taken by the state to strengthen the material and technical base of collective and state farms and to create favourable economic conditions for their development. Having built up sufficient resources for the rapid development of agriculture, the state steadily increases its allocations to this key branch of the socialist economy. Investments in collective-farm and state agricultural production in 1966 amounted to

12,000 million roubles, which was 1,382 million roubles more than in 1965 and 7,338 million roubles more than in 1956. In 1966 and 1967 the rural economy was supplied with more machinery and fertilizers than ever before.

In abolishing economic poverty inherited from the old social system, in helping to rebuff the fascist invasion and eliminating its grave consequences, in carrying out effective struggle against the baneful influence of the elements the collective and state-farm system has fully demonstrated its strength and vitality. These qualities ensure a rapid and stable development of the country's rural economy. In 1966 and 1967, the first two years of the current five-year plan period, the average yearly rates of accretion of agricultural production were nearly 80 per cent higher than in the preceding five-year period.

## *18. THE SOVIET VILLAGE: YESTERDAY AND TODAY*

The results of the sweeping changes brought about by the October Revolution in Russia can perhaps best be seen in the Soviet village. Collectivization led to radical changes not only in the rural economy but in the entire way of life of the peasantry.

Before the Revolution 760 peasants out of a thousand could neither read nor write; the rural population of Central Asia and the northern regions was almost totally illiterate. "There is no other country so barbarous," wrote Lenin in 1913, "and in which the masses of the people are

*robbed* to such an extent of education, light and knowledge—no other such country has remained in Europe; Russia is the exception.” The building of a new life in the village and the introduction of the collective system which brought literacy and culture to the peasants formed an integral part of Lenin’s cooperative plan.

The battle against illiteracy was conducted on an unprecedentedly broad scale from the outset. Millions of adult peasants went to school. They were taught to read and write by village teachers, school pupils, workers and members of the intelligentsia from the cities. In 1926 out of a thousand peasants 510 could read and write; and in 1939—840. Today there is complete literacy in the country. Compulsory eight-year education has been introduced both in the city and the countryside. District centres and large villages have secondary (ten-year) boarding schools for pupils from distant villages. Many farmers’ children study in specialized secondary schools, institutes and universities. The number of peasants with a secondary and higher education has been steadily rising. Out of a thousand collective farmers there were 18 with a higher and secondary education in 1939; 226 in 1959 and 330 in 1967.

Large-scale mechanized collective production would be inconceivable without skilled workers and specialists. Especially needed are machine operators. Their number has then doubled in the last 15 years and in 1967 reached 3,293,000. The number of electricians, radio operators and workers of other industrial professions in the countryside is also on the rise.

Specialists with a secondary or higher education are also playing an increasing role in agri-

cultural production. From 58,000 in 1928 their number increased to 745,000 in 1966.

In 1958 there was an average of only four specialists with a secondary or higher education per state or collective farm, whereas in 1966 the number exceeded 10. Today many big state and collective farms have 40-50 and even 100 specialists with a secondary or higher education.

The majority of the rural specialists comes from peasant families. Their education, like that of all Soviet pupils and students beginning from elementary school and up through higher school, is free of charge.

Gone are the days of poverty and ignorance. The term "cultural backwardness" is no longer applicable to the countryside. The victory of Soviet power and particularly the transition to collective labour have given the peasant access to literacy, science and to all the spiritual riches of mankind.

Speaking of books, in 1914 the country had only 11,000 rural libraries; in 1967 the number rose to 86,000. The number of volumes contained in these libraries increased for the same period from 4,000,000 to 506,000,000—a more than 120-fold increase. In per capita count the contrasts are even more striking. In the pre-revolutionary village there were three books per 100 peasants; in the Soviet village there are 475 books per 100 inhabitants. Books used to be a rarity in the peasant's house; today there is hardly a farmer's home without a family library. Public libraries are financed by the state, the collective farms and trade-union organizations. Their use is free.

The rural population subscribes to numerous

periodicals. In 1967 almost 90,000,000 copies of newspapers and magazines were delivered to farmers, state-farm workers and the rural intelligentsia. The cultural life of the village is many-sided. It centres around the village clubs which have mushroomed throughout the countryside. From 100 in 1913 their number has increased to 112,000 in 1967.

Amateur art has become quite popular in the village. Today 160,000 drama, music, song and dance circles have been set up in the village clubs, attended by more than 2,000,000 villagers.

The cinema occupies a special place in the life of the rural dwellers. In 1966 the countryside accounted for 127,000 cinema units of the total of 149,700 operating in the country, while attendance reached the astronomical figure of 1,761 million.

For their importance and scope, the changes that have taken place in the spiritual life of the Soviet village are tantamount to a cultural revolution.

Nearly all houses in the rural areas have been built in Soviet times. Between 1918 and 1967 some 21,000,000 homes were built with the personal savings of collective farmers and the rural intelligentsia and state aid. The thatched clay huts that were once seen in every village have disappeared from the scene. In today's village one finds spacious homes, schools, kindergartens and nurseries, clubs and palaces of culture, hospitals and clinics, department stores, hotels, restaurants and cafes. Villages are being rebuilt according to an architectural plan combining modern comforts with the requirements of rural living. Collective farms often pool means

and build sanatoria, rest homes and young pioneer camps.

Owing to its scope and complex character, contemporary rural construction calls for new industrial methods of building. Special mechanized units are now being provided by the state for rural construction work. Farmers often set up inter-farm building cooperatives financed by the founders and managed by elective boards. Their property is a form of cooperative and collective-farm property with a higher level of socialization.

Inter-farm building cooperatives have become widely popular with the farmers. The latest building technique, timber and assembling enterprises, brick and cement works, and designing organizations are at their disposal. The state attaches great importance to reconstructing the village. Republican and all-Union ministries of rural construction have been established for the purpose.

The entire country is taking part in the solution of one of the key problems of our time; that of abolishing the differences that exist between the conditions of cultural and every-day life in the city and the countryside.

Soviet power and the collective-farm system have enabled the peasants to achieve material and cultural well-being. And this was done in close cooperation with the working class and under its leadership.

The alliance between the working class and the farmers was born of life, of the vital demands of historical development. Its fruitful results can be seen in the development of the collective-farm system.

Western writers often assert that there is nothing in common between the interests and the goals of the Soviet workers and the Soviet farmers, that they sharply contradict each other. Professor D. Mitrany of Harvard University even claims that the alliance between the Soviet workers and farmers was "never achieved despite much effort by the Communists."

How do matters actually stand?

### 19. CITY AND COUNTRYSIDE

The relationship between the city and the countryside has long been a subject of discussion and debate.

Lenin, the founder of the Communist Party, wrote in 1910 that it was the ideal (and the programme) of the Social-Democrats to eliminate the difference between the city and the countryside. The ideal was regarded by Lenin's adversaries as "sheer fantasy"; they contended that its realization would mean the destruction of the big cities as centres of power and culture. Lenin responded by saying that the Social-Democrats knew well enough the value of such centres of power and culture and that the elimination of the differences between the city and the countryside did not mean the rejection of the treasures of art and science that had been created in these centres. On the contrary, said Lenin, the elimination was necessary "in order to bring these treasures *within the reach of the entire people*, in order to abolish the alienation from culture of millions of the rural population."

The antithesis of the city and the countryside grew out of the process of the social division of

labour. With time it became increasingly sharper: the countryside more and more fell behind the city economically, politically and culturally. The Belgian poet, Emile Verhaeren, once created the image of an octopus-town whose avid tentacles had seized the surrounding fields and farms, crippling and destroying all that was living and beautiful, dooming the farmers to poverty and ruin.

The city, however, gave rise to a force that was to befriend the peasants. This was the proletariat whose social position, economic and political goals (struggle against exploitation and poverty, for civil rights and liberties) made it a natural ally of the peasantry. The historical conditions which produced this alliance also strengthened it. The leadership of the alliance fell to the proletariat—the more united and better organized class which had a clear understanding of the problems and goals of the struggle for a better future—and its vanguard, the Party created by Lenin.

The entire development of the revolutionary struggle and the building of a new life in Russia are convincing proof of the friendship and cooperation that have existed between the toilers of the city and of the countryside. Politically, their alliance was forged in the battle against the old system, for the victory of the October Revolution and for the defence of its gains, for land for the peasantry and for the socialist reorganization of the village. It has played a decisive role in the successful construction of socialism and in the building of communism in the USSR.

By giving land to the peasantry the Soviet state immediately raised the production of small



farms and laid the basis for their further development. Traditional forms of marketing farm produce were retained. Ties between the city and the countryside were maintained, as formerly, through the market and by the purchase-sale system. The Civil War that was forced on the country by internal counter-revolution and military intervention led to the policy of War Communism and, as mentioned earlier, to the adoption of the surplus appropriation system in place of free trade.

The sophisticated historian could not fail to notice that the introduction of this economic set-up (1918) was almost immediately followed by a sharp change in the relationship between the peasant masses and the Soviet state. In the first half of 1918 the majority of the peasants, and these were the middle peasants, could not make up their mind as to whether they should support the old or the new government. But when they saw that the rule of the White Guards and the interventionists had led to the restoration of landlords' ownership of land which deprived the peasants of the land allotted to them by Soviet power and once again doomed them to a rightless and impoverished existence, they went to the side of the Soviets. Together with the working class the peasants took to the battlefields, regarding the defence of the gains of the October Revolution as their sacred duty. The peasantry produced a number of outstanding military leaders, among them Vasily Blyukher, Semyon Budenny, and Vasily Chapayev. This joint struggle brought out the common interests of the workers and peasants, developed and strengthened their friendship.

In their attempt to destroy this alliance, the enemies of the Soviet state took advantage of the country's economic hardships by instigating a number of uprisings. The Communist Party clearly understood the grave situation and introduced the New Economic Policy which included a number of concessions to the peasantry. Among them was the substitution of taxes in kind for the compulsory deliveries of surplus. The essence of this policy, as Lenin emphasized, consisted in building up a sound economic foundation for the alliance of the working class and the peasantry.

The attempts of the enemies of Soviet power to destroy the friendship between the peasants and workers were a complete failure.

By the end of 1921 the kulak bands were almost fully eliminated. They had found no support among the peasants, who showed their fidelity to the proletarian state and to the alliance with the working class by rehabilitating in an unbelievably short period of time the disrupted agricultural economy and providing the cities with food. The latter responded by increasing deliveries of farm machinery and industrial goods to the countryside; they helped the village to wipe out illiteracy and opened the way to the peasants to knowledge and culture.

Such are the facts concerning the development of the relationship between the workers and the peasantry. A number of Western Sovietologists, however, continue to assert that the interests of the workers and the peasants became opposed to one another following the October Revolution and particularly owing to collectivization.

Even a cursory acquaintance with the docum-

ents issued by the Communist Party and the Soviet Government on collectivization will show the groundlessness of such assertions. One of the basic provisions of Lenin's cooperative plan, for example, was that the principle of voluntary entry into the collective farms must be strictly observed. Practical experience, too, has yielded convincing examples of cooperation and mutual friendly aid between the workers and peasants in reorganizing the countryside.

When collectivization was already in full swing the central Party and government bodies received numerous letters from peasants asking for help from the workers in setting up collective farms. One of these letters, sent by the peasants of the Borskoye village in the Middle Volga Territory and published in *Pravda* in January 1930, reads: "Comrade-proletarians of the red capital! In tackling the problem of finding the best way of changing from individual farming to large-scale socialized agricultural production, we often lack experienced leaders to guide us in organizational and technical matters. Your direct participation in this gigantic task of agricultural reorganization is needed immediately."

Similar letters were received from Siberia, the Northern Caucasus, the Ukraine, Byelorussia and Kazakhstan, in fact, from all parts of the Soviet Union. They were carefully considered by the workers. Various industrial enterprises of Moscow, Leningrad, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, Kiev and other cities began sending teams of workers to start cultural work in the countryside, to repair farm machines and to work permanently in the village on the organization of collective-farm production.

Between 1928 and 1931 not less than 250,000 factory workers and specialists went out to the countryside to take part in rural reorganization. Many remained in the village and took up permanent work there. A particularly important part in rural reorganization was played by 25,000 of the best workers sent to the countryside as organizers of the new system of socialist agriculture.

By confusing the attitude of the kulaks towards the workers with that of the peasant masses Western propagandists repeatedly claim that the village was hostile to the envoys from the cities. Actually only the kulaks displayed animosity towards the workers' representatives, who were often attacked and sometimes killed by groups of the rich peasants. The peasant masses, on the other hand, welcomed the workers to the village as true and tested friends.

The regional meeting of collective farmers of the Petropavlovsk Region in the Kazakh Republic declared, for example, that "workers mobilized from among the 25,000 for collective-farm work in the Petropavlovsk Region have fully proved their worth. They have shown the villagers examples of labour heroism, labour discipline, revolutionary fortitude and the ability to direct socialist construction in the countryside in the true Bolshevik spirit."

Such was the general attitude of the peasants towards the working class in the period of collectivization.

Through collectivization the economic basis of socialism was established in the countryside; this further strengthened the alliance of the workers and the peasantry.

The proletarian city steadily promoted the economic and cultural development of the village. It supplied the peasants with machines, trained them in industrial professions, and provided the countryside with teachers, doctors and cultural workers.

Such are the fruits of the alliance of the workers and peasants, an alliance which is persistently denied by some Western propagandists. True, there are those who admit that such an alliance indeed exists, but then they would go on to say that in this alliance the workers occupy the leading role while the peasants play a subordinate part. Their position thus coincides, in a perverse way perhaps, with the Marxist thesis on the alliance between the working class and the peasantry which accepts working-class leadership.

This Marxist thesis, however, is not an arbitrary assumption; it reflects objective historical reality. That the working class is the most advanced, united and organized class is sufficiently evident. In the working class the peasantry found a reliable leader, one with a deep understanding of its vital interests and capable of acting in its interests and defending them. This is what constitutes the leading role of the working class, which has nothing to do with the subordination of one class to another. The peasantry is an ally of the proletariat with equal rights, and it fully understands the proletariat's leading role.

The working class of Russia played a decisive part in the struggle for a radical recasting of life in the formerly oppressed outlying national territories. The nationalities problem was one of

the most acute and complex problems facing the proletarian state. Actually it was a peasant problem, for the population of these backward outlying regions of tsarist Russia was made up chiefly of peasants. The principal task, then, was to establish proper relationship between the working class of the former ruling nation and the peasants of the former tsarist colonies. The tsarist government kept the people of these parts in ignorance and poverty, doing everything to preserve the age-old feudal and even tribal systems. Many peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan knew nothing of farming and had no written language. Discussing the life of the oppressed and backward nationalities, Lenin declared in 1916 that the state of the triumphant Russian proletariat would help these nationalities to attain industrialization, democracy and socialism.

Lenin's promise has been carried out by the Russian proletariat.

The fraternal aid of the Soviet peoples, and above all the aid of the working class of Russia, enabled the nationalities of Central Asia, Kazakhstan and other former colonies of tsarist Russia to overcome their economical and cultural backwardness within an incredibly short time. They became free peoples and formed their own states, which today have an up-to-date industry, large-scale mechanized agriculture and a high level of cultural development. The land where a literate man was once as rare as a well in a desert now has a network of schools, universities, and national academies. Numerous scientists and scholars have emerged from the ranks of the formerly oppressed peoples.

The Great October Socialist Revolution undermined the economic and social basis of the historical differences between the city and the countryside. It put an end to the urban exploitation of the countryside and eliminated the grounds for the existence of antagonistic contradictions between them. Those differences that continue to exist under socialism arise from two forms of socialist property: state and collective-farm property. State property represents the highest form of socialization, property that belongs to the whole people. Collective-farm property is group property that belongs to the collective farms. Both forms of property are socialist by nature and offer wide scope for the cooperation of the two friendly classes in the building of a new society.

Although the working class occupies the leading position in Soviet society, it does not strive for any privileges, nor does it have any. It is the only class in history that does not seek to perpetuate its power. Having secured the full and final victory of socialism in the country and ensured the passage of Soviet society to full-scale construction of communism, the dictatorship of the proletariat has discharged its historical duties; and from the point of view of further social development within the country it has ceased to be necessary. With the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union the state of proletarian dictatorship has developed into a state of the whole people in which the working class retains its leading role.

The state of the whole people is the highest form of class alliance between the working class and the collective farmers.

Much has been written in the West to the effect that the peasantry has been obliterated in the Soviet Union. True, the country has no peasants in the former sense of the word; there are no poor or middle peasants, no farm labourers and no kulaks. There are the collective farmers, farmers who have been for ever delivered from the threat of ruin, poverty, and exploitation and whose collective economy, which is their property, is based on joint labour and common ownership.

Present-day development of production relations in the countryside proceeds along the lines of consolidating the collective and state farms. The Communist Party has severely criticized and fully rejected the attempts to artificially eradicate the remaining differences between the working class and the collective farmers. These differences will disappear of themselves when collective farm property reaches a higher level of socialization and grows into public property. As a result, the two forms of property—group and state properties—will merge and become communist property. This does not mean that the farmers will be destroyed by the proletariat, as said by some Sovietologists, but rather that society will acquire a homogenous character—in fact become a classless communist society, a society in which the material and spiritual needs of all will be satisfied.

Try as one might, one will not find any traces of enmity between the city and the countryside. The only war waged by the two sides was the common war against the grim legacy of the old system, and in this battle the friendship of the two classes was forged and tempered.



## 20. SOCIETY, THE STATE AND THE FARMER

The peasantry was the most numerous and the most oppressed class of pre-revolutionary Russia. The majority of the peasants was reduced to hopeless poverty and suffered incredible privations. Their poverty was made all the harsher by their lack of political rights. The peasants had no say in a society dominated by the bourgeoisie and landowners. This society and the tsarist government ignored the conditions of the peasants as they ignored the conditions of the masses in general.

Wars and uprisings that shook the country time and again did not solve the land problem. It was only under the leadership of the working class that the peasants succeeded in their struggle, putting an end to poverty and political oppression and began to build a new and better life.

Industrialization and collectivization did away with the mixed nature of the country's economy. Public socialist property gained complete sway in the country. Radical economic reconstruction changed the social structure of society.

All the exploiting classes were abolished. Soviet society is made up of two friendly classes: the workers and the farmers, who are closely linked with the people's intelligentsia. The working class has become the most numerous section of society. In 1966 workers and employees made up more than 76 per cent of the population as against 17 per cent in 1913. This resulted from the country's rapid industrialization, the chief prerequisite for overcoming backwardness, faci-

ilitating man's labour (including that of the peasant) and making it more productive. It was the force that brought about the reorganization of the country's industry and led the village to the road of progress.

The mechanization of agriculture reduced the demand for manpower, which was readily absorbed by the growing industry. In the last forty years the number of workers and employees has roughly increased by 72,000,000 and in 1967 reached approximately 83,000,000.

Radical changes have taken place in the village life and in the composition of the rural population. The teacher was a rare figure in the pre-revolutionary village; the doctor even more so. Agronomists were unheard of, to say nothing of engineers or architects. Burdened with sorrows the peasant eked out a miserable existence. There was no one to look to for support, no one to ask for help.

The Revolution changed the life of the village, which took a sharp turn for the better.

Today among the farmer's neighbours one finds those who help him to manage the large-scale machine-operated farm, who teach and bring up his children, who take care of his health and help him organize his leisure. Nearly 4,500,000 rural inhabitants work in the field of public education, public health, and in scientific agricultural establishments. More than 1,500,000 are engaged in various services. State and collective farms number some 500,000 agronomists, zootechnicians, engineers and other specialists.

No longer can one think of the farmer's life as confined or limited. The farmer is no longer an

individual toiler but a member of a large collective, a friendly society in which the work of each person is an integral part of the creative labour of the entire people.

Owing to this bond with the whole of society and to the latter's support the material and technical base of agricultural production has been strengthened. There has been increasing scientific and cultural assistance to the countryside, and pensions and guaranteed labour remuneration for collective farmers have been established. In case of natural calamities the farmers can always count on the state to extend credits, supply seed and food.

Practical experience and participation in socialist construction have convinced the farmer that his welfare is closely linked with the welfare of the entire country. This forms the basis for the unity of the farmers' personal interests with those of society. As the farmer develops intellectually, he comes to understand more fully the social significance of his labour. The revolution has radically changed the peasant psychology, and this is one of its key achievements. It freed millions of land tillers from a dull and hard life which deprived them of human dignity. It opened before them the world of free labour and creative work, a world that called for daring quests and selfless struggle for achieving man's boldest aspirations and building a better future for all.

The Soviet farmers have repeatedly demonstrated their fidelity to the ideas of communism; one has only to recall their feats of valour during the Civil War and World War II, and in peaceful labour on the farms.

Apart from a good income, collective labour has brought Soviet farmers general respect and fame. Those who work well are given state awards and medals, those who perform outstanding work are honoured with the title of Hero of Socialist Labour. Anyone who has been awarded this title twice has a bronze bust erected in his honour in his native village.

An important event celebrated by the entire country is the Day of the Agricultural Worker.

The farmer's role in Soviet society is not only that of a worker on the land; he has every opportunity of becoming an active public or state figure. The Soviet state embodies the broadest and the most representative form of democracy. The Constitution of the USSR holds that all power in the country is vested in the working people of the city and the countryside who are represented by the Soviets of Working People's Deputies.

What is the social composition of the Soviets?

Altogether 1,577 deputies were elected to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR of the seventh convocation (1966), more than 1,130 of whom, either by social origin or social standing, belong to the working class or the peasantry. Of these at the time of their election 698 were employed at industrial enterprises or engaged in agricultural production: 404 worked at plants, factories and state farms and 294 in collective farms. The distribution is much the same in the Supreme Soviets of Union and Autonomous Republics and in the local Soviets: of the more than 2,000,000 deputies to the local Soviets almost 580,000 are workers and 670,000 peasants.

These are some of the facts about the Soviet farmer.

## *21. THE WAY THINGS ARE*

Of all the prophecies and theories on the fate of the peasant, the Marxist-Leninist doctrine alone has withstood the test of time. It discovered and substantiated the objective necessity of the alliance of the working class and the peasantry and of setting up cooperatives in the village, which was in keeping with the vital interests of the peasants and the demands of social development. The establishment of large highly-mechanized collective and state farms in place of the former small farms has led to the socialist reorganization of all the spheres of rural activities: economic, cultural and domestic.

The change from small farms to large-scale agricultural production in itself was nothing new. It is part of a process that began centuries ago, and continues to take place in many countries today. The question is: at whose expense are the farmlands expanded, in whose interests is the land worked and machinery applied? Lenin wrote in 1910 that capitalism raised the technical level of agriculture, but only by ruining and crushing the masses of petty producers. The almost sixty years that have gone by since these words were written have fully confirmed their irrefutable truth.

In such a prosperous capitalist country as the United States with its rapid mechanization of agricultural production and intensification of farming, the situation of the small and middle

farms is extremely grave. Not in a position to make the fullest use of technological progress, they cannot possibly compete with large mechanized capitalist farms and are inevitably the losers in their struggle with the latter.

A grim picture of US agriculture was painted by President Lyndon Johnson in his State of the Union Message in February 1968. He acknowledged the ruin of small and middle farmers. Employment in farm production went down by 46 per cent between 1950 and 1967. The fate of 1,500,000 farmers hangs by a thread, for their strained financial circumstances prevent them from making good sales. Ten million rural dwellers—one out of five—live below the subsistence level. Farmers that have come to ruin try their luck in towns; there, according to President Johnson, they find an atmosphere of poverty, unemployment and human suffering.

While thousands of small and middle farms are brought to ruin, large-scale farms continue to grow in size and number, and their profits are running high.

The situation in agriculture in the US is typical of that in the rest of the capitalist world. In Great Britain, France, the FRG and other capitalist countries, technological progress and the intensification of agricultural production are accompanied by the decline of small and middle farms on the one hand and the growth and rising prosperity of large farms on the other. Official data for the "Common Market" countries show that about 8,000,000 farmers will be compelled to give up agricultural work in the near future.

History has shown that the chief tendency of agricultural production under capitalism consists in the ruin of the petty farmer and his replacement by the large capitalist producer.

The tendency under socialism is just the opposite. Socialist reorganization of agriculture leads to the amalgamation of small farms into large-scale collective economies. This process is greatly facilitated by the state farms. The Soviet Union is the first country in the world where this process took place without victimizing the toiling farmers. The emergence of collective and state farms which are large-scale mechanized agricultural enterprises has lightened the farmers' work and raised their productivity, and in this way has created a sound basis for the steady improvement of their welfare. Labour has become the only source and gauge of one's welfare: the more the farmer contributes through his work to the socialized economy, the higher his income and his living standard. The collective farms have put an end to the threat of poverty and ruin, to the farmer's fear of insecurity; they have made him confident of the future. It should be noted that the incomes of Soviet farmers have gone up 8.5-fold compared with pre-revolutionary times. All farmers have the right to pensions and enjoy guaranteed wages. There has been a sharp rise in the farmers' educational, cultural and technical level. The elimination of the essential socio-economic and cultural distinctions between the city and the countryside is under way.

Collective labour has united all the farmers into a single friendly family; it has greatly strengthened their alliance with the working class. From the narrow world of their personal

interests they have entered the arena of social life and statesmanship. Their labour has become a social affair and has acquired nation-wide significance. This has given rise to mass socialist competition in the village—a patriotic campaign involving millions of farmers for achieving higher results and higher labour productivity.

Collective and state-farm production is constantly on the upgrade. It has a new gigantic task to accomplish in the current Five-Year Plan (1966-70), which contemplates an increase of gross output by 25 per cent and that of grain output by 30 per cent. In tackling this vital task the farmers have at their disposal the economic, industrial and scientific resources of the country. Compared with the preceding Five-Year Plan period the state has doubled its capital investments in agriculture to the notable sum of 41,000 million roubles. Thirty thousand million more are contributed by the collective farms. An extensive and diverse programme for the further consolidation and development of the material and technical base of the collective and state farms will be carried out. It includes large-scale mechanization, land improvement measures and the wide application of chemistry in agricultural production.

An important contribution is being made by Soviet selectionists who have produced a number of varieties of crop cultures and are continuing research in this field.

All these measures contribute to the creation of the necessary material basis for stable and rapid agricultural growth, which will provide the country with an abundance of food and raw material.



The implementation of this programme is inseparably linked with the further rise of the farmers' living standards. The Five-Year Plan envisages a considerable increase in the construction of homes, schools, hospitals, clubs and cinemas and the extension of gas mains to the villages. The farmers' incomes from the socialized economy will increase by 35-40 per cent.

Notable results have already been achieved. In the first two years of the plan period the average annual rate of accretion of farm produce went up almost by 80 per cent as against the preceding five years: the farmers' incomes in kind and in cash from collective-farm production increased by approximately 20 per cent. Within this period hundreds of thousands of farmers moved into new homes. New schools, clubs, libraries, department stores, hospitals and clinics have been built in the countryside; new sanatoria and rest homes were built by the farms on a cooperative basis. The consistent elimination of the basic distinctions between the city and the countryside is under way.

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The peasants had two paths to choose from: the capitalist or the socialist path of agricultural development. The first means oppression and poverty, ruin and hunger for the majority of the peasants; the second delivers them from economic enslavement, ruin and poverty, helps them develop confidence in their future and provide them with all the conditions for satisfying their material and spiritual demands. In the collective-farm system based on socialist principles the pea-

sants have a sound foundation for achieving well-being and building a life worthy of man. In socialism the peasant finds the force that has helped him to do away with economic poverty, to acquire political rights and genuine freedom and to achieve a deserving place in society. That is why the peasants, together with the working class and under its leadership, fought for the victory of the socialist revolution and took an active part in the building of socialism. That is why today they spare no efforts to achieve the final victory of communism, a society with abundance of material and spiritual wealth for each and everyone.

М. СУХАНОВ

«По плану Ленина»

*на английском языке*

Цена 34 коп.



