

S. P. TRAPEZNIKOV

LENINISM
AND
THE AGRARIAN
AND PEASANT
QUESTION

VOLUME II



This volume deals with the varied theoretical and practical experience of the Communist Party and the Soviet government in carrying out Lenin's co-operative plan. Factual material is invoked to show that objective and subjective conditions had matured for going on to complete collectivisation of agriculture at the end of the twenties and in the early thirties. The Party worked out organisational measures for this transition, the rates and forms of co-operation, and determined how ready specific districts were for the new move.

The volume also shows how life was arranged on collective farms—the emergence of new socialist methods of collective work, the principles governing remuneration, and the structure of socialist farming.

The emergence and consolidation of the collective-farm system, the author notes, was one of the crucial factors behind the historic victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945.

The closing chapters trace back the history of the collective-farm system, demonstrate the distinctive features of developed socialism, and recapitulate the Communist Party's measures for the further improvement of agricultural production.



S. P. TRAPEZNIKOV

LENINISM
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QUESTION

IN TWO VOLUMES



Progress Publishers

Moscow

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HISTORICAL
EXPERIENCE
OF THE CPSU
IN CARRYING
OUT LENIN'S
CO-OPERATIVE
PLAN

VOLUME II



Progress Publishers

Moscow

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С. П. ТРАПЕЗНИКОВ
ЛЕНИНИЗМ
И АГРАРНО-КРЕСТЬЯНСКИЙ ВОПРОС
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Part One

**FOLLOWING LENIN'S COURSE
OF BUILDING SOCIALISM
IN THE USSR**

CHAPTER I

LENIN'S CO-OPERATIVE PLAN AS THE SCIENTIFIC BASIS FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF AGRICULTURE IN THE USSR

Lenin's famous co-operative plan, an integral component of the overall plan for the construction of socialism in the land of Soviets, became the programme for the transformation of Russia's agriculture along socialist lines. In summing up the experience of co-operation and collective farming gained in the first years of Soviet government Lenin concluded that agriculture in Soviet Russia should be developed by involving the mass of working peasantry in socialist construction through co-operation—*first in the sphere of trade and later in the sphere of production*, by gradually introducing the principles of the country's collective farming in agriculture. Apart from being the only correct one, this course had the virtue of being the most simple and easy to understand for the mass of the peasants in their transition to socialism.

That is why Lenin focussed his prime attention on identifying the historical role of co-operation as a means of transforming agriculture along socialist lines and thus converting millions upon millions of small peasant producers into active and conscious builders of socialism. *Lenin takes the credit for a profound and comprehensive elaboration of the theory of socialist co-operation which he defined as the main highway for the Russian peasantry's advance to socialism. His co-operative plan, a brilliant example of the creative development of Marxist theory, indicates the way to implement this profound socio-economic transformation. It shows how, through the various forms of co-operation, the peasant masses will gradually assimilate the ideas of socialism.*

Lenin demonstrated the development of co-operation in a socialist state in all its diversity: *firstly*, as a socialist form of economy based on public ownership called upon to develop new relations of production in agriculture, to get the peasants to accept a new

style of labour discipline and to become accustomed to a new way of life; *secondly*, as a mass public organisation capable of uniting the whole of the working peasantry and of playing an educational role in relation to them similar to that played by trade unions with respect to the working class; *thirdly*, as a new socio-economic system in the countryside capable of developing the productive forces in agriculture and raising the material welfare of the working peasantry.

The development of Marxist ideas on the socialist transformation of agriculture invariably pointed the way to those forms of association which would be the most accessible and the least painful for the peasantry in their transition from small-scale individual farming to a collective system of agriculture. Lenin warned the Communist Party against the danger of expropriating small and middle peasants during the campaign to bring them together into agricultural associations, and equally against the premature inclusion of their collective property into the state property belonging to the nation as a whole. Only on the basis of stimulating the development of two types of socialist agricultural enterprise—the collective farms and state farms—could the conditions be created for an accelerated development of productive forces and for the elevation of collective farms to the level of agricultural enterprises of a consistently socialist type.

The ideologists of the Trotsky and Bukharin oppositions waged a struggle against Lenin's co-operative plan even during his lifetime. They were bent on reducing to zero the role and significance of co-operation in the Soviet state. By distorting its political and economic nature the adversaries of Leninism sought to portray Soviet co-operative enterprises as just ordinary collective capitalist enterprises. And it is easy to understand why. The followers of Trotsky and Bukharin rejected Lenin's doctrine on the possibility of socialism winning through in a single country and did not believe that the political alliance of the working class with the working peasantry could be consolidated.

Lenin was merciless in exposing such reactionary bourgeois views of Soviet co-operation. He urged the Party to realise that co-operation in conditions of the Soviet state was acquiring a completely new significance and content and that it pursued other aims than co-operation under capitalism. Co-operation under the dictatorship of the proletariat differs fundamentally from co-operative societies existing in bourgeois society in terms both of its form and content. *In form* Soviet co-operation is a productive association and a mass organisation of working people coming together to form collectives;

in content it is a socialist type of economy as co-operative enterprises, to quote Lenin, "...do not differ from socialist enterprises if the land on which they are situated and the means of production belong to the state, i.e., the working class."¹

In conditions of the bourgeois state co-operation is totally subjected to the laws of capitalist development and serves as an instrument of exploitation and oppression of the working masses. The Communist Party has always explained that in the Soviet state co-operation was the principal and crucial component of socialist construction in the countryside since it was capable of affecting all the most important spheres of the political, economic and cultural life of the peasantry. To quote Lenin again, "...The position of the co-operatives undergoes a fundamental change from the time of the conquest of state power by the proletariat, from the moment that the proletarian state sets about systematic creation of the socialist order. Here quantity passes into quality.... The co-operative, if it embraces the whole of society, in which the land is socialised and the factories nationalised, is socialism."²

In the sphere of circulation the consumers' co-operation was to be the predominant form. It involved the mass of the peasantry in an active and conscious participation in co-operative commercial operations and helped them realise the benefits of co-operation, introduced the peasants to the rudiments of collective management, public control and taught them to trade in a cultured and efficient manner. As Lenin put it: "...Given social ownership of the means of production, given the class victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie, the system of civilised co-operators is the system of socialism."³

In the sphere of production the peasant was coming to see for himself the advantages of association and collectivism through his participation in the more elementary forms of co-operation, i.e. marketing and supplying agricultural and credit co-operatives. Thus the peasant was preparing himself for a transition to a higher, productive form of co-operative association exemplified by collective farms where the basic means of production are socialised, peasant labour is collectivised and agriculture is organised on the basis of large-scale social production. Lenin wrote: "Only if we succeed in proving to the peasants in practice the advantages of common,

¹ V. I. Lenin, "On Co-operation", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1966, p. 473.

² V. I. Lenin, Original Version of the Article "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, 1977, pp. 215-16.

³ V. I. Lenin, "On Co-operation", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 471.

collective, co-operative, artel cultivation of the soil, only if we succeed in helping the peasant by means of co-operative or artel farming, will the working class, which wields state power, be really able to convince the peasant that its policy is correct and thus secure the real and lasting following of the millions of peasants."¹

The Party made the implementation of Lenin's co-operative plan directly dependent on the successful solution of two crucial tasks: *first*, to achieve a radical improvement in the work of the organs of Soviet power from the bottom to the top, and, *second*, to raise significantly the cultural standards of the mass of the peasantry.

The first task consisted in eliminating the survivals of bureaucratic practices, red-tape, procrastination and the negligent attitude to the requirements of working people still persisting in the Soviet state apparatus. Lenin demanded that the Party should work hard to gain complete mastery of the mechanism of the new state apparatus, that it should enlist workers and peasants in the work of management and control. That was the only way to improve the Soviet state apparatus, to make it really flexible, influential and authoritative among the working people. As Lenin put it, "there are a great many talented organisers among the peasants and the working class, and they are only just beginning to become aware of themselves, to awaken, to stretch out towards great, vital, creative work, to tackle with their own forces the task of building socialist society."²

The second task was to raise the cultural standards of the peasantry, since it was impossible to organise the mass of the peasantry into co-operatives without first effecting a cultural revolution in the countryside. Lenin wrote: "And the economic object of this educational work among the peasants is to organise the latter in co-operative societies. If the whole of the peasantry had been organised in co-operatives, we would by now have been standing with both feet on the soil of socialism. But the organisation of the entire peasantry in co-operative societies presupposes a standard of culture among the peasants (precisely among the peasants as the overwhelming mass) that cannot, in fact, be achieved without a cultural revolution."³

Lenin ridiculed and disproved the claims of bourgeois reformists

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Speech Delivered at the First Congress of Agricultural Communes and Agricultural Artels, December 4, 1919", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, 1965, pp. 195-96.

² V. I. Lenin, "How to Organise Competition?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, 1965, p. 409.

³ V. I. Lenin, "On Co-operation", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 474.

to the effect that in a backward agricultural country such as Russia, a country with a predominantly illiterate peasant population, any attempt to build socialism would fail. Disproving these false assertions the Communist Party provided a brilliant example of tactics when, guided by the revolutionary theory of Marxism, it tackled the great historic task of building socialism by first establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat. Relying on the political power of the proletariat the Party was able to step up its efforts to carry out cultural revolution in the countryside and to direct the mass of the peasantry onto the path of socialism.

The steady development of co-operative movement in the countryside furnished a new basis, both economically and politically, for new social relations between town and country in which the former's guiding role vis-à-vis the latter was strengthened as was the union between socialist industry and agriculture. This means that the town was able not only to carry the countryside with it, but to actually guide and direct it along the socialist road. Lenin wrote: "Under capitalism the town introduced political, economic, moral, physical, etc., corruption into the countryside. In our case, towns are automatically beginning to introduce the very opposite of this into the countryside."¹ The great historic importance of agricultural co-operation lay in the fact that the Party found in it a form of association which combined in a successful blend the private interests of peasants with the overall interests of the state: this made it acceptable and mutually advantageous for both sides. Consequently, co-operation both as an economic and a political form of mass organisation of the peasant population was the simplest, the easiest to achieve and understand and the most accessible to the mass of the peasantry in their transition to a new social system. In the course of their active and conscious participation in co-operative construction the peasants were learning in practice to build socialism. "All we actually need," Lenin wrote, "...is to organise the population of Russia in co-operative societies on a sufficiently large scale, for we have now found that degree of combination of private interest, of private commercial interest, with state supervision and control of this interest, that degree of its subordination to the common interests which was formerly the stumbling-block for very many socialists."²

Developments since then have demonstrated that co-operative construction in agriculture had a chance of successful progress to-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Pages from a Diary", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 466.

² V. I. Lenin, "On Co-operation", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 468.

wards socialism provided it was backed up by comprehensive, steadily growing material, financial, organisational and cultural assistance on the part of the proletarian state and the industrial city. As Lenin put it, "at present we have to realise that the co-operative system is the social system we must now give more than ordinary assistance, and we must actually give that assistance."¹ Lenin's brilliant ideas on the role and significance of co-operation in the Soviet state opened up great prospects for the development of socialism in the countryside and illuminated the way for the Party to build socialism.

What are the main theses of Lenin's co-operative plan?

Firstly, the plan proceeded from the assumption that Soviet Russia had everything necessary and in adequate quantity to build socialism now that the proletarian state held the reigns of government in its hands and controlled the country's economy. But the victory of socialism could not come about by itself, it could only be achieved in the course of determined and prolonged struggle. Therefore the most reliable guarantee of this victory was the consolidation of the political alliance between the working class and the mass of the working peasantry, in which the working class led by the Communist Party played the guiding role. To quote Lenin, "Soviet power has given us the alliance of workers and peasants. Therein lies its strength. Therein lies the guarantee of our successes and of our ultimate victory."²

The Soviet peasantry have travelled a long and glorious path of historical development in a fraternal alliance with the working class under the leadership of the Communist Party. Unlike their counterparts in Western Europe, Russia's working peasants in the course of three successive revolutions were invariably an ally of the working class under whose leadership they fought against the oppression of Russia's landowners and capitalists, to overthrow the tsar and the bourgeoisie. As a result of this joint struggle which culminated in the proletariat's victory in October 1917, the Soviet peasantry obtained the land, peace and freedom from the hands of the revolutionary proletariat. That was why Soviet peasants so highly prized the proletariat, their leader and liberator, and cast in their lot with it in an unbreakable eternal alliance.

Historical experience shows that the working class led by the Communist Party and backed by the mass of the toiling peasantry

¹ V. I. Lenin, "On Co-operation", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 469

² V. I. Lenin, "Fourth Anniversary of *Bednota*", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 249.

can win political power by relying on its high standard of organisation, staunchness, unity and iron discipline. But *the winning of political power is only the first step. The main thing is to keep and consolidate this power and to build socialism.* For that the dictatorship of the proletariat, *without which the working class cannot consolidate its victory, is necessary.* Lenin repeatedly pointed out that the supreme principle of the dictatorship of the proletariat was to maintain correct relations between the two main classes, the working class and the peasantry. Without the alliance with the peasantry, he wrote, "...the political power of the proletariat is impossible, its preservation is inconceivable.... The supreme principle of the dictatorship is the maintenance of the alliance between the proletariat and the peasantry in order that the proletariat may retain its leading role and its political power."¹

The proletariat as the most advanced revolutionary class in society did not win political power to perpetuate its dictatorship. It needed the latter above all to turn this powerful weapon against the exploiting classes, to suppress them and to bring the revolution to the complete victory of socialism. To fulfil this historic task the working class had to carry out a truly titanic organisational, economic, cultural and educational work. Lenin wrote: "We must strive to build up a state in which the workers retain the leadership of the peasants, in which they retain the confidence of the peasants."²

Guided by the Communist Party the working class in alliance with the poor peasants toppled the rule of the bourgeoisie and established Soviet Government in October 1917, thereby setting up a political basis for socialism. In the period of its political domination the working class, which led the mass of the peasantry, could and had to ensure the laying of the economic foundation of socialism and build the socialist system.

Secondly, Lenin's co-operative plan proceeded from the need for the comprehensive development of socialist industry, above all of heavy industry, as the basis for the socialist reconstruction of the country's national economy, including agriculture. To this end Lenin worked out a comprehensive electrification scheme (GOELRO) which, like his co-operative plan, formed an integral part of the overall plan of socialist construction in Soviet Russia. The GOELRO plan became the scientific programme of the Commu-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Third Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, 1965, p. 490.

² V. I. Lenin, "Better Fewer, but Better", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 501.

nist Party in the field of socialist industrialisation. Lenin wrote: "Only when the country has been electrified, and industry, agriculture and transport have been placed on the technical basis of modern large-scale industry, only then shall we be fully victorious."¹

Lenin had no illusions about the formidable difficulties which the Soviet state had to overcome in its efforts to build up socialist industry. No capitalist country had been able to develop its industry without attracting investment capital from outside. Soviet Russia was to be the first exception to this rule for it was deprived of any help from outside in its industrialisation programme. What is more, it had to contend with active opposition from the capitalist countries which were trying to exploit the Soviet Republic's economic backwardness and undermine its independence as a state. Pointing to this Lenin set the Party the task of mobilising the country's entire domestic resources and manpower for the industrialisation drive. He wrote: "If we see to it that the working class retains its leadership over the peasantry we shall be able, by exercising the greatest possible thrift in the economic life of our state, to use every saving we make to develop our large-scale machine industry, to develop electrification, the hydraulic extraction of peat.... In this, and in this alone, lies our hope."²

The Party was aware that only on the basis of heavy industry would it be possible to reconstruct agriculture and set it on the socialist path. Only by placing agriculture on the basis of the latest agricultural machinery would it be able to make a transition from the small, individual peasant farms to large-scale socialist agriculture and to tear up capitalism in the countryside by the roots which were fed by the small peasant economy. The Communists were firmly convinced that in the not too distant future the Soviet Union's agriculture, reconstructed along socialist lines and equipped with the latest machinery, would become the most advanced in the world, the biggest producer providing an abundance of agricultural produce and raw materials for industry. As early as 1918 Lenin wrote: "Our natural wealth, our manpower and the splendid impetus which the great revolution has given to the creative powers of the people are ample material to build a truly mighty and abundant Russia."³

Thirdly, Lenin's co-operative plan aimed at transferring the peas-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Eighth All-Russia Congress of Soviets, December 22-29, 1920", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, 1974, p. 516.

² V. I. Lenin, "Better Fewer, but Better", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 501.

³ V. I. Lenin, "The Chief Task of Our Day", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 161.

ants to the path of collective farming with strict observance of the principle of voluntary association. Condemning the Trotskyites' zigzagging attitude to the peasantry, Lenin warned the Party against the danger of applying coercion, crude methods of administration and commanding in economic relations with the working peasantry. Lenin wrote: "That is why our task is now to go over to the collective tillage of the land, to large-scale farming in common. But the Soviet government must not under any circumstances resort to coercion. There is no law which makes this compulsory. Agricultural communes are established on a voluntary basis; the adoption of collective tillage must be voluntary; the workers' and peasants' government must refrain from exercising the slightest compulsion, and the law prohibits this."¹

Collectivisation could succeed only if the Party carried out patient and consistent political work among the working peasantry. Lenin demanded that strict measures of Party and administrative disciplining should be taken against those Party and Soviet functionaries who were guilty of abusing their authority and of replacing persuasion and education by methods of administration and command in relations with the working peasants. He was particularly merciless in castigating those members of the Party who held anti-middle peasant views qualifying them as reactionary and harmful for socialist construction. Waging an uncompromising struggle against the Trotskyites and checking their moves against the middle peasants the Party managed to create a situation where the middle peasants became the central figure in the countryside and a reliable ally of the proletariat in its work for the country's economic rehabilitation.

But, Lenin warned, the middle peasantry by virtue of its social and economic environment was a highly specific social category. The middle peasant was situated midway between capitalism and socialism and his siding with socialism depended on whether the Party would adopt the correct policy towards the peasantry. It was important to properly understand the dual nature of the middle peasant. On the one hand, he was a toiler who did not exploit others. For a long time he himself suffered the oppression and exploitation by landowners and kulaks. But on the other hand, the middle peasant being a petty owner had visceral, sentimental attachment to his plot of land. These two opposite trends were constantly tearing his soul apart. Lenin wrote: "As a working man

¹ V. I. Lenin, "First Congress of Farm Labourers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, 1965, p. 44.

the peasant gravitates towards socialism, and prefers the dictatorship of the workers to the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. As a seller of grain, the peasant gravitates towards the bourgeoisie, towards freedom of trade, i. e., back to the 'habitual', old, 'time-hallowed' capitalism."¹

The middle peasantry was therefore a social stratum whose allegiance was sought both by the working class and the bourgeoisie. That is why the Party waged such a determined struggle to win over the middle peasantry. It skilfully pursued a policy of achieving agreement with the middle peasants and educated them towards a frame of mind that would enable them to break free of their petty-owner habit and resolutely join the working class and follow its lead. The Party was convinced that by its painstaking and dedicated work it would win the middle peasantry over to socialism and thus would remove the danger of its becoming again the object of exploitation and enslavement. It never tired of explaining to the middle peasants that their road to a free and socialist life lay only through the conversion of small, scattered farmsteads into a large-scale collective agricultural enterprise equipped with the latest agricultural machinery and farming techniques and developing on the basis of the application of the latest achievements of agricultural science.

Fourthly, Lenin's co-operative plan presupposed that the socialist transformation of agriculture would inevitably meet with formidable difficulties and would be attended by sharp class struggle. Socialist construction in the countryside was to result in the elimination of the last and the most numerous exploiting class—the kulaks, who, undoubtedly, would not lay down arms without a fight and would offer fierce resistance to the advance of socialism.

Lenin described the struggle against the kulaks as the final and decisive battle against Russian capitalism. The subsequent course of the class struggle in the countryside completely verified Lenin's shrewd prediction. The kulaks did, indeed, wage a desperate fight in an attempt to block socialist construction in the countryside. In this battle they tried to use the remnants of the routed exploiting classes and hoped for support from the middle peasant. By playing on his property-owner mentality, by scaring him with the prospect of losing his property the kulaks were dragging the middle peasant back to capitalism, obstructing in every possible way his transition to large-scale socialist farming.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Greetings to the Hungarian Workers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 389.

Therefore, in order to involve the middle peasant in socialist construction, the Party had to pursue the Leninist class policy in the countryside with a firm hand. This policy was three-pronged: *to consolidate the alliance with the middle peasant, to wage decisive struggle against the kulak and to rely only on the poor peasants.* In this uncompromising and determined struggle the Communist Party succeeded in winning the middle peasant to the side of the working class and in involving him in the common work of building socialism in the USSR. The CPSU Programme states in this connection: "The destiny of socialism in a country like the USSR largely depended on the solution of a most difficult problem, namely, the transition from a small-scale, dispersed peasant economy to **socialist co-operation.** Led by the Party, aided and fully supported by the working class, the peasantry took the road of socialism.... The real solution of the eternal peasant question was provided by the Lenin co-operative plan."¹

After the proletariat had won political power the task of transforming agriculture along socialist lines, as Lenin defined it, was the most difficult and complex and at the same time one of a higher order. Failure to solve it successfully would make Russia's advance towards socialism impossible. Moreover, a situation took shape not only in Russia but "on a world scale for this most difficult and at the same time most important socialist reform, this crucial and fundamental socialist measure, to come to the forefront, and it has come to the forefront in Russia."²

In our days the co-operative path in the development of agriculture has proved successful not only in the USSR but also in many countries of the socialist bloc. The experience of socialist co-operation in agriculture is having a salutary effect on the countries of Asia and Africa which have thrown off the colonial yoke and in which the co-operative movement has developed vigorously. Of equal importance is the fact that the co-operative movement in the capitalist countries is increasingly joining the struggle of the proletariat for its political and economic rights.

Lenin's co-operative plan, as the best way of involving small and middle peasants in the mainstream of socialist construction, has fully justified itself and herein lies its international significance.

¹ *The Road to Communism*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1962, p. 458.

² V. I. Lenin, "Speech to the First All-Russia Congress of Land Departments, Poor Peasants' Committees and Communes, December 11, 1918", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, 1965, p. 344.

1. THE PARTY'S EFFORTS TO TRANSFORM AGRICULTURE ALONG SOCIALIST LINES

The 15th Party Congress which met in December 1927 marked a turning point in the development of Soviet agriculture. The Congress raised the question of solving *the most difficult, the most complex and principal task* facing the proletariat after winning political power—the transformation of agriculture along socialist lines and involving the working peasantry in the mainstream of socialist construction. It took ten years before the Party could set about the practical solution of the final and most crucial part of the agrarian question.

The proclamation of the policy of radical reorganisation of agriculture along socialist lines was a continuation of Lenin's industrialisation policy as worked out by the Central Committee and adopted by the 14th Party Congress. The creation of domestic heavy industry and large-scale collectivised agriculture was the general line pursued by the Party and aimed at laying a solid material and technical foundation of socialism.

The 15th Congress met at a time when, in terms of output, Soviet industry had overtaken the level of pre-war Russia and had become a sufficiently potent lever for accelerating significantly the process of the transformation of Soviet agriculture along socialist lines. Bearing this in mind the Party Congress specially stressed the need for pushing on a broad front the construction of a large-scale collective system of farming and for intensifying the offensive on the capitalist elements in the countryside. This twofold task determined the Party's policy of implementing in practice the collectivisation in agriculture with a view to placing it on a new socialist footing.

It was necessary to set the multi-million peasant masses on the path of collective-farm construction not only in order to eliminate the age-old backwardness of Russian agriculture and end the food problem. It was also dictated by the urgent need to remodel radically the country's agriculture along new, socialist lines. The Communist Party was fully aware that the fullest development of collectivisation was a key and integral part of the great historic task of socialist construction and that without the socialist transformation of agriculture it would be impossible to build socialist society.

The Party proceeded from Lenin's instructions to the effect that it was wrong to build socialism in industry alone while leaving

agriculture at the mercy of spontaneous development in the hope that the petty-bourgeois countryside would of its own accord follow the lead of the socialist city. It was also wrong to allow a situation to continue for much longer where Soviet Government and socialist construction were based on two polarised foundations: on the one hand, on the large-scale socialist industry and, on the other, on the most backward and fragmented system of small peasant farming, since sooner or later this incongruous combination would bring down the whole of the country's economy.

It was essential to eliminate immediately this dangerous contradiction which was making itself increasingly felt by prejudicing the national economy: on the one hand, small commodity production in agriculture based on private property and serving as the breeding ground for capitalism and, on the other, large-scale socialist production in industry which formed the basis for the growth of socialism. There was only one way of overcoming this contradiction, namely, to replace the old and outmoded relations of production in the countryside with new socialist relations of production.

The economic laws governing the development of a socialist national economy are such that both industrial and agricultural development call for a uniformed and planned organisation and management on a national basis. Otherwise it is impossible to establish a pattern of correct proportions among the various branches of the national economy, impossible to distribute and utilise the national income with maximum effect and impossible to ensure the dynamic and successful performance of the socialist economy as a whole. The need to set up a single economic foundation of large-scale socialist production in both industry and agriculture stemmed naturally from the objective social and economic conditions prevailing in the country.

The decisions adopted by the 15th Party Congress were based on Lenin's co-operative plan which forms an integral part of his doctrine of socialist revolution and the possibility of building socialism first in one country. Proceeding from this scientific premise the Congress unanimously approved the Central Committee's plan for extending and strengthening the existing network of collective and state farms. It also provided scientifically sound recommendations to the Party on ways and methods of tackling the historic task of wide-scale collectivisation in agriculture.

The explicit instructions issued by the Party Congress on methods of collectivisation embodied the Leninist general line of the Party aimed at bringing the peasant masses to a common objective by influencing them from all sides at once—namely, to transfer the peasantry onto the path of setting up large collective farms through-

out the country. The decisions adopted by the Congress pointed out that "at the present time the task of uniting and transforming small individual peasant homesteads into large collective farms must be put *at the centre* of the Party's activities in the countryside."¹

Needless to say, this momentous revolutionary transformation of agriculture could only be carried out on the basis of strict voluntary association, on the basis of strengthening the alliance with the middle peasants. The Congress instructed the Party to launch, without delay, a massive propaganda campaign among the peasants to make them see the need for a gradual transition to large-scale collective farming, and to explain to them that "the successes scored by the Party's agricultural policy coupled with the associated new situation enables the proletariat's party to develop further the offensive against the kulaks and to adopt a series of new measures to inhibit the growth of capitalism in the countryside and to set peasant farming on the socialist path by relying on the full power of the economic organs and continuing to lean on the masses of poor and middle peasants".²

In its resolution on the report "On Work in the Countryside" the 15th Congress outlined a series of immediate tasks for the Party, the fulfilment of which would ensure the success of the collectivisation policy and a rise in labour productivity in agriculture. The key tasks among them were: consolidation and improvement of the work of the state organisations and co-operative societies dealing with the marketing of industrial products in the countryside and the purchasing of farm produce; the promotion of the leading role of socialist industry in the country's national economy; the expansion and consolidation of all types of co-operatives as the most reliable means of a step-by-step passage from co-operation in marketing and supply operations to the socialisation of production facilities at the disposal of individual peasant households; all-round assistance to collective farm construction; the further promotion of the purchases of farm produce under contract establishing a direct link between peasant agriculture and the socialist industries processing its output and ensuring planned regulation by the state of the corresponding branches of agriculture; increase of agricultural credit and of material assistance to agricultural producers' asso-

¹ *KPSS v resolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh syezdov, konferencii i plenumov CK* (The CPSU in the Resolutions and Decisions of Its Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenary Meetings), 1898-1970, Vol. 4, Moscow, 1970, p. 57 (in Russian).

² *ibid.*, p. 63.

ciations and to the poor peasants and the poorer sections of the middle peasants.

In view of the new situation in the countryside the Congress raised the question of revitalising the rural Soviets as a matter of great urgency. The solution of this major problem was closely bound up with such an important organisational measure as the placing of the rural land societies under the jurisdiction of the rural Soviets. This would enable the Soviets to deny the kulaks their last refuge in the form of the land societies and would open up new prospects for them as they would acquire an additional resource in the shape of the budgets of the land societies, which could be used to finance economic, cultural and socio-political work in the countryside as well as to invigorate and expand the Soviets' activities in other spheres.

Far-reaching qualitative changes that had occurred in the country's social and economic development enabled the Party to make a start on the practical implementation of Lenin's instruction on the long-term planning of national economic development. The Congress examined the question of the first five-year development plan. In its directives the Congress pointed out that the drawing up of such a plan was dictated by the following considerations: the social and class content of the commanding heights in the country's economy, the correlation between town and country, had undergone fundamental change; the organisational form of the national economy had also changed radically to make planned economic management possible; the distribution of the national income had been changed fundamentally. The share of the socialist sector of industry became greater, the co-operative movement had made advances as had the state trade. The proportion of the working class in the country's population had grown and links between it and the mass of the peasantry had been strengthened. The dictatorship of the proletariat had been consolidated.¹

That was the political and economic background which determined objectives of the first five-year economic development plan. The drawing up of the five-year plan was an extremely difficult and complicated process: for one thing the Soviet country lacked any previous experience in the matter, on the other hand, there were forces within the Party which opposed its adoption. Some of these people were opposed to the five-year plan as a whole while others countered its directives with utterly mistaken and unacceptable alternatives. This gave rise to a sharp struggle within the

¹ See: *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 4, pp. 31-32.

Party over the issue of the drawing up of the first five-year plan. This struggle was duly reflected during the discussion which preceded the Congress.

Let us now examine the opinions that were expressed in connection with the drawing up of the first five-year plan.

Firstly, the question of accumulation: one group of critics advocated concentrating exclusively on accumulation while ignoring questions of consumption; another group, on the contrary, laid emphasis on consumption and ignored socialist accumulation.

Secondly, the question of sources of finance: one group proposed that industry be built up at the expense of agriculture, which was to supply all it could in the way of financial resources. That would mean laying the burden of industrialisation on the peasant masses. Another group, on the contrary, urged that the entire plan be based on agricultural development, which they proposed to advance by cutting investments in industry.

Thirdly, the question of priorities: one group demanded that priority be given to light industry, their opponents, by contrast, pressed for attention to be focussed on heavy industry and neglected the development of light industry.

Fourthly, the question of growth rates: one group advocated the idea of industrialising the country in the shortest possible time, i. e. within a single five-year plan; another group, by contrast, advocated a slow pace of industrialisation.

Thus, in the situation that arose it was essential to work out a correct scientific line that would determine the objectives of the first five-year plan. The 15th Congress played a crucial role in this respect. It pointed out that the plan should take into account both the interests of production and those of consumption and establish correct proportions between industry and agriculture, and between heavy and light industries with priority given to the former; the plan had to provide for such political and economic development that would help strengthen the union between the town and countryside, consolidate the alliance between the working class and the toiling peasantry and ensure the complete victory of the socialist elements throughout the national economy.

The directives of the 15th Congress stated that on the basis of the country's industrialisation and by strengthening all the components of the state of the proletarian dictatorship it would be possible to solve the most difficult task of socialist construction – the socialist transformation of agriculture and the involvement of the mass of the peasantry in the building of socialism. The vital needs of the development of society required the integration of agriculture

into a unified and planned system of national economy. That was the only way to overcome the disproportions and the age-old backwardness of the country's agriculture.

The Communist Party was fully aware of the tremendous difficulties that would beset the implementation of this momentous revolutionary transformation. *The socialist way of development was an unexplored and uncharted path and it was no easy matter to transfer millions of peasants who for centuries had been attached to their small holdings and small-scale peasant world onto the path of large-scale farming based on public ownership and collective labour.* To put into effect this truly grand historic project a far-reaching revolution in the countryside was called for, a revolution which would radically transform the country's agriculture and the traditional peasant mentality on a new socialist basis. This truly socialist revolution began two years later after the 15th Congress.

2. THE IDEOLOGICAL DEFEAT OF TROTSKYISM AS THE NECESSARY CONDITION FOR THE SUCCESSFUL REALISATION OF LENIN'S CO-OPERATIVE PLAN

The 15th Congress not only marked a turning point in the socialist transformation of agriculture but was also a major landmark in the Party's life. Its outstanding historic achievement was to complete the ideological rout of Trotskyism and to make the Party and the people confident of the victory of Lenin's plan for the construction of socialism in the land of the Soviets. Thus the 15th Congress summed up the results of a prolonged and tough struggle against Trotskyism, that most dangerous political trend.

As a result the Party solved three major tasks: one, it pulverised the capitulationist theory advanced by Trotsky and his supporters of the impossibility of building socialism in one country and thus defended Lenin's theory of socialist revolution; two, it buried for all time the Trotskyist theory of the impossibility of drawing the working peasantry into the work of building socialism, raised the vanguard role of the working class in the grand transformation of Soviet society and in its leadership of the peasant masses; and three, it consolidated the Leninist unity of the Party based on the theory of Marxism-Leninism as the ideological weapon of all the Communists. Naturally, this outstanding moral and political victory greatly contributed to the successful implementation of Lenin's co-operative plan.

Trotskyism was the most pernicious political trend at every stage of the Russian revolution. Being isolated from the proletarian masses the Trotskyites were a group of factionalists with differing political views, given to phrase-mongering and intrigue, and recruited from different sections of the urban petty bourgeoisie and from the ranks of the intelligentsia. Disguising themselves with Leftist revolutionary phraseology the Trotskyites in fact represented a most revolting and dangerous brand of opportunism. It is not a matter of chance, therefore, that at different stages of Russian revolution the Trotskyites had invariably operated at its extreme flanks: either on the extreme right or the extreme left. This led Lenin to comment once that they exhibited a peculiar harmony between Leftist adventurist phraseology and Rightist opportunist actions.

The opportunist nature and Leftist adventurist policy of Trotsky and his supporters were particularly in evidence in their attitude to the peasantry. Having adopted the agrarian concepts of the anti-Marxist theorists of Western Social-Democracy Trotsky looked upon the peasants as a reserve army of the bourgeoisie, as a class incapable of grasping the socialist ideas pursued by the proletariat and of becoming its reliable ally. Like all social-opportunists Trotsky had one fate in store for the peasants: economic ruin and eventual conversion into a wage-earning agricultural proletariat. He believed that only after capitalism had completed its job of expropriation would ruined and proletarianised peasants draw level with the urban proletariat to become its ally. In other words Trotsky distinguished only two classes in the countryside—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat and ignored all intermediate strata within the peasantry.

Proceeding from this anti-scientific concept Trotsky rejected the bourgeois-democratic character of the first Russian revolution and opposed Lenin's thesis on the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry, i.e. the inclusion of representatives of the peasantry into the provisional revolutionary government to be formed if the proletariat and the peasantry won a victory in the revolution. Trotsky saw the first Russian revolution as a purely socialist revolution and the possible revolutionary government as a purely worker government. He reiterated this view during the second bourgeois-democratic revolution in 1917. He kept repeating that the revolutionary proletariat of any country could not rely on the peasantry, that the two classes would inevitably clash, and that for this reason socialist revolution had a chance of winning only on a global scale and would only be made by the world proletariat alone.

Trotsky sought to impose this thoroughly false capitulationist theory on the Party with particular zeal after Lenin's death. In the early years of Soviet government Trotsky was at pains to create the impression that the Party and the Russian proletariat had violated what he claimed was a Marxist rule when they took over power in a country where the overwhelming majority of the population were small peasants who had not yet turned into agricultural proletarians. That is why, he argued, the revolution would inevitably be defeated and that in order to save it extraordinary measures had to be taken, namely: since the proletariat had come to power it had to expropriate all small and middle peasant producers without delay and convert them into wage-workers of state-owned agricultural enterprises to be set up through government coercion. The Trotskyites insisted that merciless pressure should be brought to bear on the peasantry and rigorous measures of economic repression adopted which would be tantamount to direct expropriation.

The Trotskyites were covering up their pernicious intentions with Leftist revolutionary phrases. During the Civil War they opposed the transfer of the landed estates to the peasants, arguing that the peasants once they had received the land would lose interest in continuing the struggle for Soviet power and would thus jeopardise the fortunes of the revolution and condemn it to defeat. At the subsequent stage of economic development the Trotskyites, acting under the pretext of protecting the gains of the revolution, came up with a thoroughly adventurist plan for "super-industrialisation" proposing to carry it out using measures reminiscent of the feudal exploitation of peasants. No wonder, therefore, that the Trotskyite concepts failed to meet with support or sympathy among the peasant masses at any stage of the three Russian revolutions. It is noteworthy that Trotskyite ideology, an essentially petty-bourgeois ideology, was alien to the mass of the peasantry.

The following question naturally arises in this connection: what agrarian programme were the Trotskyites advancing and by what means and methods did they propose to implement it in the conditions of the Soviet state?

We should at this point make the reservation that we do not know the documentation of their agrarian programme but whatever it was its basic concepts were set out in a number of documents. The most complete exposition of these concepts was contained in Trotsky's last work "On our New Tasks"¹ which his

¹ This work was based on the speech delivered by Trotsky at a general meeting of the city's Party organisation in Zaporozhye on 1 September 1925.

supporters christened the "credo" of their agrarian policy. The Party with every justification qualified it as the low-grade pamphlet of an inveterate renegade who had completely and irrevocably broken with Marxism-Leninism.

First of all, Trotsky treacherously rejected the historical decisions of the 14th All-Union Party Conference which proclaimed the *Leninist teaching on the possibility of building socialism in the USSR a law for the Party*. This provoked Trotsky's fury. Unable to shake the appeal of Lenin's ideas, this renegade concentrated the fire of his criticism on the Party's economic policy, opposing its Leninist course aimed at achieving a further upswing in agricultural production and developing the co-operative movement in the countryside.

Accusing the Party of "Narodism", of "regeneration" and of "kulak leanings" Trotsky painted a gloomy picture of Soviet reality describing it as "the twilight of the revolution", saying that the "cuckoo was sounding its last hour", etc., etc. Trotsky must have sunk to the lowest depths if he began to ignore the objective laws governing social and economic development, if he ignored the evidence of the scientific Marxist-Leninist analysis of the aggregate factors of reality. His anti-scientific concepts found their best expression in his agrarian platform.

The first Trotsky-Zinoviev thesis formulated the definition of the course of development of Soviet agriculture. Replying to the question of the trend of the socio-economic processes in the countryside the Trotskyites peremptorily declared that Soviet agriculture was following a "capitalist path of development" and was being promoted in this direction by the "kulak line" of the CC. Commenting on the decision of the 14th Party Conference on party work in the countryside Trotsky arbitrarily described the latest party measures in the field of peasant policy as an extension of the framework of capitalist relations in the countryside.

He saw the Party's measures to expand co-operative movement in the countryside and state assistance to the middle peasants as extending capitalist relations. Trotsky and his supporters mechanically transplanted the laws of development of peasant agriculture under capitalism to the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat, thus ignoring the incontestable fact that the development of the Soviet countryside was determined by that of the socialist city and that the capitalist elements in the countryside were opposed in the Soviet state not only by the working masses but by the entire system of the working-class dictatorship with the commanding heights of the economy in its hands, above all, socialist industry.

The second thesis referred to the alignment of class forces in the countryside. Ignoring the new processes of differentiation at work among the peasantry in the Soviet period the Trotskyites identified this differentiation with the differentiation of the peasantry under capitalism. The logic of their reasoning was simple: insofar as Soviet agriculture was following the capitalist path of development the differentiation of the rural population should correspond to this path. By falsifying statistical data the Trotskyites mechanically lumped together the middle peasants and kulaks and concluded that Soviet agriculture was dominated by the kulak or, to use Trotsky's own phrase, the capitalist farmer. Trotsky said: "We are witnessing the formation of a proprietor in the countryside—the farmer of a new type. Of course we may go on calling him a kulak from force of habit but it would be more accurate to describe him as a capitalist-type farmer."

The renegade Trotsky never tired of repeating that there could be only two classes in agriculture—the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. The Trotskyites, therefore, presented a distorted picture of the alignment of class forces in the Soviet agriculture. Having ignored the middle peasant—that central figure in the Soviet countryside, they in effect nullified the great gains of the October Socialist Revolution. It is easy to see that this thoroughly adventurist scheme which followed from the notorious idea of the inevitable clash between the working class and the peasantry was fraught with serious political danger for the Soviet state.

The third thesis concerned methods of the Party's leadership of the peasant masses. The Trotsky-Zinoviev method could be briefly described as one of "tightening the screws". Trotsky and his like-minded Party colleagues Zinoviev and Kamenev considered the peasant exclusively as a bourgeois owner not amenable to proletarian influence and re-education. They believed that the peasants as a class should be expropriated and turned into an agricultural proletariat. That is why the Trotskyites showed no interest in any form of political and general education of the working peasants, in raising their cultural and professional levels. They were hell-bent on the military-coercive measures of the days of War Communism—methods of bare administration and military discipline with regard to the peasants. The Trotskyites were careful to disguise all this with "ultra-revolutionary" phrases, with assertions that the proletariat had a vital interest in "keeping up the flames of class struggle" and revolutionary battles.

The oppositionists' economic policy was particularly reactionary where it concerned the peasants. The Trotskyites considered their

adventurist thesis of "super-industrialisation" as the best means of achieving their political aims. They proclaimed a policy that was harmful to the cause of socialism and contradicted the spirit of socialist revolution. They proposed to build industry by subjecting the peasants to feudal forms of exploitation, by way of total expropriation of small and middle peasants. As the 15th Congress of the Party pointed out, the Trotsky-Zinoviev clique "in a complete contravention of Lenin's policy insisted that the peasants should be taxed more than under the old regime..."¹

The fourth thesis concerned Lenin's co-operative plan. To be sure, the Trotskyites did not dare to oppose it openly. The co-operative plan as formulated by Lenin had not only been endorsed by the whole Party but was very popular with the mass of the peasantry as it was easy to understand and was in harmony with their aspirations. It was on this central issue of the agrarian policy that the Trotskyites fully demonstrated their double-dealing and thoroughly hypocritical position. They paid lip-service to Lenin's co-operative plan while at the same time rejected out of hand the possibility of involving the mass of the peasantry in the mainstream of socialist construction through co-operation, seeing it as a purely bourgeois form which stimulated the growth of capitalism in the countryside. They professed their support for Lenin's co-operative plan but in fact they preached the theory of "unresolvable conflicts" and the inevitable clash between the working class and the peasantry, ruling out the transformative influence of the city on the countryside.

Ignoring Lenin's fundamental principles the Trotskyites rejected, in effect, his co-operative plan according to which it was precisely through agricultural co-operation that the socialist industry was to lead the peasantry to socialism, transforming the small individual peasant farms into large-scale collective agriculture on the basis of new machinery and relying on strengthening the alliance between the working class and the working peasants. No wonder that Trotsky countered Lenin's co-operative plan with a patently capitulationist scheme of his own, which, if implemented, would have resulted in the restoration of capitalism. The central thesis of his plan stated: "While we are unable to provide agriculture with modern machinery we have two courses of action open to us: either we use the methods of War Communism in the countryside ... or, while we are unable to collectivise agriculture on the basis of our industry, we must allow productive forces in

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions..., Vol. 4, p. 50.

the countryside to develop even with the help of capitalist methods. Herein lies the essence of the present phase of our policy."

So, according to Trotsky, only two methods were possible and there was no third way: either back to War Communism, which would mean expropriation of peasants by methods of state coercion, or capitalism which also implied expropriation of the working peasants only by different means. What is more, the Trotskyites extended their expropriation plans to agricultural co-operative societies of the peasants insisting on the "immediate conversion into state enterprises" of all forms of co-operative associations.

In contrast to Lenin's teaching on the need to develop two types of agricultural enterprises—collective and state farms—based on two different forms of social property, i.e. state property and co-operative property, the Trotskyites suggested setting about socialising the implements and other means of production at the disposal of the peasants to bring them together into giant agricultural enterprises and turning the peasants themselves into wage-workers. That was the hard lot to which the Trotskyites were planning to condemn the working peasants and such were the usurper methods they were fully intending to use to solve the agrarian question. Such methods would have been coveted by Stolypin himself, who broke his neck in his zeal to push his anti-peasant terrorist policy. But as it turned out later Stolypin's spiritual heirs went even further.

The Trotskyites accused old Party members, whose loyalty had been tempered in battles, of regeneration and of consigning revolutionary slogans to oblivion. Trotsky issued a battle cry: "Rely in everything only on youth", "Youth is the barometer of the Party". He assigned this tremendously important role not to working-class youth but to the students who, so he claimed, were alone capable of making the Party healthier and younger, of re-animating its revolutionary spirit. This base, provocative concept, designed to play the youth off against the battle-seasoned Leninist old guard, provoked widespread indignation among the working class and within the Party.

The Trotskyites clearly aimed at aggravating contradictions in all spheres of life of Soviet society, above all in relations between the working class and the peasantry, which, if they had succeeded, would have led to the downfall of Soviet power, to the collapse of the world's first state of workers and peasants. They were deliberately working towards this end as they rejected the concept of the possibility of building socialism in one country and of involving the working peasants in the mainstream of socialist con-

struction.

The Trotskyites attempted to justify this brand of extreme Leftist adventurism in theoretical terms. Thus, Preobrazhensky, a Trotskyite theoretician, went to the lengths of asserting that a "new revolution" would be necessary in the near future for economic reasons. But a new revolution against whom or what? It turned out that the new revolution would be directed against the gains of the October Revolution and the Party's Leninist policy. Hinting at the approach of the "new revolution", necessitated allegedly by the New Economic Policy, Preobrazhensky wrote that the conflict was inevitable, that it would start in the countryside and later spread throughout Russia and that in the course of this conflict "one or the other will have to step aside", clearly referring to socialism and capitalism. In political language that meant that either Leninism or Trotskyism would win. Trotsky himself formulated this thesis even more clearly and unequivocally when he said that since the Party had rejected War Communism there was no reason for it to be afraid of capitalist penetration, for the latter had allegedly gone so far that the Party might have to face the need to make a second October revolution.

Opposing Lenin's theory of the possibility of socialism becoming victorious in one country and the line of the Party Central Committee which had displayed exceptional staunchness in the struggle to translate into reality Lenin's behests, the Trotsky-Zinoviev capitulationist bloc slandered the Party and the working class. They claimed that the country lacked forces necessary for the building of socialism, that the working class was unable to unite and lead the multi-million peasantry and that there could be no durable political and economic alliance between these two classes since the socialist path of development was alien to the peasantry.

Clearly, the Communist Party and the Soviet people could not take the course of setting up large-scale capitalist production in agriculture which would mean inevitable ruin and impoverishment of the peasant masses, the end of the alliance between the working class and the peasantry, the ascendancy of the kulaks and, ultimately, the defeat of socialism. The Communist Party and the Soviet state had only one way open to them, the way indicated by the great Lenin, the way of the socialist transformation of agriculture and the gradual transition from small peasant households to large-scale socialist farming—collective farms. Only through the unification of half-ruined and scattered peasant household into large socialist farms capable of using tractors and modern agricultural machinery could the country eliminate its agricultural backwardness

in a short term and ensure a rapid upsurge in every branch of agriculture and a substantial improvement in the material welfare of the peasantry.

In its uncompromising and highly-principled struggle against the "Leftist" capitulationist concepts of Trotsky and his followers the Leninist Party was defending consistently and firmly the Marxist-Leninist policy aimed at placing the country's agriculture on a co-operative footing as an urgent economic need of the Soviet people, as an essential condition for the building of socialist society. The Trotsky-Zinoviev capitulationists, who were essentially advocating bourgeois ideology, were trying to divert the Soviet peasantry off the socialist path onto one of capitalist development which would have had disastrous consequences for the dictatorship of the proletariat. The 15th Congress resolutely rejected the anti-scientific concepts of Trotsky and his supporters and reaffirmed its loyalty to Lenin's co-operative plan. At the same time the Congress recognised that propaganda of the views of Trotsky and his followers was incompatible with membership of the Party.

CHAPTER II

THE URGENT NATIONAL NEED FOR LARGE-SCALE SOCIALISED AGRICULTURE

1. INDUSTRIALISATION AS THE KEY COMPONENT OF LENIN'S PLAN FOR SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION

The epic struggle for industrialisation and the transformation of the country's agriculture along socialist lines marked a glorious chapter in the history of the Soviet Communist Party and the Soviet state. This period was packed with a wealth of experience in the Party's theoretical and practical activities, with its titanic struggle to maintain the ideological purity of its ranks and for the education of all Communists in the spirit of utter devotion to Marxism-Leninism. This struggle culminated in the complete ideological rout of Trotskyism and Right opportunism, those two most powerful and most dangerous anti-Leninist trends within the Communist Party.

That period was also marked by major economic and political successes of the Soviet state, by successes in its foreign and domestic policies. As a result the Communist Party and the Soviet people succeeded in building up a powerful heavy industry and large-scale socialist agriculture: the country's age-old technical, economic and cultural backwardness was overcome and an unshakable solid economic foundation of socialism laid down on which the structure of socialism could safely be built. Naturally, this had involved a tremendous nation-wide effort to overcome various difficulties both internally and on the international scene.

The Soviet Union's international situation in those years was extremely difficult. The capitalist countries would not resign themselves to the existence of the only socialist state and used every available means to strangle the Soviet Republic in its cradle. True, during the first few years after the end of the Civil War the imperialists moderated their zeal. Seeing that in the aftermath of the Civil War the Soviet Republic was lying in ruins, they

were hopeful that it would never be able to get back on its feet, and would inevitably die a natural death under the burden of those tremendous internal hardships that had befallen it after the ravages of two wars. But it was not only these illusory hopes that deterred the imperialists from open attack and brigandage. The fact was that the capitalist countries themselves had sustained major moral, political and economic losses during World War I and having encountered a crushing rebuff when they attempted to launch an armed intervention into the Soviet Republic, were unable openly to attack the Soviet state again. They, too, had to play for time in order to put their own house in order, to "pacify" the angry popular masses. That is why the post Civil War years were in a sense a peaceful respite both for the capitalist countries and for the Soviet Union. Those years came to be known as the period of stabilisation. To be sure, this stabilisation was different in character in the Soviet state and the capitalist countries but objectively it was beneficial for both sides.

Needless to say, the capitalist countries took advantage of this respite and succeeded in achieving a substantial measure of domestic stabilisation. By 1926 most of them had regained the pre-war economic level and strengthened their financial situation. Thus in 1926 world pig iron production was 100.5 per cent of the pre-war level, the figures for steel production, coal output and basic grain output were 120.6, 96.8 and 110.5 per cent of the pre-war level respectively. Production advanced particularly rapidly in the United States which, far from losing anything during World War I, emerged from it greatly enriched.

The imperialists could not fail to see that the USSR, too, was making good progress in its economic development during that period. The imperialists' hopes for the Soviet Russia's "natural death" failed to materialise. For the USSR the period of stabilisation was one of growing political and economic might. It enabled the Soviet state to consolidate its positions in the world scene, to increase its prestige in the eyes of the working class and all working people throughout the world. This came as a none-too-pleasant surprise for the imperialists and was the main obstacle in their anti-Soviet policy. However, they would not give up their plans to destroy the world's first socialist state.

The Party was always mindful of Lenin's warning about the deadly menace of capitalist encirclement and his insistence on accelerating economic development as far as possible. History itself made the Party make optimal use of the respite to step up

progress in every area of economic development, in order to raise the economic potential of the world's first socialist country in the shortest possible time. Now that Russia had the most advanced political system the task of rapid economic upswing in the country moved to the fore. As Lenin put it, "...either perish or overtake and outstrip the advanced countries *economically as well.... Perish or forge full steam ahead. That is the alternative put by history*".¹ The Party had to make unprecedentedly strenuous efforts to overcome all manner of obstacles obstructing its path in its economic policy.

Firstly, it was necessary to overcome without delay the appalling economic backwardness inherited from the old bourgeois-landowner system. Russia, being an agricultural country with a poor industry and poor agriculture, was far behind the advanced capitalist countries. The *first difficulty*, therefore, was to overcome this age-old "Russian" backwardness. The future of the revolution depended on how quickly and how effectively this challenge would be met.

Secondly, it was essential to determine the right line to be taken in building up a new socialist economy. The Party and the country had to follow an unexplored and uncharted course in this area. Therefore, *the second difficulty* lay in developing new forms and methods of socialist economic management.

Thirdly, the deadly menace of the hostile capitalist encirclement had to be overcome if the Soviet country was to avoid becoming economically and politically dependent on the capitalist world, and if it was to retain its independence as a sovereign state. Hence, the *third problem* was to effect a rapid economic upsurge and build up war industry for the reliable armed defence of the Soviet state relying on domestic resources and forces. For that challenge to be met successfully the country had to consolidate the alliance between the working class and the working peasantry, to strengthen party unity, to concentrate all efforts on boosting the Soviet Republic's industrial potential and to make the most of the peaceful respite to achieve maximum progress in socialist construction.

That is why we may safely say, in emphasising the special significance of this period in history of the Soviet state, that the Communist Party guided by Lenin's behests coped admirably with the tasks history put before it. The Party displayed confident skill

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, 1964, p. 364.

in piloting the people safely through a difficult course full of obstacles, privations and hardships and guaranteed the historic victory of the Soviet state.

The Party's general line in this period was defined by the decision of the 14th Congress on industrialisation. It was precisely the development of a powerful heavy industry that was made the key link in the chain of major tasks in socialist construction outlined by the Party. Whereas in the preceding period the Party's prime objective was to get the existing factories, plants and mines back to work, the task now was not only to re-equip them with new machinery but to build a large number of new factories and plants, to organise the manufacture of producer goods and to build up entire new industries.

In other words, the task was to build up a domestic heavy industry in the shortest possible time, an industry relying on the bedrock of heavy engineering and wholesale electrification. This challenging task had to be tackled using such internal forces and resources as were available without counting on any help from outside. Lenin wrote: "Heavy industry needs state subsidies. If we are not able to provide them, we shall be doomed as a civilised state, let alone as a socialist state."¹ Indeed, it was an extremely difficult and challenging task more daunting than any that had ever faced any other country in human history.

The task in agriculture was equally difficult: whereas in the first years of Soviet government the country had to restore the pre-war crop area relying on the old material and technical base, the task now was more complex: it was necessary to create the essential prerequisites, and then proceed to carry out a radical socialist transformation of agriculture on the basis of new technology and material resources. Needless to say, the task could not be solved unless the country was industrialised.

All this signified that the Soviet Union had entered a qualitatively new period of its historical development, a period which called for a new economic policy. Such a policy was exemplified by the grand programme drawn up by the Party for the country's industrialisation. The Soviet people faced tasks that no other people in the world had ever faced before. It is greatly to the credit of the Leninist Party that it developed new methods of industrialisation, used new sources of accumulation, and discovered new laws governing industrialisation.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Fourth Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 426.

Let us have a look at them.

First of all the use of special methods of Soviet industrialisation. It is generally known that all major industrial powers began their industrialisation drives with light industry, gradually proceeding to build up heavy industry. In those countries industrialisation took a long time. Not so with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union could not afford to take this road of industrial development. For one thing history did not allow much time. The Party was fully aware that the capitalist countries could at any moment attack the USSR, and, taking advantage of its backwardness, smash the revolution's great gains. There was no choice but to begin with the heavy industry and build it up at the most accelerated pace relying on native resources. Understandably this way called for far more resources and strenuous efforts.

Secondly, the search for new and hitherto untapped sources of accumulation. It is a fact that all major industrial powers financed their industrialisation by unfair means and methods: by plundering colonies and dependent countries, through war reparations exacted from vanquished nations or by making loans from other countries on crippling terms. Needless to say, the USSR, as a socialist state, could not count on such sources of finance. *The only course open to it was to find domestic sources of socialist accumulation.* What exactly were these sources? Basically, there were four: a) the existence of the Soviet state which controlled the commanding heights of the national economy, the financial and banking system and all the natural resources of the country b) public ownership of the instruments and means of production, which made it possible to obtain and accumulate profits from industry, agriculture, internal and external trade c) the free and creative work of Soviet people, those true creators of the national material and spiritual wealth d) the existence of a truly revolutionary party equipped with the scientific theory of Marxism-Leninism and relying on the complete knowledge of the objective laws governing social development. Admittedly, the mere existence of these powerful, material and moral resources was not sufficient to solve the problem. They had to be put in motion, brought together and integrated into a single unit and directed to the attainment of the principal objective—the country's industrialisation. Truly socialist methods of economic management had to be worked out to ensure the achievement of this goal.

Thirdly, the Party's discovery of new laws governing socialist industrialisation. Guided by advanced Marxist-Leninist theory and

relying on the objective laws of social development the Party found a sound scientific solution to this problem. Historical experience shows that capitalist industrialisation is accompanied by the continuous impoverishment of the working class and enrichment of a small handful of exploiters. Its inevitable concomitants are economic crises, wars and mass unemployment. These spring from a basic malaise of the capitalist system, anarchy in production and unbridled competition between individual capitalists and monopolies. Socialist industrialisation, by contrast, stimulates the continuous growth of the working class leading to strengthening and expansion of the country's material and technical base and to an improvement of the material welfare and cultural standards of the working masses. This in turn stimulates labour productivity, steps up the pace of industrialisation and encourages greater initiative and an imaginative attitude to work on the part of the working class. One of the salient features of socialist industrialisation is its planned character, which rules out crises, competitive struggle and unemployment.

Capitalist industrialisation is based on the merciless exploitation of the working masses of town and country. It creates an unbridgeable gulf between industry and agriculture, between town and country. Capitalist industrialisation isolates itself from farming and leads to the impoverishment and proletarianisation of the working peasantry and to a swelling of the reserve army of labour. Socialist industrialisation, in contrast, puts an end to all forms of exploitation of working people, and bases itself on the alliance with agriculture which brings industry and agriculture closer together and obliterates the age-old antithesis between town and country. Socialist industrialisation creates a powerful base for a radical transformation of agriculture.

At the price of unparalleled hardships and privation the Party tackled the arduous problem of mustering the funds for capital construction in heavy industry. This heroic exploit performed by the Soviet people will be inscribed in letters of gold in the annals of mankind. Indeed, no other country in world history has had to endure such formidable trials, which in the case of the Soviet Union at times bordered on self-sacrifice. The Soviet people made these sacrifices in the full knowledge that any hesitation would have doomed the great cause of the revolution to defeat.

The first decade of Soviet government was crowned with momentous changes in every area of the country's political, economic and cultural life. The Soviet Union had successfully regained the pre-war level of industrial and agricultural output and was

entering a new period of its historical development—the period of radical transformation of the whole of its national economy along socialist lines. The 15th Congress of the Communist Party summed up the economic and political development in the first decade of Soviet government and stated with satisfaction that the USSR, despite its hostile capitalist encirclement, had not only withstood the pressure of the combined forces of external and domestic enemies, but succeeded in an incredibly short time in getting its war-ravaged national economy back on its feet and embarked on all-out socialist construction.

The outstanding result of the Party's Leninist policy was that the Soviet people translated into reality the historic decisions of the 14th Party Congress and scored an impressive success in the industrialisation of the country. Gross industrial output in 1926/27 was 102.5 per cent of the pre-war level. Large-scale socialist industry advanced at a particularly rapid rate and in 1927 achieved an 18.2 per cent annual growth rate, surpassing the industries of the most developed capitalist countries in terms of growth. The spectacular success of the Soviet Union in the matter of socialist industrialisation was irrefutable proof of the superiority of the socialist over the capitalist system of production.

Thanks to the tremendous efforts and dedicated labour of the Soviet people coupled with the skilful economic guidance of the Communist Party the Soviet state searched for and correctly utilised all available domestic sources of accumulation. The following statistics illustrate this: whereas in 1926/27 slightly over 1,000 million rubles worth of investments were made in industry, three years later the total was almost 5,000 million rubles. In 1913 Russia produced an estimated 10.2 thousand million rubles worth of industrial products (in terms of 1926 prices), in 1927 the total was 12.7 and 1929—19.9 thousand million rubles. Particularly encouraging was the brisk way the heavy industry was advancing. Thus, compared with the preceding year, the engineering industry grew as follows: in 1927—131.2 per cent, in 1928—133.4, and in 1929—144.3 per cent. Compared with the pre-war level the turnover of the whole of large-scale industry registered a 17 per cent increase in 1928 while the gross output of producer goods—30.2 per cent.

All this enabled the Party and the Soviet state to embark on the construction of new factories and plants and to bring forward the completion dates of enterprises still under construction. In July 1926 the ground was broken for the Soviet Union's first tractor plant in Stalingrad. In December 1926 the Volkhov hydroelectric

power station was inaugurated. In 1927 construction work began on the Dneproges, the Turkestan-Siberian railway and a major automobile plant in Moscow. Those years saw the launching of the Shatura and Nizhny Novgorod thermo-electric power stations and the start of construction work on electric power stations in Kharkov, Shakhty, Kiev, Saratov and Rostov-on-Don.

In this general upsurge of the national economy the share of industry in relation to agriculture steadily increased, a process which was accompanied by the steady expansion of the socialist sector within industry and the rapid shrinking of the private sector. Thus, the contribution of industry to the country's total economic output reached 42 per cent in 1927, regaining the corresponding pre-war level of 1913. The socialist sector yielded as much as 86 per cent of total industrial output, leaving the private sector in industry a mere 14 per cent. The private sector, what is more, was confined largely to small-scale industry, contributing a minuscule 2.4 per cent to the output of large-scale industry. *Thus, the progress of the Soviet Union's large-scale nationalised industry was marked not only by rapid growth rates but also by the firm consolidation within it of the socialist system of production leading to the complete elimination of the elements of capitalism.* An analogous process was evident in the field of trade where the state and co-operative sectors were rapidly ousting the private sector. Within two years the contribution of the socialised sector to the aggregate trade turnover rose to 81.9 per cent and in 1926/27 registered 94.9 per cent in wholesale trade, and 67.4 per cent in the retail trade. At the same time the share of the private sector dropped from 9.4 per cent to 5.1 per cent in the wholesale trade and from 42.7 per cent to 32.6 per cent in the retail sector.¹ This process showed that Lenin's co-operative ideas had been imbibed by the peasant masses. Suffice it to say that in the space of two years consumer co-operatives expanded their coverage in supplying the rural population by almost double from 25.6 per cent in 1924/25 to 50.8 per cent in 1926/27. At the same time co-operative and state-owned organisations marketing agricultural produce controlled up to 63 per cent of the market in 1926/27 as compared to 55.7 per cent in 1924/25.

¹ See: *Pyatnadtsyati syezd VKP (b)* [The Fifteenth Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)], Verbatim Report, Part I, Moscow, 1961, p. 59 (in Russian).

The increased control of the trade exercised by state-owned and co-operative sectors was of tremendous significance in consolidating the union between town and country, boosting the economic influence exerted by the working class on the mass of the peasantry and improving the exchange of industrial and agricultural products between town and country. Bearing in mind that almost all credit arrangements had by then been placed under state and co-operative monopoly it is easy to appreciate the massive growth of the socialist elements within the country's national economy.

All this enabled the Party to conclude that the victory of socialism in industry, trade and credit had been guaranteed. Pursuing its undeviating Leninist policy the Party had led the country onto the highway of socialist construction. This historic fact was clearly registered in the decisions of the 15th Party Congress which stated that the period after the 14th Congress was characterised by the further expansion of the socialist sector in the country's economy and by the accelerated regrouping of forces in favour of the consolidation of the economic base of socialist construction.

The first successes that they had scored in socialist construction gladdened the hearts of Soviet people and strengthened their faith in the ultimate victory of Lenin's industrialisation policy. Those were the first sparks of hope for converting Soviet Russia, once a backward agricultural country, into one of the industrial giants of the world.

2. THE HISTORICAL NECESSITY AND OBJECTIVE NEED FOR THE RADICAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC TRANSFORMATIONS IN AGRICULTURE

Momentous changes were taking place in agriculture as well, which was also on the upgrade. True, other processes were at work here, namely the socio-economic processes endemic to small commodity economy. Nonetheless, the profound changes that had occurred in industry, trade and credit were exercising a most salutary influence on the life of the millions of peasants. The steady amelioration of the economic situation in the countryside was stimulating the emergence of an increasingly socialist trend in rural areas.

But for all those positive changes the economy of Soviet Russia, notably that of its agriculture, remained poorly developed

and heterogeneous. The country's economy was beset by complex contradictions whose aggravation called for their urgent solution. In the first place it was essential to solve the key problem of the relationship between large-scale socialised industry and small-scale, diffused peasant farming. It was a problem so complex and so crucial that the future of the country's industrialisation hinged on its solution as did the alliance between the working class and the mass of the peasantry and, ultimately, the future of socialism in the USSR.

The basic contradiction here was that large-scale industry and small-scale peasant agriculture were increasingly exhibiting a gross disparity both in terms of growth rates and the trend of development. Although agriculture was making steady progress, it was much slower than that of industry and the socialist elements in agriculture were developing far more slowly than in industry and in the sphere of circulation. The following statistics put the picture in perspective: in 1925/26 industrial output grew by 42.2 per cent compared with 19.2 per cent in agriculture, in 1926/27—18.2 and 4.1 per cent respectively. What is more, this lag was in the increase and thus threatened the equilibrium between agriculture and industry and the very future of the country's economic development.

No less dangerous was another contradiction which came to light within the peasantry. It was increasingly apparent that efforts to strike a happy balance between the Party's economic and class policies in the countryside were encountering great difficulties. At the time the Party's agrarian policy had two aims: on the one hand, the Party was encouraging the peasantry to display economic initiative in every way and stimulating its self-interest and incentive in boosting agricultural production which led to the growth of well-to-do middle peasants and kulaks, on the other, the Party was adhering to its class policy aimed at limiting the capitalist element in agriculture and defending the interests of the proletarian and semi-proletarian sections of the rural population.

It should be said that in the initial period this policy did not affect the middle peasants. But as the middle peasants became more well-off they were finding it more and more difficult to manoeuvre within the framework of the Party's class policy. Their economic ambitions irresistibly propelled the middle peasants towards an expansion of their acreage, towards more intensive methods of farming, towards renting more land and towards the use of hired labour. As a result, the middle peasants were

increasingly voicing dissatisfaction with the Party's class policy and swinging more and more towards the kulaks. This objective trend demanded that the Party develop and take measures that could still more effectively stimulate the middle peasant's economic initiative with a view to directing it towards the setting up of a system of large-scale socialist farming based on public ownership. That was the only way open to the Party that offered any prospect of a correct solution of this contradiction. But this course of action also demanded that the Party display great caution and circumspection, and pursue a most flexible policy without precipitating things.

Apart from these two basic contradictions other less important contradictions were coming to light in the country's socio-economic life, which, although they were relatively unimportant individually, in their totality created great difficulties in the way of socialist construction. The main reason behind these contradictions and difficulties was the backwardness of agriculture, its outmoded system of small commodity production, which obstructed the development of the country's productive forces. At this point it would be useful to examine in more detail the most important social and economic processes in the Soviet countryside and also the way agriculture was developing in the rehabilitation period after the Civil War.

*A. Far-Reaching Qualitative Changes
in the Socio-economic Structure
of the Soviet Countryside*

The country's agriculture had by late 1927 regained the pre-war level in all the basic indices while in some sectors it had even surpassed it. Expressed in percentage against the agricultural output in 1913 the rehabilitation period presents the following picture:

a) The area under grain crops was 96.9 per cent of the pre-war level, 107.1 per cent for cotton, 86.6 per cent for flax, 106.6 per cent for sugar-beet, and 179.4 per cent for the area under oil crops.

b) The average gross output of agriculture was 108.3 per cent including: grain crops—91.9 per cent, cotton—110.5 per cent, flax—71.6 per cent, sugar-beet—93 per cent, and oil crops—161.9 per cent.

c) In livestock-breeding (compared to the 1916 level) the figures were as follows: horses—88.9 per cent, cattle—114.3 per cent,

sheep and goats—119.3 per cent and pigs—111.3 per cent.¹

Admittedly the rehabilitation of agriculture did not proceed equally well everywhere. Thus in the North Caucasus and in the Volga country, owing to the disastrous consequences of the Civil War and the terrible hunger of 1921, followed in 1924 by a catastrophic drought, the rehabilitation process was severely slowed down and prolonged. The level of agriculture in these areas remained lower than the pre-war level right up to the time when solid collectivisation got into its full stride. The restoration of agriculture in the country was on the whole completed by 1928.

The radical changes in the social and economic development of the countryside came as the direct result of the transformation of agriculture brought about by the Great October Socialist Revolution, which created a new economic system and a new social and economic structure in the countryside. Naturally, with the predominance of small commodity production in the countryside the process of social stratification among the rural population continued under the new social system but it differed radically from the class stratification of the peasantry which had occurred in capitalist Russia. Thus, before the October Revolution the main processes were the disintegration of the middle peasants and the continuous growth of two extreme groups within the peasantry—the poor peasants and the kulaks. This process was due on the one hand to the weaker section of the middle peasants becoming impoverished and joining the poor peasants and/or rural proletarians and, on the other, to the more solid middle peasants joining the kulaks.

Under the Soviet system, in contrast, quite different processes were at work. As the rehabilitation period after the Civil War showed, only a small section of the peasant poor became proletarianised and joined the ranks of the urban and the rural proletariat; the majority of poor peasants eventually joined the middle peasant group thus becoming the central figure of Soviet agriculture. That is the reason why the proportion of poor households in the post-revolutionary period dropped from 65 to 35 per cent, a drop of almost 100 per cent.

As for the middle peasantry, an insignificant section of it became transformed into poor peasants and an equally insignifi-

¹ See: *Shestnadtsatiy syezd Vsesoyuznoi Kommunisticheskoi partii (b)* [The 16th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)], Stenographic Record, Vol. I, Moscow, 1935, pp. 54, 60, 61 (in Russian).

cant proportion joined the kulaks, the capitalist group. The steady influx of peasants from the poor group meant that the middle peasantry became ever stronger as the central figure in the countryside. Far from disintegrating and shrinking as it had in tsarist Russia, the Soviet middle peasantry went to strength and consolidated its position. Thus, during the first decade of Soviet government the proportion of the middle¹ peasants rose three-fold as compared with the pre-revolutionary level.¹

But parallel to this healthy and natural process of the differentiation of the peasantry under the new social system another process was at work, namely, the expansion of the kulak stratum with its deep roots in small commodity peasant farming, which provided such fertile ground for its growth. Indeed, the number of kulaks considerably increased during the first years of the New Economic Policy, but the growth rate of kulak farms was not nearly as high as it had been under capitalism. This is proved by the following statistics: as compared with the pre-revolutionary level the proportion of kulak farms shrank to just a third, i.e. to 4-5 per cent as against 15-20 per cent before the revolution.

The table below shows the process of differentiation among the peasantry in that period (data relating to the RSFSR and the Ukraine):

**GROUPS OF PEASANT HOUSEHOLDS ACCORDING
TO AREA UNDER CROP**
(per cent)

	Without crops	With crop area of under 1 desiatines	From 1.1 to 2 desiatines	From 2.1 to 3 desiatines	From 3.1 to 4 desiatines	From 4.1 to 6 desiatines	From 6.1 to 8 desiatines	From 8.1 to 10 desiatines	From 10.1 to 16 desiatines	Over 16 desiatines
RSFSR										
1925	4.7	12.4	21.9	19.8	14.2	15.6	6.2	2.5	2.0	0.7
1926	4.5	11.6	20.5	19.9	14.8	16.2	6.5	2.8	2.4	0.8
Ukraine										
1925	4.5	10.2	21.1	19.6	13.6	15.0	7.0	3.7	4.0	1.3
1926	2.2	7.7	18.0	21.2	16.0	17.4	7.8	4.0	4.2	1.5

¹ See: *20 let sovetskoj vlasti* (Twenty Years of Soviet Government), a Statistical Abstract, Moscow, 1938, p. 46 (in Russian).

It is easy to see that as differentiation went on the number of farms with few or no crops was steadily decreasing while the number of middle peasant farms grew considerably; simultaneously there was a certain growth of the kulak group through the influx of the better-off middle peasants. However, the data clearly indicate that the middle peasant was a central figure of the Soviet rural scene with over 60 per cent of all households being owned by the middle peasants.

All this was indisputable evidence that in the state of the dictatorship of the proletariat a type of differentiation of the peasantry was taking shape which by its very nature precluded the establishment of capitalism in agriculture and opened up before the peasants a non-capitalist path of development as the only one possible in the circumstances. This process, natural for Soviet agriculture, was inaugurated, on the one hand, by new agrarian relations and, on the other, by the new taxation policy of the Soviet state. Let us examine this in more detail.

In the first place, under capitalism the stratification of the peasantry intensifies owing to private ownership of land whereby land can be bought and sold. This enables the rich peasants to buy up land from their poor neighbours and thus amass large acreages. By nationalising the land the Soviet state put paid to all that. Buying and selling of land was banned, renting was allowed to only a limited extent and only for those peasant households which undertook to use it for purposes other than exploitation of hired labour. Thus the possibility of large acreages becoming concentrated in the hands of a few kulaks was ruled out.

Secondly, under capitalism a disproportionately large share of the taxation burden falls on the peasant poor and the middle peasants with only an insignificant part borne by the kulaks and other wealthy peasants. The Soviet state almost completely exempted the poor peasants from taxes, levied moderate taxes on the middle peasants and laid the bulk of the taxation burden on the kulaks and other members of the rural top stratum. In 1927 the taxation of peasant incomes in Soviet Russia was just a mere third of its pre-war level.¹

Thirdly, under capitalism the entire system of economic levers: credit, co-operation, trade, moneylending, etc. is designed to speed

¹ See: *Pyatnadsatyi syezd VKP (b)* [The 15th Congress of the All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks)], Stenographic Record, Part II, Moscow, 1962, p. 1189 (in Russian).

capitalist development. Needless to say, the Soviet state quickly closed or severely limited the channels stimulating the growth of capitalist elements. True, the kulaks sometimes succeeded in getting round Soviet legislation and making use of government credits and co-operative funds, as well as of all manner of renting arrangements, etc., but these were the exception rather than the rule. On the whole, all the economic levers at the disposal of the Soviet state: co-operation, credit, trade, and other regulating measures and arrangements—were used to encourage the expansion of poor and middle peasant households and to limit the growth of capitalist elements. State-provided material assistance to the working peasants in 1925/26 amounted to 373 million rubles and rose to 427 million rubles in 1926/27. Apart from that, special aid to the peasant poor reached some 191 million rubles between 1925 and 1927.¹

The new social and economic relations taking shape in the countryside objectively militated against capitalism and encouraged socialist development, favouring the alliance between the working class and the mass of the working peasantry. In this process which developed vigorously under the impact of the regulating measures adopted by the Soviet state and the influence of the socialist city the poor and middle peasant farms were gradually drawn into the main stream of the country's economic development.

*B. The Maximal Potential of Small Peasant Farming
and the Objective Need
for Its Radical Transformation*

Now let us consider the question of how the new process of social differentiation in the Soviet countryside influenced the development of Soviet agriculture and the level of its productive forces. We have already mentioned that in terms of quantity of output Soviet Russia's agriculture on the whole regained its pre-war level. For all the importance of the quantitative indices they do not present a full picture since the pre-war level was on the poverty line. In this instance it is important to show the qualitative side of the development of agriculture in Soviet Russia: the level of its technical equipment, increase in crop yields, the gross output and output for the market and the prospects for the development of small peasant farming.

¹ *ibid.*, Part I, p. 70.

First of all, unlike the countryside of pre-revolutionary Russia the Soviet countryside was *en masse* petty-peasant with small-commodity production, while agriculture as a whole became more diffused and fragmented, and, therefore, less productive. Describing the new social structure and the new organisational and economic system in the countryside, Lenin wrote that "everything has become more equable, the peasantry in general has acquired the status of the middle peasant".¹ Naturally, these changes could not fail to affect the development of agriculture and the level of its productive forces.

Marxism-Leninism has proved that large-scale farming in any form has indisputable advantages over small-scale farming. These advantages stem from the possibility of employing the latest machinery, from a more efficient utilisation of capital, the use of advanced farming techniques, etc. Small-scale farming has none of these opportunities and so Soviet agriculture, having reverted from large-scale system of production to small-scale farming after the October Revolution, lost these advantages. By its very nature small-scale farming could not break with the use of obsolete machinery and methods, and was condemned to small-scale output for the market and to low productivity. Indeed, it was not even always capable of sustaining simple reproduction.

The advantages of large-scale farming can best be illustrated by considering the situation in the production of grain for the market. For instance, before World War I the marketability of landowner farming registered 47 per cent, that of the kulaks—34 per cent while the marketability of the poor peasant and the middle peasant households—a mere 14.7 per cent. This compares with the following statistics relating to the end of the first decade of Soviet government: collective and state farms provided 47.2 per cent of all marketable grain, more than did the large landed estates of pre-revolutionary Russia, the marketability of the kulak farms amounted to 20 per cent while that of the poor and middle peasants—just to 11.2 per cent.²

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P. (B.), March 8-16, 1921", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 216.

² See: V. S. Nemchinov, *Izbrannye proizvedeniya* (Selected Works), Vol. II, Moscow, 1967, p. 107 (in Russian). The drop in the marketability of the kulak farms as compared with the pre-war level resulted from the reduced size of kulak farms. As for the decline in the marketability of the poor and middle peasant farms, two factors were responsible: on the one hand, their smaller size and on the other, the undoubted increase in the consumption of farm produce within the peasant households.

Thus, following the liquidation of large landowner farms and the severe reduction of the large kulak farms small households began to dominate the country's rural scene for the most part middle peasant households which were noted for small crop yields and low marketability. But it was precisely these households that became the main holders of gross production and suppliers of marketable farm produce. The process of further fragmentation of peasant households, diminishing farm size, continued. Whereas before World War I Russia had 15-16 million peasant households, during the first decade of Soviet government their number rose to 24-25 million. Within the Russian Federation the number of peasant households rose from 13.9 million to 16.6 million in 1926. The progressive reduction of farm size resulted above all in the diffusion of manpower, in the fragmentation of farm land, in a decline in the use of farming machinery and in a drop in capital investments in agricultural production. As the process of fragmentation and reduction of farm size gained momentum peasant families became smaller and their production capacity dropped. The peasant family was finding it increasingly difficult to improve its farming as it had no ample opportunities. Thus the average size of peasant families in the lower reaches of the Volga dropped to three quarters of its original size within the first decade of Soviet government. Whereas an average peasant family in 1917 had 6.3 members, in 1928 it was 4.7, a drop of 25.4 per cent.

For the peasant household the progressive contraction of the family limited its physical capacity to produce. In turn, this created the danger of the peasant household turning from a producing into a consuming unit, a semi-subsistence unit barely capable of meeting the consumer needs of the family and unable to provide surplus produce for the market. A considerable proportion of peasant households were faced with the grim prospects of having to drop out of the system of commodity-money and market relations.

The fragmentation of peasant households was accompanied by the reduction of the individual area under crops. Small households became so unprofitable and inefficient that they were hardly able to keep a horse or own any but primitive implements. It was not surprising therefore that in a number of districts there were far fewer draft animals in the peasant's households than before the war.

The progressive diminishing of farm size made it impossible for the peasants to keep pace with the progress of agricultural engineering. Most households tended to own and use the most primitive of

implements—the wooden plough and the hoe. They could not even afford a two-share plough. As for things like drills, horse-drawn reaping machines, threshers, etc., small-holders could only dream of them. Small wonder, therefore, that by late 1927 there was a crisis in the sales of agricultural machinery: there were few buyers. That is why a number of farm machinery plants operated only at 50 per cent of their capacity.

The system of small peasant farming had exhausted itself: it was no longer able to meet the needs of the country's economic development. The abysmal technical level of their farming compelled the working peasants to start looking for a way out. Some of the peasants found it in hiring themselves as agricultural labourers or migrating in search of employment, while their more progressive fellow-peasants pooled their resources and set up collective farms.

What was the reason for the intensive fragmentation and reduction of farm size under the Soviet system?

Diminishing farm size was the direct result of the agrarian revolution, with its deep effect on every aspect of the rural economy and life. The agrarian revolution brought the redistribution of expropriated lands among the landless and small peasants. The redistribution of the land stock carried out on the basis of the nationalisation of the land and the egalitarian principle in its turn produced a sharp increase in the number of small peasant households. It led to a smaller average farm size and a radical change in the entire economic system and socio-economic structure of the countryside. The most momentous revolutionary upheaval in the entire system of land tenure in Russia gave full scope to and spurred the economic activity of the working strata of the peasantry and created wide opportunities for a free use of land.

However, there were "theorists" who tried to assert that the fragmentation of peasant households was a mistake, the result of the erroneous agrarian policy of the Party and Soviet government. These assertions were groundless, since the process of fragmentation of peasant households was historically inevitable. Was it perhaps the case that this process contradicted the spirit of the transitional period? No, it was not. What is more, this process was even necessary for the peasant masses, who from their personal experience learned that small individual farming was economically unprofitable and saw the need for a transition to large-scale farming based on collective ownership. *But as long as the fragmentation and reduction of the size of peasant households*

were historically inevitable, a temporary drop in productivity in agriculture was equally inevitable.

Thus, the progressive diminishing of farm size and the temporary decline in agricultural productivity may be seen as the overhead expenses of the agrarian revolution. To ensure the success of the revolution, Lenin pointed out, "the proletariat should not shrink from a temporary decline in production.... What is most important to the bourgeois is production for the sake of production; what is most important to the working and exploited population is the overthrow of the exploiters and the creation of conditions that will permit the working people to work for themselves, and not for the capitalists."¹

Naturally, small-scale peasant farming could only develop within certain limits until it came into conflict with the state of the productive forces in the country as a whole. The situation could not last long. And indeed, by the end of the first decade of Soviet government the economic unviability and backwardness of small-scale peasant farming, factors which had proved such an obstacle to the economic development, became all too apparent.

With the sluggish growth of the country's agriculture, its marketability was extremely low and had a tendency to drop further. It was especially true of the biggest and most important branch of the country's agriculture—grain-growing, an area where the failure of small-scale peasant farming was most glaring. Soviet Russia's grain growing in those years was far behind the pre-war level by all the indices. True, we must add that the drop in the indices of grain production sprang partly from justifiable causes. Thus, the contraction in the area under grain crops was accounted for by an expansion of the area under industrial crops which supplied raw materials to industry. The area under root crops and grasses expanded as more and more peasants changed over to multi-field crop rotation. Similarly, the significant drop in the output of grain for the market was the direct result of increased bread consumption by the peasants themselves.

Nonetheless, the main reason for the backwardness of grain farming was the low productivity of small-scale peasant households. Two trends could be clearly discerned in the development of small-scale farming: one, the continuing process of fragmentation and reduction of farm size, two, falling productivity and output. The table below shows the gross output of Soviet agricul-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft Theses on the Agrarian Question", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 160.

ture between 1926 and 1928 (in terms of 1926/27 prices, in millions of rubles).

Years	Gross agricultural output	Of this animal produce	Percentage of animal produce
1926/27	16,862.6	5,370.5	31.8
1927/28	16,870.7	5,425.3	32.2

As the table indicates, agriculture advanced at a sluggish pace. The negligible increase in output posed a real danger to the further development of commodity relations in the country. To complete the picture let us have a look at the growth of gross and marketable farm produce in per capita terms between 1923 and 1926 (in terms of market rubles).

Years	Gross farm output per capita	Marketable farm output per capita
1923/24	65.7	21.7
1924/25	69.0	24.6
1925/26	80.0	28.6

Clearly, the level of gross and marketable output was far too inadequate to meet the growing needs of the working peasantry. In some areas, notably grain-growing areas, the ratio of per capita marketable output to per capita gross output was even lower. Take Saratov gubernia, for instance, one of the major grain producers in the Volga country.¹

Years	Gross farm output per capita	Marketable farm output per capita
Rubles		
1923/24	32.8	5.8
1924/25	27.8	4.5
1925/26	49.8	12.4

¹ The Central State Archives of the October Revolution (hereafter to be designated CSAOR), f. 5451, op. 12, d. 181, l. 114.

Nothing supplies better proof that the root cause of extreme backwardness and abysmally low productivity of Soviet agriculture at the time was the small-scale peasant farming. It was unable to integrate into a single process the development of grain production with the development and rational conduct of animal husbandry and of other branches of agriculture. What is more, small-scale farming led to the deterioration of soil fertility, disrupted the continuity in crop rotation and was being increasingly geared to purely consumer needs.

Despite the tremendous material and technical, financial and organisational assistance extended to the working peasantry and despite the truly titanic efforts made by the Communist Party and the Soviet government to lift the country's agriculture out of its predicament, it remained at a low level and was always fraught with the dangerous trend towards a further drop in productivity levels and marketability.

Soviet agriculture at the time was far behind the agriculture of capitalist countries in every basic index of its performance. Crop yields were extremely low and unstable. The following comparative statistics on wheat yields in Europe, Canada and the USSR are highly characteristic (poods per hectare).¹

	1909- -1913	1924	1925	1926	Average for 1925-26
Europe (without USSR)	78.1	65.7	84.3	73.1	75.0
Canada	82.4	49.6	82.4	75.6	69.4
USSR	42.7	34.7	49.6	49.0	44.6

As the table indicates, during the years of Soviet government wheat yields rose somewhat but this rise in productivity was barely noticeable and wheat yields continued to be well behind that in capitalist countries. Technical backwardness, lack of the proper means of production and inefficient farming techniques were the inevitable concomitants of small-scale farming. If we compare the application of mineral fertilisers in the USSR and in capi-

¹ See: A. A. Andreyev, *Na putyakh pod'ema i sotsialisticheskoi rekonstruktsii selskogo khozyaistva* (On the Path of the Rise and Socialist Reconstruction of Agriculture), Rostov-on-Don, 1930, p. 179.

talist countries we will see that the difference is colossal. In Belgium, for instance, 600 kilos of fertiliser per hectare was applied, the same in Holland, in Germany—300 kilos, in France—120, and in the USSR—a minuscule 3 kilos.¹

This, undoubtedly, indicates the abysmal standard of agriculture typical of small-scale peasant farming, which was very much at the mercy of the weather and all other random events and accidents. Suffice it to say, that huge acreages of standing grain crops were destroyed by the invasion of all manner of pests and the proliferation of weeds. An estimated 15-36 per cent of all grain loss in some parts of the country was attributable to pests and weeds. In an average year pests devoured up to 30 million tons of grain and that in a situation where the total grain consumption by the rural dwellers was about 29 million tons. The losses inflicted by agricultural pests and weeds throughout the country were estimated at almost 2,000 million rubles a year. Such was the colossal waste of material values caused by the backwardness and primitive methods of small-scale farming.

But speaking of the backwardness of Soviet agriculture in those years we should not forget one other vital historical circumstance which was one of the basic reasons for its poor state, and which on no account should be left out of any analysis of the evolution of Soviet agriculture. Clearly, the extreme technical backwardness of the landowner agriculture of pre-revolutionary Russia coupled with its poor farming methods, which Soviet power inherited, could not be overcome within a short time and so it continued to hamper the development of the productive forces in agriculture like a lead weight.

For many decades the agriculture of tsarist Russia was dominated by the predatory practice of extensive land tenure whereby the dominant classes concentrated on bringing progressively larger acreages of farm land under cultivation, on extensive expansion rather than on more intensive farming using better and more productive methods of cultivation. This short-sighted approach inevitably resulted in the stagnation of Russia's agriculture coupled with the instability of its crop yields and technical backwardness.

Let us illustrate this by the following highly indicative example: in the space of 13 years between 1901 and 1913 Russia's overall area under crops expanded by 16 per cent. But average wheat yields in the 32 years from 1883 to 1914 remained static at just under 40 poods per dessiatine. Clearly, it was impossible for the pro-

¹ *ibid.*

letarian revolution to overcome at one stroke the onerous legacy of decades of pre-revolutionary mismanagement and turn the country's backward and neglected agriculture into an efficient one. This backwardness could not be overcome on the basis of the old material and technical base and the prevailing small-scale peasant farming with its low marketability.

All these profound reasons for the extremely low level of agriculture and its lagging far behind the country's industry became so apparent that the situation could be tolerated no longer. What is more, by virtue of the objective law of economic development small-scale peasant farming became the source of the main difficulties impeding the economic development throughout the country.

A way had to be found out of the situation. And that way out was the transition from small-scale individual peasant farming to large-scale high-efficiency farming geared to the market. The historical necessity and economic need to transform the country's agriculture were so obvious that the transition to large-scale farming was placed on the agenda as the most pressing task of national importance. Its urgency was all the greater since the working peasantry had a vital economic stake in large-scale farming which alone would ensure a higher level of productivity and create the prospect of overcoming the chronic backwardness of agricultural production.

But by no means all types of large-scale farming could guarantee a life of prosperity and high cultural standards for the peasants. Large-scale farming could be of two types: either socialist or capitalist. Accordingly, there were two different ways of development—the socialist or the capitalist. The capitalist way of development in agriculture was possible only within the narrow limits laid down by Soviet government, on its terms. The introduction of the New Economic Policy allowed such development but only until Soviet industry was restored and while the trade and credit were still very much dominated by private capitalist elements.

However, the introduction of the NEP as an inevitable economic policy in the transitional period was designed to help the victory of socialist elements in the country's economy rather than to ensure the victory of capitalism. With the restoration and subsequent progress of socialist industry coupled with the establishment in the field of trade and credit of the domination of the socialist sector the capitalist elements in agriculture were undermined and severely weakened and so the capitalist way of

development of the country's agriculture was to be ruled out as totally unviable.

There was an alternative, more progressive way—the socialist way, which is totally ruled out in the agriculture of bourgeois countries. Under the dictatorship of the proletariat in the USSR the socialist way forward for its agriculture was not only objectively inevitable but the working peasantry had a vital stake in its victory. The peasantry could not embark on the capitalist path of development without impinging on its own vital interests. And indeed the new, socialist way was asserting itself irrepressibly in the countryside as large collective farms grew and gained in strength with every successive year. The table below illustrates both the increase in the number of collective farms and the growth of their productivity between 1924 and 1927.

Years	Collective farms		Ploughland		Crop area		Population	
	number	%	thousand hectares	%	thousand hectares	%	thousand people	%
1924/25	13,854	100	1,000	100	695.1	100	716.1	100
1925/26	14,857	107.1	1,220	110.9	838.6	120.6	829.3	116.6
1926/27	16,734	110.2	1,708	139.4	1,065.4	127.1	979.4	115.2

Years	Draft animals		Cattle		Gross output		Marketable output	
	thousand head	%	thousand head	%	mln rubles	%	mln rubles	%
1924/25	90.2	100	123.0	100	90.0	100	34.0	100
1925/26	88.2	97.8	144.6	108.3	130.0	135.6	54.0	58.0
1926/27	113.3	128.4	174.7	120.8	175.0	143.5	72.0	183.3

These data indicate that while all the indices advanced gross and marketable output grew particularly, which showed the high level of the productivity of large-scale collective farming and the inevitability of its victory.

Thus, if we survey the course of social and economic develop-

ment of the countryside in the first ten years of Soviet government the following picture emerges: *in the immediate post-revolutionary years, after the decisive rout of the landowners and partial expropriation of the kulaks the economic development of the country's agriculture followed a course from large-scale farming with high marketability to small-scale farming with small output for the market, and later the reverse movement emerged from the depths of this process—from small households with low marketability to large-scale farming producing for the market, yet no longer capitalist but, socialised and collective.*

The rejuvenation of agriculture proceeded amid the deep socio-economic contradictions and was accompanied by great difficulties and a sharp struggle between the old and the new. It should be remembered that small-scale peasant farming, although it was not capitalist, nonetheless spawned capitalist elements daily and even hourly on a mass scale. Therefore, the socialist path for the country's agriculture was more difficult than the capitalist road. The difficulty lay not only in the fact that it was a totally new, unexplored and untrodden path but also in the necessity to draw into the orbit of socialist development millions upon millions of small producers with their petty-bourgeois, private-owner habits and traditions which they could not or would not abandon.

That is why success in switching the mass of the peasantry onto the socialist path of development in agriculture depended largely on the peasantry and on the working class which had the commanding heights in its hands: state power, industry, and credit. Not only the political but also the economic alliance between the working class and the working peasantry was being consolidated on the basis of the common struggle for the victory of the socialist way of development in agriculture. By its entire economic policy the Communist Party promoted the advance of the countryside along the socialist path, being fully aware of the community of interests of these two friendly classes, of their shared interest in the victory of socialism.

3. THE BREAD SHORTAGE AND THE CAUSES OF THE SHARPENING OF CLASS STRUGGLE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The ever widening gap in development terms between agriculture and industry was creating considerable difficulties in socialist construction and posed a direct threat to the union between town

and country, to the alliance between the working class and the mass of the peasantry. The November 1928 plenary session of the CC of the CPSU noted in its resolution: "The danger of a further widening of the gap between the development of industry and that of the agricultural base represents the chief danger at the present time."¹

The most vulnerable spot in the country's agriculture was grain production and this was the most important factor behind the prevailing economic hardships. Suffice it to say that despite favourable climatic conditions grain production did not rise in the space of the three years. Gross grain production was 4,747 million poods in 1926/27, 4,464 million in 1927/28 and 4,535 million poods in 1928/29. The country was entering the reconstruction period of all-out industrialisation with meagre grain reserves. And this at a time when Soviet society was forging ahead: new towns and cities were arising, new industrial centres being built, the population had increased by no less than ten million. And yet grain yields were still on the level reached many years before. Before the Revolution out of the gross grain production of 5,000 million poods 1,300 million were destined for the market; in 1927, ten years after the Revolution, out of the gross grain output of 4,747 million poods the marketable part accounted for only 630 million poods. Thus there was a severe discrepancy between the population's growing grain requirements and the nation's actual ability to meet them. The country was sliding into acute grain crisis which was contracting the domestic grain market and curtailing grain exports. In 1926/27 centralised government grain purchases amounted to 662 million poods which dropped to 627 million poods the following year. Before the First World War Russia was annually exporting 600-700 million poods of grain, while in 1926/27 grain exports were a mere 152 million poods, and this trickle almost completely dried up in 1927-28.

The grain crisis could not fail to affect the animal husbandry, which was directly dependant on the grain situation. It also began to experience great difficulties. As early as 1928 there was clear evidence of a slowing down in the growth of the peasants' animal population while in some areas particularly strong in livestock breeding the growth of the animal population stopped altogether.

The grain shortage began to hit other areas of Soviet society. The first casualty was the working class, the urban population

¹ *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 4, p. 127.

which faced the prospect of bread rationing. The domestic market started to contract, exports were being curtailed and growth rates in every branch of agriculture began to drop. The greatest danger was that the bread problem began to hamper industrialisation.

To be sure, the main cause was the system of small-scale peasant farming. But it would be a mistake to blame the grain crisis on this alone. If it were indeed the only cause of the crisis the country would have failed to achieve the comparatively high degree of economic rehabilitation which was in evidence in other branches of agriculture, notably in the industrial crop sector.¹ There were other factors of a purely subjective nature. The disproportions which had persisted in the price formation of agricultural produce had not been completely eliminated. The leveling out of prices which was carried out after the "marketing crisis" produced a new set of disproportions. As a result, grain production was at a disadvantage and was steadily losing its status as the dominant branch of agriculture.

Here are some statistics of state purchasing prices of basic farm products in the Russian Federation as a whole (1913 prices = 100).

	1925/26	1926/27	1927/28
Field crops	117	98	107
including:			
grain	111	89	96
industrial crops	116	146	152
Animal products	166	178	181
including:			
food	154	170	178
animal raw materials	175	184	185

One of the basic reasons for the decline of grain production was the absence of sufficient moral and material incentives for the

¹ In the industrial crop sector gross output (in 1926-27 prices) grew from 874 million rubles in 1925-26 and 756 million rubles in 1926-27 to 901 million rubles in 1927-28. The area under industrial crops in 1928 exceeded the pre-war level by 58.5 per cent.

peasants to boost grain output. This largely explains why of all the branches of agriculture only grain production had failed to regain the 1913 level (in terms of the area under crops, and of gross and marketable output). This was especially true of such major granaries as the North Caucasus and the Lower and Middle territories of the Volga. Besides, as we have mentioned above, dangerous trends were in evidence there which led to the further decrease in the output of staple crops for the market and an expansion in the sowing of crops largely used to meet needs of peasant households.

The parlous state of the grain producing sector of agriculture led, in early 1928, to a serious crisis in state procurements of grain. By the start of that year there was a 128 million poods grain deficit. Grain purchases were being conducted under extremely difficult conditions and the grain deficit was being made up for very slowly. As a result in the spring of 1928 bread rationing was introduced in a number of cities as an emergency measure, and by autumn the entire urban population was subjected to bread rationing. The grain purchasing problem was constantly at the centre of attention of all Party, government and economic bodies.

But the difficulties the grain purchasing campaign of 1928 experienced are not to be blamed exclusively on the backwardness of agriculture and especially of its grain-producing branch. That these objective factors were responsible was clear to everyone. But we must also examine other, highly specific, reasons, engendered by the overall situation prevailing in the country, which constituted the primary obstacle to the grain-purchasing campaign. The reason was not of course that there was no bread in the countryside. After the three successive bumper-harvest years prior to 1928 there were, undoubtedly, considerable grain reserves in the countryside but for reasons of the overall market situation the peasantry and, especially its top stratum, were in no hurry to come forward with them.

Let us now examine these specific reasons and considerations of the overall market. *First*, the divergence between the increased solvency of the peasantry and the meeting of their new requirements with the available supply of industrial products had seriously upset the market equilibrium. This divergence had been brought about by a rapid growth of the peasants' purchasing capacity as a result of the drop in prices of industrial goods accompanied by simultaneous price rise for animal produce and industrial crops in early 1928. The increased purchasing power of the peasantry was neither balanced with a matching increase in the

supply of consumer goods, nor with a corresponding increase in the level of taxation of the better-off and kulak sections of the rural population. It should be noted that the unfavourable correlation between grain prices and the prices of animal products and industrial crops sharply reduced the incentive to sell grain surpluses on the market.

Secondly, serious mistakes were committed by the planning agencies, primarily in failing to establish the correct relationship between the prices of various types of agricultural products and to levy adequate taxes on the better-off part of the peasant population. State and co-operative purchasing agencies also proved unequal to the task. Instead of working concertedly and efficiently at conducting grain purchasing campaigns they opted for a competitive approach and at the same time were slow in supplying the countryside with manufactured goods thereby undermining their own positions in the bread market, and allowing the kulaks and speculators to get their greedy hands on the available grain surpluses.

Thirdly, many local Party organisations failed to appreciate the full significance of the grain-purchasing campaign. In some areas the class line pursued by the Party was distorted and there were cases where they slipped into opportunist attitudes of peaceful coexistence with the kulaks.

All these factors taken together enabled the kulak and the speculator to bring the bread market under their control, to concentrate in their hands considerable grain reserves and to resist the grain purchasing campaign conducted by the authorities. To consolidate their position in the countryside the kulaks launched a sharp struggle aimed at winning the middle peasants over to their side and forming a united front in the effort to sabotage the grain-purchasing campaign. The question naturally arises: how on earth did the kulaks get so much grain when it was the middle peasants who were the principal producers and suppliers of grain to the market?

Yes, the middle peasant was indeed the central figure of Soviet agriculture and yet, owing to certain circumstances, the kulaks controlled the bulk of the grain surpluses. Why?

First of all, we must bear in mind the unique features of Russian kulaks. As capitalist entrepreneurs they were also representatives of the worst, exploitative type of trade capital in its money-lender form. The Russian kulak was not like the American farmer, whose activities were chiefly connected with agricultural production, he was a unique social type. Lenin provided an

extremely apt description of Russian kulaks when he called them "muck-faced landowners". They were not so much capitalist producers as entrepreneurs, buyers-up and money-lenders, noted for most backward and hideous forms of exploitation of the rural population. And as such, the kulaks were dyed-in-the-wool reactionaries. Marx wrote: "Without revolutionising the mode of production ... they only worsen the condition of the direct producers..."¹

The reactionary nature of the kulaks lay precisely in the fact that they rather destroyed than developed the productive forces in the countryside through exploiting and ruining the working peasants. The kulaks as a class opposed the economic progress as it brought no benefits for them and for this reason sought to preserve the old mode of production, the old, medieval forms of farming. It is not surprising that the more progressive of the middle peasants were more efficient farmers than the kulaks. Therefore, the uncompromising struggle against the kulaks was necessary not only because they posed a threat to the socialist transformation of the countryside but also because they impeded economic progress and the development of the productive forces in agriculture.

How did it come about that the bulk of the grain surplus ended up in the hands of the kulaks? What were the channels through which grain flowed into the kulaks' barns?

The first such channel was rent and the hiring of farmhands. By renting land from peasants or by leasing to them farming implements, machinery and draft animals, the kulaks as a rule did not make the peasants pay cash for the rental preferring to be paid for the services in kind, mainly in grain. In this way they could keep the toiling masses of the countryside in economic dependence and preserve the crippling nature of mutual settlements.

The second channel was represented by rural industrial enterprises such as mills, oil-mills, wool-carding and millet-shelling enterprises and smithies.

In 1928 the kulaks owned over 80 per cent of such facilities and made those who used them pay in grain. This gives a clear idea of how powerful a source of grain these facilities were. The newspapers of those years reported that some kulaks could obtain 40,000-60,000 poods of grain a year by exploiting such enterprises.

The third channel was the keeping of pedigree animals (stallions,

¹ K. Marx, *Capital*, Vol. III, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, pp. 334-35.

bulls, rams and boars). The kulaks owned nearly 85 per cent of these categories of farm sires and made their services available to other peasants largely against payment in kind. It was a highly profitable source of income.

The fourth channel was usury, which was also a major source of grain for the kulaks. It should not be forgotten that the private sector controlled from 30 to 40 per cent of the retail trade in the countryside. Taking advantage of the weakness and sluggishness of state and co-operative trading organisations the kulaks undertook retailing functions and in this area too they displayed more enterprise and operated with greater efficiency establishing extensive contacts with the urban bourgeoisie, with all manner of speculators, buyers-up, etc. In this area, too, the kulaks preferred payment in kind.

Finally, the fifth channel was the economic power of the kulaks. Since pre-revolutionary times the average size of their farms had admittedly shrunk but even so the kulaks had considerable economic might. In 1927 there were half a million peasant households in the USSR owning more than 16 dessiatines of land each and 300,000 with under 16 dessiatines of land per household. This means that 800,000 households (4 per cent) owned 26 million dessiatines, i.e. 15 per cent of the total area under crops. In terms of the average norm of peasant land tenure these households had over 18 million dessiatines of surplus land. They owned considerable numbers of draft animals, a wide range of farming implements and machinery. The marketable grain surpluses of kulak households reached 20 per cent of the total output of marketable grain in the country. Add to that the grain supplies to the kulak barns through other channels we have mentioned above and it is not difficult to see how the kulak ended up controlling the bulk of the grain surpluses.

Having in this way amassed colossal grain reserves the kulaks refused point blank to sell them to the state at fixed prices and thereby sabotaged the normal food supply to the Red Army, the working class and the peasant poor. At the same time the kulaks went to work on the middle peasants in an attempt to persuade them to hold back the sale of grain surpluses to the state. In some areas the kulaks even put up armed resistance to the local bodies of Soviet government resorting to assassination of rural activists, Party workers and government officials and destroying property belonging to co-operatives and collective farms.

Thus, as in 1918, the kulaks strove to precipitate civil war in the country. By unbridled campaigns of terror, provocation, sa-

botage and intimidation of working peasants the kulaks sought to clash with the Soviet government on the bread front and force it to abandon the practice of purchasing bread at fixed state prices. But it was not only high bread prices that the kulaks were aiming at. In their ambitions they went further, demanding that the Soviet government abandon its class policy in the countryside, that the rural Soviets stop controlling the activities of the land societies, and pressed for changes in the taxation policy as well as for the right to vote in elections to the rural Soviets.

The political situation in the countryside was becoming extremely complicated and strained. It was made worse by the fact that the anti-Soviet claims of the Trotskyites were being joined by attacks on the Party from the Right opportunists. The first symptoms emerged of new differences in the Party. Whereas the Trotskyites continued to criticise the Party for being lenient with regard to the capitalist elements, notably the kulaks, and demanding that it immediately set about liquidating them, having in mind also the middle peasants, the Right opportunists, by contrast, insisted that the demands of the kulaks be met and proposed to raise the prices for bread purchased from the kulaks, to slow down the pace of industrialisation and curtail the purchases of industrial equipment abroad.

Relying on the support of the Right opportunists the kulaks stepped up their anti-Soviet activities, continued to sabotage state grain purchases and to terrorise the local Party and Soviet executives. In a number of land societies the kulaks succeeded in depriving farmhands and poor peasants of their voting rights as members of the societies and declared the law on agricultural tax null and void. However, the kulaks and their champions had made a bad miscalculation for which they were to pay dearly. The Soviet authorities responded with full revolutionary determination to check this counter-revolutionary sabotage by the kulaks by applying severe emergency laws against them. Kulaks who refused to sell grain to the state were made liable under Article 107 of the country's criminal code which provided for confiscation of grain surpluses and the transfer of 25 per cent of the confiscated kulak grain to the peasant poor.

The Communist Party appealed to the working class to join in the grain-purchasing campaign and together with the peasant poor, put into effect the Soviet government's policy in the countryside, displaying model organisation and staunchness. More than 130 worker teams were sent from the cities to the country's principal grain-growing areas to assist the local Party organisations

and the peasant poor. The next major step in the struggle against the kulaks' sabotage was the adoption of new methods of grain purchasing. Kulaks and well-off peasants were placed under the public control of poor and middle peasant masses who were directly responsible for imposing individual taxes on kulaks and requisitioning grain surpluses from them. This measure was first applied in 1928 in the country's grain-growing areas. It enabled the Party organisations to heighten the political activity of the poor and middle peasants and to organise them better by rallying them around the working class.

The adoption by the Soviet government of emergency measures against the kulaks was approved by the Plenum of the Party Central Committee in April 1928. To stimulate the middle peasants to take a more active part in state purchases of grain the government increased the supply of industrial consumer goods to the villages, increased taxation on the upper strata of the rural population and improved the direction of grain-purchasing campaigns by the local Party and government bodies. The July 1928 Plenum of the Party's Central Committee decided to raise the purchasing prices for grain and in this way remove the imbalance in prices of agricultural products which was in evidence in the first half of 1928.

It should be stressed that the Party and the Soviet government could not afford to increase grain prices earlier, at the beginning of 1928 for this would have hit the poor peasants and the poorer sections of the middle peasants and benefited the kulaks. Indeed, what would it have meant to increase grain prices just before the spring sowing campaign? The poor peasants and weak middle peasants would then have had to buy sowing seed from the kulaks at the increased prices. Needless to say, the kulaks would not have missed this chance and would have pushed the grain prices further up to the highest possible level.

It should not be forgotten that the Soviet government's emergency measures were necessitated by the fierce resistance on the part of the kulaks. But these measures were of a short-term nature. Already in July 1928 a Plenum of the Party Central Committee while drawing the Party organisations' attention to the need to fight tooth-and-nail any opportunist softness in the conduct of grain-purchasing campaigns, warned against excessive zeal in applying extraordinary measures as being incompatible with the Party line in the countryside. The decision of that Plenum stated: "In its policy the Party should proceed from a determined struggle both against those elements which express bourgeois trends in our

country and are seeking to circumvent the decision of the 15th Party Congress 'to develop further the offensive against the kulaks', and against those elements which are seeking to lend extraordinary and temporary measures the character of a steady or long-term course, thereby placing in jeopardy the alliance between the workers and the mass of the peasantry."¹

So, the Party pursued a principled class policy which was at once flexible and firm. By relying on the poor peasantry, strengthening the alliance with the middle peasants and waging a resolute struggle against the kulaks, the Party succeeded in isolating the kulaks and in consolidating the block of the poor and middle peasants. The poor and middle peasants led by the local Party organisations joined in the determined struggle against kulak sabotage. The emergency measures taken against the kulaks and supported by the working peasants helped the Party and the government to build up the necessary stocks of grain to ensure a normal bread supply to the urban population and the Red Army and also to create sufficient grain reserves.

¹ *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 4, p. 108.

CHAPTER III

MOBILISATION OF THE MASSES FOR A NATIONWIDE STRUGGLE FOR RAISING PRODUCTIVITY IN AGRICULTURE AND REMODELLING IT ALONG SOCIALIST LINES

1. THE ENHANCEMENT OF THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL GRAIN GROWING AREAS TO MAKE THEM THE TREND-SETTERS IN COLLECTIVISING AGRICULTURE

The year 1928 saw intense class struggle against the kulaks over the issue of state grain purchases and the Party's struggle to win over the poor and middle peasants and rally them around the working class. The experience of this struggle and the lessons they drew from it helped the Party organisations to appreciate more deeply the tremendous political importance of the bread problem and made them tackle vigorously the problem of boosting agriculture and resolving the grain crisis. At the same time the Communist Party and the Soviet government re-examined their priorities to further enhance the role of such key grain producers as the North Caucasus and the Lower and Middle Volga territories. In addition to guiding all working peasants along the only true road towards increased productivity in agriculture the Communist Party provided them with generous material assistance. This assistance was stepped up particularly after the 15th Party Congress and was later expanded in every area. Thus investments in the agriculture of the North Caucasian Territory financed by the state increased from 20 million rubles in 1927 to 33 million rubles in 1928, not taking into account the peasants' own investments. Whereas in the previous five years 48 million rubles had been allocated to provide the North Caucasian peasants with machinery and implements, in 1928 alone a total of 22 million rubles was spent for this purpose.

State assistance to the poor peasants grew particularly rapidly. This assistance flowed via many channels: land tenure regulations, credit arrangements, state budget and insurance, co-operative societies and public assistance. Let us take as an example the Lower Volga Territory. Within three years the poor peasants

received a total of 1,174.4 thousand rubles worth of assistance in the form of free land tenure regulatory services, 121,914 rubles worth of assistance for land improvement purposes, in the form of resettlement allowances and relief to jobless farmhands and 148,000 centners of seed grain provided free, which amounted to 5,066,042 centners between 1921 and 1928.

A total of 12,667,839 rubles worth of credit and loans were given to the poor and middle peasants who accounted for 64.8 and 31 per cent of the total respectively. An average poor peasant household received 507 rubles worth of credit and an average middle peasant farm—408 rubles. Through the channels of agricultural tax and state insurance the peasants received some 2 million rubles worth of assistance. A total of 284,400 households in the Territory were granted a variety of concessions and tax reliefs in 1928. Finally, through the channel of peasant mutual assistance 17,262 dessiatines of arable land were ploughed up free for poor peasants in 1927, and in 1928—24,122 dessiatines. The number of households which received assistance by mutual labour assistance arrangements amounted to 7,951 in 1927, and this figure jumped to 35,246 in 1928.

All these measures speeded up the peasants' transition to collectivisation and made the country's chief granaries the trend-setters of the collective-farm movement.

While mobilising all material and social forces for accelerating the socialist transformation of agriculture the Communist Party tackled this complicated problem with the outmost caution, always mindful of Lenin's instruction that the transition from small-scale individual farming to large-scale socialised farming is an extremely complex and difficult process and that on no account should any haste, let alone coercion, be allowed in respect of small individual producers. The transition to large-scale collective farming which was now beginning did not imply abolition of small individual farming. The small producers were to be gradually prepared for this complex process of transition to collective agriculture.

Formidable difficulties stood in the way of this momentous transformation and these difficulties had to be overcome at all costs. The first difficulty was the small commodity economy itself which was based on private ownership of land, something that could not be abolished simply by issuing an order or by agitation. It could only be changed with time through practical experience and relying on the persuasive force of example. Another obstacle which was just as difficult to overcome was

the lack of the material and technical means necessary for conducting large-scale farming. Finally, there were organisational problems springing from the shortage of experienced personnel and the difficulties in mastering and developing new forms of farming.

Of course, all these obstacles and difficulties were temporary and their overcoming was a matter of time, all the more so since the Soviet state had reliable guarantees for this: *firstly*, the wide-scale construction of state farms and the consolidation of the existing collective farms which demonstrated to the peasants the enormous advantages of large-scale farming over fragmented individual farming; *secondly*, the truly giant scope of the construction of tractor plants and agricultural machinery works which made it possible to supply agriculture with farming implements and up-to-date machinery in a short time; and *thirdly*, the increasing assistance provided to the peasantry by the working class, which was crucial for overcoming organisational problems in the countryside.

Thus, the inevitable victory of the new, socialist agriculture was ensured by the whole system of material, technical and organisational measures carried out by the Communist Party and the Soviet government. The task facing the Party now was to encourage the creative initiative of the working peasants, to mobilise them for a mighty effort to boost the productive forces in agriculture, raise crop yields, achieve an early solution of the grain problem and develop all branches of agriculture. It was essential to find forms and methods of work among the peasants which would persuade the working peasants to embark on large-scale collective farming.

The Party had always believed that the boosting of productivity in agriculture and the material incentive in achieving it were the most powerful means of persuading the mass of the peasantry to accept socialist ideas. The advantages of socialist agriculture had to be shown in practice, by each achievement in the work of raising the efficiency of Soviet agriculture, by increasing gross and marketable output, and raising the profitability of peasant farming.

The claim of the Trotskyist-Bukharinist capitulators that the Party was "forcibly" introducing socialism into the countryside was nothing else than malicious slander against the Party. They could not and would not see that the economic situation in the country at the time had prepared the ground for the socialist development of agriculture. In these conditions the Party's task

was not to "introduce" socialism into the countryside, but to help the peasant masses grasp this historical process, and to understand that they were to be the grave-diggers of the old, bourgeois system in the countryside, and builders of the new, socialist way of life. It was this idea that underlay the Party's entire practical work in the countryside.

In this respect we must note the positive experience gained by the Party organisation of the North Caucasus which was later used throughout the country. In the summer of 1928 the North Caucasian Party Committee undertook to find out, with the help of poor and middle peasants, which measures would facilitate the successful and close combination of the fulfilment of the tasks of socialist reconstruction of agriculture with the daily work of individual poor and middle peasants. To this end a congress of North Caucasian grain growing peasants was convened in August 1928, which passed a decision in favour of state regulation of agriculture through obliging all grain-growers to effect a conducting minimum of agricultural measures to raise the farming efficiency. The congress appealed to all peasants, collective farms and agricultural experts to join in a campaign to boost agricultural production under the slogan "Everyone contribute to doubling crop yields".

After this congress congresses and conferences of peasant activists were held in all areas and districts and subsequently the poor peasants of the Territory held their own conferences and land societies held mass rallies. The most urgent issue, hotly discussed by the peasant masses, was that of ways and means of raising crop yields, and the future methods of conducting agriculture, the elaboration of such measures that would ensure the gradual transition to new methods of farming.

Those congresses, conferences and rallies showed clearly that the Party's policy of boosting crop yields and improving efficiency of farming and, ultimately, of remodelling of agriculture on socialist lines was fully approved and supported by the poor and middle peasants. The best indication of this was the enormous political activity of the poor peasants. For instance, at eight area conferences in the North Caucasus out of a total of 1,191 delegates 699 spoke and over 2,000 questions were put to the platform from the floor.

On the basis of the numerous proposals and suggestions made by peasants a single territorial agrotechnical plan was drawn up, which provided for a minimum of agrotechnical measures to be carried out throughout the Territory. Their purpose was

to raise crop yields, expand the acreage under crops and promote co-operation and collectivisation. All progressive forces in the Territory collaborated in the drawing up of the plan: agricultural experts, scientists, large numbers of peasant activists, co-operative organisations, etc. The implementation of the plan attracted the attention of the population of the territory in general, but first and foremost, of the peasants. Soon afterwards these public forces went into action. The results of the joint work exceeded all expectations.

In October 1928 the Bureau of the North Caucasian Territorial Party Committee instructed the Territorial Executive Committee to exercise immediate control over the implementation of the plan and provide material incentives for the peasants to implement it. Among other things, it was proposed to improve the functioning of rural Soviets, to activate the work of various sections and production conferences under these Soviets and within local land societies to introduce a system of agricultural inspectors to control the implementation of agrotechnical measures. The Territorial Executive Committee in its turn put forward a range of measures to implement the agrotechnical production plan. In particular, it introduced reductions in agricultural tax for those individual or collective farms which fulfilled the plan of agricultural measures, took measures to improve the work of rural Soviets, extend their powers and strengthen the material base.¹

Let us examine some of the measures included in the territorial agrotechnical plan. The cornerstone of the plan was the minimum of agrotechnical measures. These measures, which every peasant farm could carry out, were mandatory for all peasants. They did not call for serious financial and material outlay, but resulted in a considerable rise of crop yields. These measures included: obligatory destruction of weeds in corn fields, mowing down boundary strips, road sides and waste grounds close to the farms; the sorting of sowing seed and its treatment with mordant; autumn ploughing for spring crops; necessary minimum crop rotations, etc. At first sight these measures seemed not very important but actually their implementation promised to increase the country's grain output by scores of millions of poods.

But that was one aspect of the matter. It was a highly important fact that with these elementary measures the Party found the correct approach to the peasants and could thus

¹ Party Archive of the CC CPSU, f. 17, op. 21, d. 3265, l. 56-59.

enhance their economic and political activity and prepare the ground for their fulfilment of more complex agrotechnical and subsequently zootechnical measures. Thus small, scattered peasant producers were being drawn into the implementation of state nationwide measures and becoming very active in the fulfilment of this plan.

In drawing up the agrotechnical measures the territorial Party organisation was fully aware that no matter how good they were, they could not be implemented all at once. This only became possible after intensive organisational work had been done and a range of material and technical measures had been taken. First, the North Caucasian Territorial Party Committee sent a large group of Party, YCL and trade union activists and most advanced workers to the countryside. Within six months of the economic year 1928/29 5,580 people, of whom more than 770 were leading workers of the territorial organisations went to the countryside to help implement the plan of agrotechnical measures. A network of agricultural courses was established in the Territory. The courses were attended by over 45,000 peasant activists.

As a result of the tremendous and intensive political, economic and organisational work which gave rise to unprecedented activity among the mass of the peasantry the North Caucasian Party organisation scored notable economic and political successes. By April 1929 a total of 2,013 collective farms, 2,162 sowing associations, 1,957 poor peasant groups, and 1,093 implement hire outlets had been set up. The chief beneficiaries from the agrominimum plan were the poor and middle peasants: they not only took part in building the foundations for a new way of life but also received substantial reductions in agricultural tax which were granted to those who had successfully carried out the agrotechnical measures. In the space of a single year over 264,000 poor and middle peasants received tax reliefs. This was a major victory of the Territorial Party Committee and the working peasants.

The work done by the North Caucasian Party organisation was successful precisely because the Party, fully aware of the material needs of the peasant masses, did not miss the historic moment when the peasants began to turn towards the socialist, collective way of farming. Furthermore, it found forms and methods of work which enabled it to encourage the political activity of the peasants and to direct it towards remodelling agriculture along socialist lines.

The Party Central Committee gave full support to the initiative of the North Caucasian Party organisation. Its Plenum in November 1928 heard the report of the North Caucasian Party Committee and passed a detailed resolution on the matter. Summing up the experience gained by the Party in its work in the countryside the Plenum made it obligatory for the Party organisations of other grain growing areas to make wide use of it to improve their own work aimed at developing agriculture. This remarkable initiative of the North Caucasian grain growers was supported by the newspaper *Pravda*, which recommended to all agricultural areas of the country to continue the good work. And indeed, before long this initiative was taken up by peasants throughout the Soviet Union.

2. THE STRUGGLE TO GAIN CONTROL OF THE LAND SOCIETIES AND TURN THEM INTO STRONGHOLDS IN THE SOCIALIST TRANSFORMATION OF AGRICULTURE

The Party was carrying out its economic measures in extremely adverse conditions, against the desperate resistance of the class enemies. At the same time this fierce class struggle had an extremely positive side, for it steeled the Party organisations politically, enhanced their vigilance in the face of the intrigues and schemes of the class enemies and taught them to enlarge their knowledge of the class interests of the various sections of the peasantry.

During its struggle to solve the grain problem the Party promoted the development of new forms of union between town and country through increasing the role of co-operatives. But these were only the first steps in the implementation of the historic decisions adopted by the 15th Party Congress. The task now was to launch an all-out offensive against the capitalist elements in the countryside, organising the poor peasants into an independent class force and rallying the middle peasants around them so as to isolate the kulaks.

First of all, it was essential to neutralise the dangerous influence the kulaks continued to exert on the more backward part of the peasantry through the land societies. The predominant form of land tenure during the rehabilitation period was the communal form within which the progressive forces of the peasantry took shape and grew as a separate entity. It was

they who were the first to raise the banner of collectivisation. It will be recalled that the land societies were large, economically powerful associations. For instance, in the Volga country land societies with up to 1,000 households accounted for 13.2 per cent of the total, societies with 1,000 to 5,000 households—52.8 per cent and those with over 5,000 households—34.5 per cent. The situation in the North Caucasus, the Central Black Earth Area, Siberia and in the Ukraine was similar. Communal land tenure was by far the predominant form in these areas accounting for 90-95 per cent of the total. The membership of the land societies was very much under the influence of the kulaks and other better-off elements.

It should be kept in mind that during the NEP period the kulaks had considerably consolidated their positions. Exercising their rights under the Soviet law on free choice of the form of land tenure¹ the kulaks sought to strengthen the communal form of land tenure in the hope of making the land societies a reliable refuge and use them to exert influence on the working peasants. The Party saw through the kulaks' tactics in good time. In 1924 it initiated a series of large-scale measures to restrict the kulaks and weaken their positions in the countryside.

These measures included: first, the setting up by decision of the 13th Party conference of a Central Agricultural Bank to provide credit to poor and middle peasants, which was a crushing blow to the kulaks, for they were now deprived of the opportunity to give loans to other peasants on crippling terms; secondly, legalisation by decision of the 14th Party Conference of land renting and hiring of labour, which put paid to the covert and therefore the cruellest forms of exploitation of poor peasants, made it easier for the government bodies to control the kulaks in the matter of land renting and hiring of labour; thirdly, the formation of poor peasant groups in villages, volosts and districts by decision of the October 1925 Plenum of the Party Central Committee; and fourthly, the bringing of the land societies under the control of the local Soviets by decision of the 15th Party Congress.

All these measures were undoubtedly of tremendous political importance as they helped intensify the work of rural Party organisations to rally the working peasants and mobilise them to work towards remodelling the countryside on socialist lines. Nonetheless, gaining control of the land societies and turning

¹ The reference is to *The Land Code of the RSFSR* adopted in October 1922.

them into truly socialist associations was one of the most pressing tasks facing the Party organisations and government bodies. The relationship between the rural Soviets and land societies constituted one of the most complex political problems. The kulaks who were in close touch with all sections of the peasantry and exerting constant and powerful influence on them, naturally regarded the land societies as the best refuge to camouflage their anti-Soviet activities. It was not surprising therefore that the kulaks sought to isolate the local Soviets counterposing to them the land societies.

The local Party organisations carried out titanic organisational work to effectuate the Party's policy of curbing the kulaks. They spearheaded the struggle to consolidate the Soviet power, unite the working peasants and protect them from kulak enslavement.

The only way to frustrate the subversive activities of the kulaks within the land societies, and paralyse their influence on the mass of the peasantry was to increase the powers of the rural Soviets, reinforce them with experienced personnel and draw into their ranks numerous activists from among the poor and middle peasants. The Party organisations carried out tremendous work in this area as well. This work resulted in the unification of the poor peasants and the active involvement of the middle peasants in economic and political life, which enabled the rural Soviets to gain control of the land societies and isolate the kulak elements.

Let us now examine the main directions of the struggle waged by the Party organisations to gain control of the land societies and turn them into strongholds in the socialist transformation of agriculture.

The first direction was the further remodelling of agrarian relations, the improvement of land settlement, and breaking up large villages with a communal form of land tenure. This important measure was carried out on a wide scale in the country's key agricultural areas and was one of the levers for developing agriculture and its transformation along socialist lines. The reduction of the size of land societies and resettlement of their members in new places had begun as early as 1925 but this work did not get into its stride until after the 15th Party Congress. This highly progressive initiative of the peasants was fully supported by the Soviet government, which granted the settlers considerable privileges and gave them material and organisational assistance. The families of those peasants who moved to special settlements and adopted social forms of farming, enjoyed priority in land distri-

bution, they were given the most fertile and better situated lands and did not have to pay for land surveying and distribution services.

The government set up a special fund of 77 million rubles to finance the resettlement campaign.

Of great importance was the fact that the life in these settlements inhabited mainly by poor and middle peasants was based on new principles: the inhabitants united in collectives and simple co-operative associations. Thus, in the Middle Volga Territory 68.5 per cent of the reorganised farms were conducted on the collective or co-operative principles in 1928. In these farms 91.6 per cent of the area received land surveying and regulatory services. In 1928 alone these farms received 499 tractors, 3,314 ploughs, 7,223 iron harrows, 2,717 seeding machines, 352 sorters and winnowing fans, and 2,400 head of pedigree animals. In the Lower Volga Territory 45 per cent of the reorganised farms worked along co-operative lines while the overall level of collectivisation in the territory was a mere 2.6 per cent.

But the great importance of the resettlement measures lay not only in the fact that the peasants now lived closer to the land they tilled and were united in collectives but also in the fact that the work in these collectives immediately yielded excellent results, namely they raised crop yields on their farms and thus provided a fine example encouraging the rest of the poor and middle peasants to go over to collective farming. Here are some figures on crop yields in the reorganised settlements of the North Caucasus and neighbouring land societies¹:

	Average yield, poods per hectare						
	Winter rye	Winter wheat	Spring wheat	Millet	Maize	Sun-flower	Potatoes
Reorganised settlements	40.9	61.0	31.7	76.8	88.4	40.9	212.6
Villages not reorganised	29.2	37.2	21.9	45.7	70.7	36.0	208.6

¹ See: *Kontrolniye tsifry po vesennei posevnoi kampanii 1929 g.* (Target Figures for the 1929 Spring Sowing Campaign), Moscow, 1929, p. 14 (in Russian).

The large stock of unused land, therefore, provided ample scope not only for a rapid development of the productive forces in agriculture but also for collectivisation. These major government measures cut the ground from beneath the feet of the old established land societies and made it possible to wrest the mass of the poor and middle peasants from under their influence.

The second direction of the struggle for control of the land societies took the form of large-scale implementation of the agricultural production plan. This plan was a highly effective measure whose importance can hardly be overestimated. During the discussion of these plans in the land societies many new forms of peasants' initiative emerged. These included production conferences, the appointment of agricultural inspectors to land societies, regular meetings of poor peasant groups, conferences of delegates from peasant women, youth initiative teams and, finally, agreements on socialist emulation between land societies.

The importance of all these forms was tremendous not only because they provided an outlet for the growing political and economic activity of the peasant masses but also because they involved the poor and middle peasants in collectivisation and set them on the socialist path of the development of agriculture. Thus, the agricultural production plan which had been worked out by the peasant societies themselves put an end to the isolation of individual peasant households which were now to submit to the requirements of social farming, i. e., to observe the rules laid down by the plan and come under the constant control of the entire land society. This was undoubtedly a step towards the radical transformation of the countryside on socialist lines.

Take, for instance, the participation of peasants in the setting up of machinery hire outlets and winnowing stations. In late 1928 the North Caucasian Territory had 451 machinery hire outlets, and the plan envisaged the setting up of a further 192 such outlets and 381 winnowing stations. All these facilities cost over three million rubles to set up and equip. Naturally, the peasants could not remain on the sidelines. As the peasants were to take part in the setting up of these facilities, according to the plan, they contributed about one million rubles in a short period of time. Another example can be adduced. Agricultural production plans envisaged contracting of crop areas by land societies. This measure could not be implemented without the active participation of the mass of the peas-

antry either. Out of the total of seven million hectares of the land to be sown in spring more than three million hectares had been contracted by the beginning of 1929.

These and other facts very vividly illustrate the tremendous importance of the agricultural production plan which helped the Party take practical measures to overcome petty-bourgeois economic anarchy in the countryside and direct the development of peasant farming according to plan. An idea of just how acceptable this form of social influence on the peasant masses proved to be can be gained from the fact that within four to five months the agrominimum plan was adopted by 1,337 land societies out of the total of 1,533 registered in the North Caucasian Territory.¹ It follows, then, that the plan was also the heaviest blow to the kulaks, berefting them completely of their influence on the land societies and on the working peasantry.

An essential component of the agrominimum plan was the agricultural production conferences, i. e., mass peasant assemblies tackling practical problems of production. They were set up both under the rural Soviets and under the land societies. Their composition ensured the participation in their work of all peasant activists.

The production conferences were a great force in the countryside as they exerted decisive influence on all spheres of the social and economic life of the land societies. Under the leadership of the rural Soviets and local Party organisations they elaborated measures to improve land tenure and encourage a transition to multi-field crop rotation, to promote the collectivisation and production co-operation of peasant farms, drew up plans for the spring and autumn sowing campaigns, exercised control over the work of machine-and-horse and winnowing stations and dealt with questions of providing assistance to agricultural labourers, poor peasants and the poorer sections of the middle peasants, in order to protect them from enslavement by the kulaks.

The decisions passed by the production conferences were both usually concrete and effective. Numerous peasant activists within the land societies took part in translating these decisions into effect.

Thus, the production conferences gave the peasant masses a good opportunity to display creative initiative, ensuring the parti-

¹ CSAOR, f. 4185, op. 9, d. 786, l. 47.

cipation of poor and middle peasants in the general struggle for socialism under the leadership of the working class. They showed the tremendous influence of the working class on the mass of the peasantry. The agricultural production conferences had much in common with their counterparts at industrial enterprises. Needless to say, any mechanical transplantation of the experience of an industrial conferences into the countryside would have been a mistake—in fact, it would have been impossible, if only because the rural production conferences brought together small and diffused producers. But it would be equally wrong to deny the role of the industrial conferences as a potent means of proletarian influence on the peasant masses and on the process of their co-operation and collectivisation.

The third direction of the struggle for control of the land societies was the organisation of collective ploughing of land, carried out by the entire membership of a land society. The Party organisations in the Ukraine, for example, accumulated a wealth of experience in tackling this complex political task. It would be fair to say that it was the Ukrainian peasants who took the lead in the transition of the land societies to the social production. Though it was the smaller land societies that were the first to join the collectivisation movement, but even they exerted serious influence on the course of collectivisation. This was virtually the beginning of solid collectivisation. The important thing was that now the development of land societies into collective farms had got under way. So Engels's assumption that the communal form of land tenure could be turned into a more advanced and developed form was confirmed.

The fourth direction in the struggle for control of the land societies was represented by the efforts to involve all poor and middle peasants in the production contracting scheme. The contracts with land societies promoted their joining collective farms. Contracting in general and especially long-term contracting, furnished a solid base for the planned development of peasant farming, and played an important role in the setting up of new collective farms. From the spring of 1928 the contracting of crop areas was practised on a mass scale. According to incomplete data, in the Russian Federation as many as 3,973 villages forming part of land societies made contracts for the arable land. These contracts provided the peasants with a single tract of land without any boundary lines. Some 50 per cent of these villages adopted the Rules of village associations.

Thus contracting provided the basis for a new, most elemen-

tary type of production association—village grain growing associations. In the same year these associations started to assume the status of associations for the joint tilling of the land. An extensive network of such associations began to take shape. These associations constituted a rudimentary type of collective farm. In 1928 some four thousand such associations were set up.

The development of the contract scheme in the countryside was considerably promoted by machine-and-tractor stations, tractor columns, state farms and various co-operative hire outlets. The best illustration of this was the amount of land received through contracts by the poor peasants who were most in need of state assistance. Thus during the autumn sowing campaign of 1928 the contract scheme carried out by grain growing co-operatives in the Russian Federation involved 21.8 per cent of all poor peasant households, or 23.8 per cent of the total land tilled by them. During the 1929 spring sowing campaign the scheme involved 33.9 per cent of the poor peasant households, or 39.2 per cent of all their land.

The contract scheme assumed particularly wide scale during the autumn sowing campaign. Through the medium of contractual schemes the Soviet state not only led the peasants to collectivisation but also improved the farming methods. It allocated generous funds to finance the scheme. Over one million hectares of the land covered by contracts was sown with high-grade seed provided by the state.

But the importance of the scheme went beyond its organisational role. It was the principal form of economic connection between the state on the one hand and the collective farms and individual peasant households, on the other, a form that enabled the state to influence collective and individual farming in a planned way, i. e., to determine the size of the crop area, the level of crop yields, the agrotechnical measures to be implemented, and the quantity of food and raw materials to be purchased to the state. Thus through the contract schemes mutual commitments of the state, on the one hand, and the collective farms and individual peasant farms, on the other, were fulfilled. The Soviet state implemented its policy of purchasing farm produce through this contract scheme until as late as 1933.

Finally, the fifth direction of the struggle for control of the land societies was the drive to strengthen the rural Soviets as the organs of proletarian dictatorship in the countryside. Without gaining control of the land societies it would unquestionably have been impossible to win over the mass of the working

peasantry. Therefore, the 15th Party Congress called the attention of the Party organisations to the need to intensify their work within the land societies, and passed a decision on placing the activities of the latter under the full control of the local Soviets. The relationships between the rural Soviets and the land societies was one of most complex political problems at the time. The point was that many rural Soviets had inadequate material resources to draw upon and many of them were still headed by inexperienced and largely untrained people.

Suffice it to say that in the Russian Federation by the beginning of 1928 as few as 1,720 rural Soviets out of a total of 57,310 had budgets of their own, or 3 per cent, whereas practically all land societies had impressive budgets of their own. That was the reason why many rural Soviets were financially dependent on the land societies, which often took over local self-government. They had great influence on the outcome of any economic or political measure carried out in the countryside. Taking advantage of this situation the kulaks strove, by threats, intimidation and bribery, to turn the land societies, within which they still had the right of vote into a refuge, a kind of bridge-head in the struggle against all economic and political measures taken by the Party and the Soviet government.

To frustrate these pernicious designs and make the rural Soviets sovereign bodies, it was essential to solve the problem of their material independence, and the Party solved it. As early as 1929 most rural Soviets acquired budgets of their own, which freed them from the patronage of land societies. Now they could pay salaries to their staff out of the state budget. This made it possible to reinforce the rural Soviets with more experienced and better trained personnel and, most important, to enhance their guiding role in the countryside, to step up their efforts to organise and mobilise peasant activists for fulfilling the tremendous tasks set before them by the Communist Party.

Thus Soviet agriculture had all the necessary objective conditions to make a leap forward—enabling it to overcome its age-old backwardness, and even to surpass the level of agriculture in technically and economically advanced capitalist countries.

First, Soviet agriculture, as a result of historical development, enjoyed favourable social and political conditions, unequalled by those in any capitalist country. No other economic system was able to liberate the productive forces to such an extent or give such a scope to the application of science and technology to economic needs as the Soviet system.

Secondly, Soviet agriculture had favourable climatic, soil and territorial conditions which made it possible to develop its productive forces to a very high level. The immense land reserves enabled Soviet agriculture to develop extensively while the favourable climatic and soil conditions held prospects of increasing the intensity of agriculture and thus ensuring high crop yields.

Thirdly, the massive industrialisation programme not only placed agriculture on a solid material and technical base, but also afforded broad opportunities to apply chemical methods and fertilisers in agriculture which was bound to revolutionise the latter as, indeed, it eventually did.

And *fourthly*, the efforts of the mass of the peasantry to raise the productivity of their work, their readiness to work for a transformation of agriculture on collective lines were a major prerequisite for making the Soviet Union within a short time a country with advanced large-scale socialist agriculture.

Taking into account the opportunities created by the successful development of the national economy, the November 1928 Plenum of the Party Central Committee set the task of translating these possibilities into reality. After examining and approving the target figures for national economic development in 1928/29 the Plenum pointed out: "At the present time the possibility for the working class to exert a revolutionising influence both on the technology of agricultural production and on the remodelling of economic relations in the countryside towards socialisation has increased enormously."¹

3. GROWTH OF COLLECTIVE FARMING IN COUNTRY'S GRAIN AREAS

The development of agriculture, like the emergence of the new type of social and economic relations in the countryside, was impelled by the great change generated by the Great October Socialist Revolution. The passage to collective forms of farming was a logical sequel of the economic policy pursued by the Party in agriculture, and equally a logical sequel of the country's economic and social development over a large number of years, and the steady growth and consolidation of socialist elements.

The historically distinctive feature of the growth of collective

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions..., Vol. 4, p. 128.

farming in the Soviet Union is that in its initial stage it mainly took the form of communes, and did not adopt other forms of co-operative enterprise until later. This was the sound economic groundwork on which the massive collective-farm movement later flourished, giving rise to the agricultural artel – the predominant form of socialised farming. From the October Revolution onto the inception of the massive collective-farm movement there were three distinct periods in the growth of collective farming in the USSR.

The *first period*, 1917 to 1921, saw the first collective agricultural associations, chiefly communes and artels, appear in all parts of the Soviet Republic. The number of co-operatives (of different types) kept increasing steadily, so that there were as many as 15,819 in the Russian Federation by the end of 1921. This was the beginning of the collective-farm movement, which drew its main strength from the poorest sections of peasants, headed by industrial workers who had come to help the countryside. The earliest collective farms sprang up chiefly in the central and north-western parts of the country. Most of them had a ready-made material and technical base – the expropriated landlord and monastic estates, and other privately-owned agricultural enterprises. But they were weak both economically and organisationally. The groups of associated peasants endured great hardships owing to their lack of skill in running a large-scale collective farm.

The *second period*, 1922 to 1925, saw a substantial decline in the number of co-operative farms: some of the weaker farms disintegrated, some merged with other co-operatives. The number of collective farms in the Russian Federation dropped to 10,732.

In a way, this was a natural process. The collective farms that survived grew stronger in organisation and economy, and gained a certain amount of administrative experience. This enabled them to withstand the economic difficulties in the initial years of the New Economic Policy.

The *third period* began in the latter half of 1925. The number of collective farms (of the simplest form) gradually increased, and agricultural co-operatives became increasingly widespread. Suffice it to say that in 1927 the Russian Federation had 11,806, and in 1928 as many as 21,938 collective farms. Vital socio-economic transformations – consolidation of the leading role of the proletarian state, higher rates of industrialisation, and entry into the reconstruction period – made it possible for the Party to proclaim at its 15th Congress the goal of collectivisation, and direct the

country's economic effort to laying the groundwork for the passage of all agriculture to collective farms.

As the rate of collectivisation rose, collective farms spread throughout the farming regions. The geographical outlines of the new, socialist farming were becoming increasingly distinct. By late 1928, the progress was more than evident, and the areas where the collective-farm movement was especially widespread were clearly marked. It became clear that collectivisation had taken firm root in the country's major granaries, making them mainstays of socialist farming.

The economic need to advance agriculture, above all grain production, without delay, found its practical solution in the radical socialist transformation of agricultural production and the growing tempo of collectivisation in the major grain regions.

The spread of collectivisation, especially intensive since the spring of 1928, was a clear indication of progress. In one year—from 1 October 1927 to 1 October 1928—the number of collective farms of all types almost doubled from 11,306 to 21,938. These figures greatly exceeded the rate of collectivisation in the first ten years of Soviet power. In some grain-growing regions of the Russian Federation, especially in the North Caucasus and along the Lower and Middle Volga, the rate was quite high.

The share of the collective sector in total agricultural output was steadily growing. Socio-economic development was clearing the way for collectivisation.

In 1928 the co-operative movement reached its peak: the peasant masses were involved in all kinds of co-operative societies. This enabled peasants to assert themselves not only as consumers of industrial goods but also as producers of agricultural commodities sold in cities through co-operatives. Agricultural co-operatives played a vital role, having grown much stronger. Their share in agricultural output began to rise.

Producer co-operatives, while simple in composition, specialised in different fields. Out of 43,369 such co-operatives in the Russian Federation in October 1928, as many as 11,735 raised crops, 3,320 raised cattle, 15,912 dealt in machinery, 6,380 specialised in land improvement, 4,928 in marketing, and 1,094 in various other fields. In contrast to the preceding period, these co-operatives began to take firmer root in the agricultural production sphere, gradually freeing themselves from middleman marketing functions.

The following figure illustrates the process: the general level

of peasant involvement in co-operatives reached 40 per cent in the major grain zones. This meant that a large body of co-operative activists had by that time emerged in rural areas. The country had thus entered a new historical stage of mass peasant involvement in co-operatives. The co-operative movement and collectivisation were one process. It progressed from the sphere of circulation—supply and marketing, which dominated the initial stage—to production.

However, the figures quoted above cannot be considered definitive or exhaustive since they reflect only one aspect of the collective-farm movement. The following figures provide the fullest possible picture of collectivisation in that period, and highlight the inner workings, character and direction of the collectivisation movement:

Types of collective farms in the Russian Federation	1927		1928	
	Total	Percentage	Total	Percentage
Communes	1,078	9	1,595	7
Artels	5,601	50	8,958	40
Joint land cultivation associations	4,227	41	11,385	53
Total	10,906	100	21,938	100

The figures bear out the rapid progress of all three forms of collective farming. In one year alone, their number almost doubled: that of communes and artels grew by 50 per cent and that of joint land cultivation associations almost tripled. The growth rate of the associations—the simplest form—was so far the highest, followed by artels and finally, by communes. In that period, the agricultural artel was still in the formative stage and did not dominate collectivisation, although its growth rate was fairly high.

Two trends had emerged: first, growth of all forms of collective farming and second, the higher forms grew more slowly than the simplest form—joint land cultivation associations.

How do we explain this rapid growth of the simplest forms of collective farming? To begin with, let us identify the branches of

agriculture where the turn toward collectivisation was the most marked, and the forms of collective farming that attracted peasants most.

The first aspect of the problem is clear. We have already seen that by late 1928 in the setting of the general progress in collectivisation, collective farming was the most widespread in the major grain regions. This stimulated the growth of the collective-farm movement, and explained why its simplest form—joint land cultivation associations—was the most popular.

The answer to the second question is that the more advanced and politically conscious of the middle peasants had turned toward collective farming, and, naturally, first in its simplest forms. While the poorer peasants agreed more readily to the higher forms of collective land use, the middle peasants preferred trying the simpler forms before accepting the following higher stage. This was evidence of the middle peasants' dual position: on the one hand, socio-economic conditions drove them toward large-scale collective farming; on the other hand, their personal farms, more prosperous than those of the poorer peasants, held them back from immediately switching to higher forms of economic organisation.

A budgetary survey of collective farms in the major grain areas of the Russian Federation shows that the percentage of the weaker strata of the peasant population (those with no land, horses or cows) was higher in the complex forms of collective farming, while the middle peasants dominated the lower forms. The figures are as follows:

Classification of members by property prior to joining collective farms	Communes	Artels	Associations
Landless	70.9	34.1	29.1
from 2.7 to 8.1 acres	14.2	23.4	24.1
from 8.1 to 40.5 acres	10.7	30.6	39.2
Horses			
none	74.3	59.0	48.1
1 horse	17.7	31.9	48.1
Cows			
none	70.1	44.1	35.4
1 cow	20.4	35.6	31.9

The dominant role of the joint land cultivation associations, as we see, was to a considerable degree due to both widespread collectivisation in the major grain regions and the middle peasants' preference for these forms of collective land use.

The middle peasants were becoming increasingly aware of the need to switch to collective farming. This seriously affected the nature and content of the collective-farm movement. The middle peasants' joining collective farms raised the economic prestige of the latter and broadened their contacts with the working mass of peasants. The role of middle peasants in collectivisation can be seen from the following figures on the number of draft animals available to collective-farm members (in per cent):

	None	One draft animal	Two draft animals	Three draft animals	Four draft animals
Old collective farms (as of 1 October 1927)	45.2	38.9	10.6	2.7	2.6
New collective farms (as of 1 October 1928)	35.3	47.2	14.3	2.5	0.7
Average for peasant farms in the Russian Federation	30.4	50.2	13.3	3.5	2.1

Hence the following conclusions: 1) the percentage of poorer households (with no horses or one horse) was higher in collective farms than in individual households; 2) collective farms organised before 1928 were dominated (84.1 per cent) by households that had had no horses or one horse (horseless households comprising 45.2 per cent); the percentage of these two types of households dropped to 82.5 per cent (those with no horses to 35.3 per cent) in collective farms organised in 1928.

The figures for cows are similar (see the table on p. 93).

The figures show that the growth of new collective farms increased thanks to the inflow of middle peasants. The latter's turn to collective farming obviously answered the inevitable massive turn of peasants to collectivisation. But we must remember that the poorer peasants, including agricultural laborers, still led the collectivisation movement at that time. They were the vanguard, the driving force of the movement, forming the firm support base of the working class in the village and promoting

	Number of collective farms	None	1 cow	2 cows	3 cows	4 cows	Total
		Percentage					
Old collective farms organised before 1 January 1928	1,070	34.4	43.3	15.1	3.7	3.5	100
New collective farms organised after 1 January 1928	15,305	18.1	55.0	22.8	3.4	0.7	100
1926 average for peasant farms in the Russian Federation	—	17.9	54.1	20.0	5.0	3.0	100

Party and government policy among the broad mass of working peasants.

4. ECONOMIC CONSOLIDATION OF OLD COLLECTIVE FARMS AND THEIR IMPACT ON COLLECTIVISATION

The preponderance of poor and weaker middle groups in the collective-farm movement in 1928 meant that they were the first to grasp that collective farms offered them the best way out of their economic difficulties. Poor peasants could not use even the simplest implements profitably or afford a horse on their personal farms. Therefore they were forced to hire means of production from kulaks, working off their debts and thus suffering ruthless exploitation.

Collective farms were the poorer peasants' first chance to free themselves forever from having to offer their labour for hire and from kulak bondage. That was why even a small collective farm that had no tractors or sophisticated equipment but possessed only the simplest implements and draft animals, offered a great advantage to peasants who owned no horses or implements. Therefore, the poorer peasants were naturally the advanced group of the rural population and were the first to respond to the historic appeal of the 15th Congress to unite in collective farms.

The poor were mostly responsible for establishing the simplest form of collective farms that, with the marginal supply of tractors at that time, meant simple pooling of the means of production. This greatly resembled the "manufactory" period. But facts proved that even the simplest form of co-operative land use, often uniting no more than 10 to 15 households, made it possible for those who had no horses or implements of their own to considerably improve their well-being. This is evident from the fact that, even at the initial stages, the gross income of collective farmers was much higher than that of average middle peasant farms and still higher than that of the poorer groups.

A comprehensive survey of the collective farms in the North Caucasus showed that gross per capital income in 1927 rubles was 162 in communes, 143 in artels, 141 in joint land cultivation associations, and 149.1 in farm machinery associations, while for individual middle peasant farms it was 122 and for the poorer groups, 104.7. This gap naturally gave peasants food for thought about the way they should work their land in the future.

In the period under review, the drive toward co-operative farming was not yet an organised mass movement. The commitment of the peasant masses to new forms of economic activity grew so rapidly that the existing management of the co-operative and collective-farm system was unable to absorb and serve the movement. While old collective farms were administered through special centers, most of the new collective farms that emerged spontaneously did not belong to any system and were left to their own devices.

These "wild" collective farms were very numerous. Central Statistical Board figures indicate that by early 1929 their percentage in the Russian Federation was 43 among communes, 69 among artels, and 74 among joint land cultivation associations. We must also note that our historians often regarded "wild" collective farms as a sham organised by kulak elements. That was not true. Their social composition points to the preponderance of poorer and middle peasants. For example, in the collective farms of the North Caucasus the poorer peasants accounted for 77 per cent of the membership, the middle peasants for 21.8 per cent, and the richer peasants for 1.2 per cent. Figures for the Lower Volga Territory were 70, 27 and 3 respectively. The situation was the same in the Middle Volga Territory.

It follows that the great number of the so-called wild collective farms was a direct result of peasant initiative, of a spontaneous drive of the mass of peasants. All that is positive proof of the fact that the idea of building large-scale socialist agriculture advanced by the Party fully met the vital interests of the working peasants.

Old, well-established collective farms played a truly historic part in the development of the collective-farm movement. Their economic record advertised the superiority of large-scale collective farming to small and fragmented personal farms, and showed how to use agricultural equipment, mechanise agricultural production, achieve higher crop yields, and ensure a more productive organisation of collective labour. Hardened in struggle, these mainstays of socialism provided tangible proof that collectivism in agriculture helped raise the material and cultural level of the working peasants.

Concrete, everyday examples helped people see the real strength of large-scale agricultural production modelled on socialist lines. Collective farms not only served to enlarge agricultural production but helped the poorer and middle peasants out of their economic difficulties. In contrast to large kulak farms that built their economic prosperity on exploiting the labour of others, the rising large-scale socialist-type collective farms were bringing complete and final emancipation to the working peasants.

Significantly, faced with the development of the collective-farm movement and the decisive offensive against the capitalist elements, the kulaks were losing ground in the village and consequently giving up their exploiter farms. In these circumstances, collective farms convincingly proved their viability by absorbing newly available manpower and land that had been used for parasitic rent, and forever freed peasants from kulak bondage. As a result, both the general land area of collective farms and their cultivated land increased significantly. For example, cultivation of arable land in the collective farms of the Russian Federation went up from 49.1 per cent to 63.4 per cent, and the planting area from 42 to 54 per cent in one year.

We must remember that at that time collective farms were mostly made up of poor and weaker middle peasants who had few means of production. But even the simple pooling of peasant implements in collective labour made it possible to perceptibly raise agricultural production efficiency. Small-scale peasant producers, helpless while working individually, became a powerful

productive force as soon as they pooled their tools and effort.

Naturally, production efficiency was highest in collective farms that used tractors.

Collective farms enabled peasants to cultivate greater areas of previously uncultivated arable lands and to use manpower more efficiently. Thus collective farms made it possible for the Party to achieve a final solution of one of the most difficult problems—the problem of agricultural overpopulated areas—and involve the “surplus” rural population in active production. This was achieved mostly by developing large-scale multi-purpose agriculture of the socialist type, and introducing more intensive, profitable and easily marketable crops. Significant progress in that direction was already in evidence at that time. Here are some figures on the percentage of different crops on collective and individual farms:

	Cereals	Industrial crops	Root crops	Other crops
Collective farms of the Russian Federation	80.8	10.1	5.7	3.4
Individual peasant farms	86.1	5.1	2.1	6.7

Another positive result of collective farming was the sharp increase in the land area under improved seed. Collective farms had become effective advertisers of better seed. In 1928 better seed was sown on 33 per cent of winter crop land on the collective farms of the Russian Federation.

A number of improvements in agricultural production raised the crop yield on collective farms of the Russian Federation compared to individual peasant farms. A USSR People's Commissariat of the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection survey of 222 land associations, 944 individual farms yielding large crops, and 77 collective farms showed that the crop yield on farms with socialised resources was 16.2 per cent higher than on individual farms. That was the advantage that simple pooling of land, implements and labour offered to peasants. Obviously, small-scale cash crop agriculture faced powerful competition from the new social form of farming—the collective farms, whose steady growth ensured complete victory to socialist agriculture.

Collective farms, with their better and stronger economic performance and greater prosperity of members, were themselves a good advertisement for the new, socialist way of life. This explains the 1928-1929 mass pilgrimages to inspect collective and state farms. The Gigant State Farm in the North Caucasus was shown to 170,000 peasant visitors from neighbouring villages in 1928-1929. Similar mass tours led by organisers of the collective-farm movement were conducted in other regions too. They greatly impressed the peasant masses.

"Eyewitness Accounts", a booklet by Makaryev, described the powerful impact of collective farming on visiting peasants. Here are some of the remarks by peasants from the grain-producing villages of the North Caucasus after they saw collective and state farms. A peasant from the village of Poltavsky wrote: "My opinion which I want all peasants to know is this: small individual farms must be abolished. Why? Because these small scattered households will keep our workers' state in a bad way until we say, 'Down with individual farms, long live the building of giant collective farms!' I have my individual farm. But now I am ready to give up this paltry business of individual farming and live instead on a large collective farm that makes a man's work easier." Visitors from the Sazonovskaya village area promised in their letter: "As soon as we return to our villages, we will firmly rebuff the kulaks and their ilk."

Numerous letters from politically advanced peasants were full of remarks to the effect that "we cannot work the land the way we used to", "I have lost faith in the old ways", "don't trust the kulak, join a collective farm", "I want to help with collectivisation".

Cattle-breeding was a weak link in the collective-farm movement. The shortage of draft animals was especially acute. This was due to the lag in the socialisation of draft animals compared to collectivisation rates, a lack of buildings to house animals, low forage supplies, and inadequate attention to this vital branch of agriculture from local Party, Soviet and collective-farm bodies. We must also remember that at that time the growth of collective farms was mostly due to the entry of the poor and weaker middle peasants who owned few animals. This complicated the situation. The state of cattle-breeding on collective farms can be seen from the following figures on the number of cattle per 100 hectares of cultivated land in the Russian Federation.

	Draft horses	Cows	Sheep	Swine
Peasant farms	14.1	18.7	70.2	9.9
Communes and artels	3.5	4.4	17.0	7.2
All collective farms	2.64	2.94	18.5	6.8

Above all, these figures demonstrate the general weakness of cattle breeding as a branch of agriculture both on individual peasant farms and in the collective-farm sector. In the case of the latter the situation was clearly inadequate. At that time, despite the steady growth of the number of collective farms and their improved economic performance, the collective-farm movement had three major flaws that seriously impeded its further progress and discouraged the peasant masses, especially the middle peasants.

The first drawback was that most collective farms were small and therefore could not fully use the essential advantages inherent in collective farming. As of 1 October 1928, collective farms had an average of 15.6 peasant households and 54.6 hectares of cultivated land. Over 60 per cent of all Russian Federation collective farms consisted of 5 to 10 peasant households. In 47.5 per cent of artels and 44.5 per cent of joint land cultivation associations, the average value of the means of production was below 1,000 rubles per collective farm. Only in early 1929, collective farms began to grow in size and become stronger and more stable.

The second flaw was the weakness of co-operative and collective-farm bodies and their failure to cope with the leadership of the spontaneously growing drive toward collectivisation. Newly organised collective farms were often deprived of adequate organisational and economic assistance. Left to fend for themselves, they ran into serious difficulties. New collective farms suffered from a particularly acute shortage of leaders and agricultural experts. Suffice it to recall that the co-operative and collective-farm system of the Russian Federation had 2,231 agronomists, 1,798 of them working on collective farms and 433 in land agencies. There was one agronomist per 31.6 collective farms (per over 70 if we count the simple associations).

Finally, the third drawback was the weakness and poor organisation of the inner economic structure of collective agricultural production, and the wrong system of distribution and remuneration. A comprehensive survey of collective farms showed that remuneration in most of them was either per capita or depended on the size of the share of means of production contributed by each member. On many collective farms, there were no guidelines governing distribution of the products of collective labour. The following figures describe the system of remuneration on collective farms of the Russian Federation (in per cent).

Types of collective farm	Collective farms with an established principle of distribution	man-power	Collective farms distributing their income by			
			work performed by means of production	contribution to socialised capital	land	cattle
Communes	91.3	86.4	—	1.8	—	—
Artels	70.3	75.5	15.2	3.9	5.9	2.0
Associations	43.5	61.3	22.0	6.6	14.2	5.2

This means that 29.7 per cent of artels and 56.5 per cent of associations had no established principles of distribution but relied wholly on the decisions of members' general meetings. Many artels and associations distributed their income not according to the work performed but according to the means of production contributed by the members (land, draft animals, implements, etc.). This obviously encroached on the rights of the poorer members. The collective farms where remuneration depended on manpower were under the sway of primitive egalitarianism: the amount of work was measured by working hours, while quality and result of work performed were ignored.

To sum up, we can single out the following major features of the collective-farm movement in 1928.

First, as regards its social content, the collective-farm movement involved mostly the village poor. This peasant group was the first to feel the economic need to unite, and played a prominent role in the socialist transformation of agriculture.

Second, as regards their technical level, collective farms were

mostly based on the simple pooling of peasant implements, draft animals, and manual labour. These farms were going through the so-called manufactory stage of development.

Third, collective farms were still dwarfish in size. Scattered in a mass of individual peasant farms, they were tiny beach-heads of the future.

Fourth, in form and degree of socialisation, collective farms were joint land cultivation associations that combined elements of collective labour with individual maintenance of the members' individual farms.

Therefore, the most urgent tasks of the collective-farm movement were: ensuring a greater influx of the main body of the middle peasants, enlarging collective farms and providing them with adequate material and technical resources, transforming the spontaneously growing drive towards collectivisation into an organised planned movement, training collective farmers to become leaders and agricultural specialists, strengthening the management of the collective-farm system at all levels, and providing competent organisational and economic services to all collective farms without exception.

Part Two

LENIN'S
CO-OPERATIVE PLAN—THE
PEASANT'S ROAD
TO SOCIALISM

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST FIVE-YEAR PLAN: A TURNING POINT IN SOVIET HISTORY

1. COLLECTIVISATION OF AGRICULTURE AS AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE GENERAL PLAN OF SOCIALIST CONSTRUCTION IN THE USSR

On the basis of the 15th Party Congress guidelines, the Party's Central Committee and the Soviet government drew up the first five-year plan of the country's economic development and submitted it to the 16th Party Conference held in April 1929. The plan was adopted amid a fierce struggle against the right opportunist group of Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky. They advanced the so-called minimum plan based on reducing the scope of economic development and on a slower rate of building heavy industry and of socialist construction in general.

The Conference rejected this and approved the optimum plan, i. e., large-scale targets of socialist construction. This plan set the colossal task of *turning the USSR, in a relatively short historical period, from an economically backward agrarian country into an advanced industrial nation, and laying firm economic foundations for socialism.*

The five-year plan envisaged a total of 64,600 million rubles in capital investments, including 19,500 million in industry and electrification, 10,000 million in transport, and 23,200 million in agriculture. These were unheard of investments in those days. It was gratifying that, for the first time in the history of Russian agriculture, it was to receive huge allocations to lay the material and technological basis for radical reconstruction. Collectivisation was therefore an integral part of the overall drive of our working people for the socialist reconstruction of the economy, for the building of socialism in the USSR.

To ensure increased rates of socialist industrialisation and use it as a basis for the radical socialist reconstruction of agriculture and of other branches of the economy, the Conference called on the working class and the working peasants to step

up their offensive against the capitalist elements with a view to decisively overcoming and ousting them in both urban and rural areas. In connection with the adoption of the five-year plan, the Party Conference appealed to all workers and working peasants of the USSR to launch a comprehensive socialist emulation movement for the successful implementation of the first five-year plan. This appeal marked the beginning of the socialist emulation and shock-work movement first in industry and later in agriculture.

The 16th Party Conference adopted the vitally important decision, "On Ways to Improve Agriculture and on Reduced Taxation of Middle Peasants". The great material and organisational assistance from the state to the mass of poor and middle peasants, which was greatly increased after the 15th Party Congress, made it possible to significantly improve agriculture, develop its productive forces, and consolidate the central role the middle peasants played in the economy of Soviet rural areas.

The giant scope of industrial construction envisaged in the first five-year plan, the steady numerical growth of the working class, the rising material and cultural requirements of the working people in urban and rural areas—all this urgently demanded a radical technical and social reconstruction of agriculture. It had to be made large-scale, highly productive, and efficient in using the latest machinery and advances in farming techniques. Economic and historical development shattered all petty-bourgeois illusions about the stability, viability and self-sufficiency of small peasant farms. The facts bore out the Marxist-Leninist view that small-scale peasant agriculture develops without a stable economic basis and inevitably falls under the sway of a larger rural economy.

This larger economy could be either capitalist or socialist. Hence an objective choice of two paths of development. The distinctive thing about small-scale cash crop farming is that it straddles capitalism and socialism, and may, therefore, take one or the other road depending on circumstances. In capitalist countries, agriculture develops in the usual capitalist way, with large capitalist enterprises exploiting and ruining the small peasant farms and reducing them to a state of degradation and expropriation.

The conditions created in the Soviet Union made for a different approach. With political power and the commanding heights in the economy held securely by the working class, the nationalisation of land and the guiding position of the

Communist Party agriculture was bound to—and did—assure progress along the socialist way. This was conditioned by the very nature of the economic and political system, and by those specific features acquired by agriculture and the country's peasantry through the specific development of the revolutionary movement in Russia and the victory of the October Revolution. Besides, the socialist way was the most advantageous for the working peasantry, paving the way to rapid growth of the rural productive forces and ruling out impoverishment, ruin, and expropriation of peasant producers.

While laying the stress on the socialist way of agricultural development, the Communist Party and the Soviet government did not neglect the individual peasant farms, furthering their growth and setting the stage for their association in agricultural collectives. This line is reflected in the loans and credits granted to collective and individual peasant farms:

Type of farm	1926/27		1927/28		1928/29 (to 1 April)	
	mln. rubles	%	mln. rubles	%	mln. rubles	%
Collective farms	16.3	10.1	46.9	21	26.3	28.5
State farms	16.7	10.5	20.6	9	14.2	15.5
Individual peasant farms	126.0	79.4	155.5	70	51.5	56.0
Total	159.0	100	223.0	100	92.0	100

The figures, as we see, increased in all three sectors. And until the latter half of 1929 the bulk of the loans and credits went to the individual poor and middle peasant farms. In due course, as the collective and state farms grew in number, their share in loans and credits grew too, while the share of the individual sector declined. Here are a few figures, illustrating this legitimate process: in eighteen months the share of collective-farm credits went up from 10.1 per cent in 1927 to 28.5 per cent in April 1929. Accordingly, though the physical sum of credits to individual farms increased, their share in loans and credits dropped in the same period from 79.4 to 56 per cent.

As part of the drive to boost agricultural production nationwide

the 16th Party Conference approved the government's measures to provide greater privileges for collective farms as well as for poor and middle peasants with their own farms. In particular, agricultural tax was cut by 50 million rubles, while poor peasant farms (35 per cent of the total) were completely exempt from tax and 30 to 45 per cent of the total tax receipts was to be obtained from the kulaks.¹ In supporting the initiative taken by the mass of the peasantry to extend the cultivated area, to introduce elements of scientific farming, to boost crop yields the government granted privileges to those poor and middle peasants who practiced multiple field crop rotations and carried out the agrominimum plan in its entirety. For the next two years the whole of the increment in the sown area maintained by the poor and middle peasants was to be tax-exempt.

The Soviet government's class-oriented taxation policy was one of the potent levers at its disposal in pressing the offensive against the kulak, an effective tool for undermining his economic power. At the same time it was a major stimulant for the effort to boost agricultural production, to strengthen the social sector in the country's agriculture and raise the efficiency of the working peasants' farming. This was the best argument against the Right opportunists' allegations to the effect that Soviet agriculture was on the decline and that the Party failed to pay proper attention to and encourage individual farmers. The statistics illustrating actual progress in agriculture at the time indicated that the general upturn of agriculture's productive forces was "proceeding both along the line of encouraging and organising *large-scale collective farming and equally along the line of providing technical and expert assistance to individual poor and middle peasants.*"²

The economic measures taken by the Party and the government were designed to strengthen the political alliance between the working class and the working peasantry on the basis of developing close co-operation of industry and agriculture. When it was clear that the decisions of the 15th Party Congress met with broad support among the working peasantry, *the 16th Party Conference launched its campaign for mass collectivisation* and instructed local organisations to spearhead and guide the rising spontaneous groundswell of the mass of the peasantry, turning the movement of individual groups and sections of the peasant population into an efficiently organised nationwide movement. Naturally, there had to

¹ See: *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 4, pp. 216-17.

² *ibid.*, p. 217.

be certain objective and subjective prerequisites before mass collectivisation could get off the ground and if the project were to succeed.

Were there favourable conditions for a successful mass collectivisation campaign?

There certainly were. The chief and decisive prerequisite was the October Socialist Revolution, which brought a new way of life to the countryside. In ending private ownership of the land the Soviet Government improved the material well-being of the mass of the peasantry and facilitated their passage from small-scale individual farming to large-scale collective farming. When speaking of this one should always remember two extremely important factors, which, apart from making the transition easier, contributed objectively to a relatively painless passage of the peasantry to collective farming. One was the deep-rooted tradition of communal land use, the other was the nationalisation of the land.

By investing control of the national economy in the workers' and peasants' state and by dint of prolonged and hard work the Communist Party prepared other economic and political conditions essential for a passage of the mass of the peasantry to collective farming, and uprooting capitalism in the countryside. We can point to at least four major circumstances which enabled the Party to launch its policy of mass collectivisation.

First, it was essential to ensure that the mass collectivisation policy of the Central Committee of the Party and the government be backed by the entire Party membership, that the Party's rank-and-file fully accepted the need for such a policy at that particular juncture. This does not mean, of course, that the collectivisation policy was something the Party just stumbled into. The explanation here is that in the early years of Soviet power the Party focussed its attention on the rehabilitation of the country's agriculture on its old material and technological base and that was largely the reason why the Party's rank-and-file were not sufficiently alive to the economic need for collectivisation. It was not until the first serious problems were encountered in the field of state grain purchases that the mass of the Party membership began to consider seriously wholesale collectivisation, for it became clear to every Party member that a small-scale peasant farming could not hope to supply the growing needs of the nation for food and those of industry for raw materials.

Secondly, it was necessary to ensure that the working class and the mass of the working peasantry backed the Party's policy of building a large-scale socialist agriculture, that they become the

organisers of the new social system in the countryside. Needless to say, the peasant masses could not be radically converted to the idea of collective farming overnight. That was to take years and years of dedicated preparatory work by the Party, and vivid practical examples were needed to persuade the peasantry to embark on the road of collectivisation. It was not until 1929 that a favourable situation of a mass collectivisation movement took shape. A tremendous contribution to this development was made by the agricultural co-operative societies, which had invaded every area of life in the countryside, acquired a substantial following and prepared a favourable psychological climate among the peasantry to facilitate their acceptance of the collectivisation idea. As the relevant decision passed by the 16th Party Conference put it: "The most important fact which has demonstrated the viability of the collectivisation movement is *that the collective farms are coming into being as the products of the independent action and initiative of the mass of the peasantry, that the advantages of large-scale farming are being demonstrated by the collective farms that have already been established...* The Conference states that the most important feature of today's collectivisation movement is *the gravitation to collective farming* of not only the poorer strata of the rural population but also of middle peasants who are coming together in collective farms contributing their implements, and livestock to the common pool."¹

Thirdly, it was necessary for the Soviet state to possess an essential minimum of material facilities and resources to finance a mass collectivisation, remaining mindful of Lenin's proposition that "a social system emerges only if it has the financial backing of a definite class".² Clearly, in the early years of Soviet power the state lacked the funds to provide adequate support for the establishment of collective farms. To make matters worse the Soviet state lacked sufficient resources to finance the absolutely essential minimum of industrial construction. It was not until 1929 that the Soviet state, as it solved the problem of internal financial accumulation and stepped up the pace of economic development, found it possible to finance the collective and state farms on a considerable scale.

Fourthly, it was necessary to build a developed industry capable of supplying the collective and state farms with agricultural machinery such as tractors, combine harvesters, etc. Needless to say, at the time when Soviet industry was only just emerging it could not hope to meet the enormous demand for farming equipment. In

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions..., Vol. 4, pp. 218-19.

² V. I. Lenin, "On Co-operation", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 469.

1929, the country was making great progress in its efforts to develop large-scale industry, when giant engineering works were quickly going up including enterprises producing tractors, combine harvesters and other agricultural equipment. These, of course, could only be applied on large-scale collective farms.

Thus, in posing the task of carrying out wholesale collectivisation the Communist Party was proceeding from an appreciation of the prevailing economic and political conditions in the country. Whereas previously, during the rehabilitation period, the Soviet state lacked sufficiently large resources to provide effective material, technical and organisational assistance to the mass collectivisation movement, by now, "*the proletarian state's resources have grown qualitatively and quantitatively, enabling it to make use of the advantages offered by the Soviet system in order to accelerate the development of agriculture through use of up-to-date machinery and the unification of small farms on the basis of collective labour*".¹

2. THE EFFECTIVE ECONOMIC MEASURES ADOPTED BY THE STATE IN CARRYING OUT MASS COLLECTIVISATION

By 1929 the development of the national economy had brought the collectivisation movement to the fore as one of the most urgent tasks for the Party, government, trade unions, Young Communist League and co-operatives and indeed for the whole country. In other words, this urgent task gained the status of *a truly national issue, of immediate concern to one and all*. The new social and economic processes which the 15th Party Congress set in motion had prefigured the subsequent course of economic development in the countryside and the new alignment of class forces, the character and direction of the collectivisation movement. In promoting the interests of the working peasants, the Party made skilful use of economic levers which played a major role in these new processes.

A. The Machine and Tractor Columns and Stations

Soviet agriculture had entered a stage of its development when the primitive farming implements began to be supplanted by agricultural machinery. By the spring sowing campaign in 1929 a total of 17,841,900 rubles' worth of farming machinery had been supplied to the countryside, 24.4 per cent more than the amount planned

¹ *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 4, p. 210.

by the state. The supply of agricultural machinery was biggest to the chief grain growing areas: a total of 1,880,500 rubles' worth, or 128.2 per cent, for the North Caucasus, 1,386,800 rubles' worth, or 155.8 per cent, for the Lower Volga Territory, and 1,415,900 rubles' worth, or 184.6 per cent, for the Middle Volga Territory.¹

But the new farming equipment that was pouring into the country's agriculture could not be fitted into the framework of small-scale individual farming, the machines broke through this old framework and helped to develop the productive forces, and build large numbers of large-scale collective farms. The new technology thus played a highly revolutionising role in the countryside, demonstrated particularly well by the performance of the early machine and tractor columns and stations and of the first fully mechanised state farms.

In the spring of 1929 the country had several scores of co-operative machine and tractor columns which were widely used not only on collective farms but also on individual ones. Being large units with hundreds of tractors and other agricultural machines the machine and tractor columns exerted a decisive influence on the pace of collectivisation and the development of collective farming. From their inception they were potent levers for remodelling the country's agriculture along socialist lines and boosting its productive forces.

The machine and tractor columns enjoyed tremendous political, moral and economic prestige among the rural population and worked a veritable revolution in peasant mentality as they enabled the peasants to see for themselves the advantages of advanced agricultural technology. In turn, the emergence of the first machine and tractor columns revealed that the application of science and technology in agriculture was being accepted by the forward-looking peasants as an essential condition of the development of agriculture. Thus, whereas in the economic year 1927/28 as few as 4,015 requests were received from the peasants for tractors, in the next economic year (1928/29) the number of such peasant requests rose to 9,684. Highly indicative in this respect was the participation of peasants themselves in setting up a special fund to purchase tractors. The peasants of the North Caucasus contributed 8.5 million rubles within two or three months while those of the Middle Volga Territory contributed 12 million rubles.

The Party Central Committee repeatedly examined the question of machine and tractor columns, giving the local initiative every

¹ CSAOR, f. 4085, op. 9, d. 811, l. 67.

encouragement in their efforts to expand the columns and improve their performance. In April 1928 the Central Committee passed a resolution encouraging the initiative of the Ukrainian Communists in developing machine and tractor columns and allocating five million rubles to the Ukraine for the purchase of tractors.¹ The example of the first tractor column set up by the Shevchenko State Farm in the Ukraine in 1927 was quickly emulated all over the country. The number of co-operative machine and tractor columns was also steadily growing. Indeed, whereas in the autumn sowing campaign of 1928 the USSR had only 14 co-operative machine and tractor columns, during the 1929 spring sowing campaign as many as 70 columns were working in the fields, 56 of them in the Russian Federation and 14 in the Ukraine.²

Inspired by the fine example of the tractor columns whole land societies joined the collectivisation movement and obliterated boundaries separating not only the fields of individual farmers but even those that separated the lands of whole villages thus creating extensive tracts of cultivated land. The work of the tractor columns brought about a radical change in social, economic and production relations in the countryside. This process manifested itself particularly clearly in those areas which were the first to embark on the road of solid collectivisation.

Similar processes were at work in other areas where machine and tractor columns operated. Of special importance in this context was the dramatic expansion of the area under crops achieved by bringing fallow lands under the plough, which caused a great increase in the sown area per peasant farm. The expansion of the area under crops maintained by poor and middle peasants was achieved not only by bringing new lands under cultivation but also through a sharp contraction in the capitalist relations in the countryside, exemplified by the reduction or complete abolition of land renting by the peasant poor to the kulaks and the hiring of draught animals or agricultural land from them.

The advent of machine and tractor columns meant that the individually-owned implements which had previously been concentrated in the hands of the kulaks ceased to be an instrument for exploiting the peasant poor, thus destroying the roots of the exploitation of the poor peasant by the kulaks. On the basis of machine and tractor columns, extensive co-operating of agricultural imple-

¹ The Central Party Archive of the Institute of Marxism-Leninism under the CC CPSU (further C.P.A. I.M.L.), f. 17, op. 2, yed. khr. 339, l. 28.

² See: *Ekonomicheskaya Zhizn* (Economic Life) V June 27, 1929.

ments and draught animals new, socialist relations of production were emerging and becoming consolidated.

It is noteworthy that the movement to pool the ownership and use of farming equipment and tools to assist the poorest peasants assumed particularly massive proportions in the spring of 1929, when in the Middle Volga Territory over 200,000 hectares of poor peasants' land were tilled by machine and tractor columns free of charge.

All-round public assistance to the working peasants contributed to the further progress of collectivisation and co-operation in the countryside. As early as the spring of 1929 agricultural co-operation reached an impressive numerical level. By July 1928 591,000 poor peasant farms had joined co-operatives making up 27 per cent of the membership in the Russian Federation alone. By May 1929 as many as 1,821,000 farms in the Russian Federation had joined, making up 49 per cent of the total membership. Consumer co-operation embraced 50.3 per cent of the poor peasants in the Russian Federation by October 1928, and 71.8 per cent by October 1929.

The machine and tractor columns exerted tremendous moral and political influence on the working peasants. They saw for themselves that mighty machinery was coming to the aid of the peasant with his primitive implements, and in their masses they immediately began to rally round the machine and tractor columns. We can cite any number of examples illustrating this. Thus, the Bureau of the Party Committee of the Middle Volga Territory, summing up the results of the work of tractor columns during the 1929 spring sowing campaign, noted in one of its decisions that "after the spring sowing campaign has been completed there is mounting enthusiasm among the peasants in the areas where tractor columns worked for concluding contracts with them...". By 1930 as many as 95 per cent of the poor and middle peasant farms in the Territory applied to contract the services of tractor columns. The Party Committee of the Central Black-Earth Area reported many cases of whole villages actually drawing to decide who would be the first to enlist the services of the local tractor column and sending delegates to the towns to request that tractor columns be increased.¹

Thus the machine and tractor columns laid the foundation of the wide-scale pooling of implements and means of production in the countryside and thereby destroyed the economic basis of the

¹ C.P.A. I.M.L., f. 17, op. 2, yed. khr. 433, l. 20.

exploitation of the poor peasants, creating a favourable environment for collectivisation and co-operation. The tractor columns and the pooling of draught animals and implements brought considerable economic benefits to the middle peasants as well as they freed much of the capital they had previously had to spend on purchasing draught animals and farming implements, enabling them to invest it elsewhere and use it to improve their own material condition.

But the machine and tractor columns were only a temporary, intermediate measure, a transitional stage on the way to more powerful state agricultural enterprises. It took time before the experience gained by tractor columns could be re-applied to the launching of unprecedented socialist enterprises of the industrial type, the machine and tractor stations.

On 5 June 1929 a decision was passed on setting up in 1930 the first 100 inter-village machine and tractor stations in the country's main granaries including 19 stations in the North Caucasus, 19 in the Lower Volga Territory, and 14 in the Middle Volga Territory. Thus, these three areas had 52, that is over half of the state machine and tractor stations. But while establishing the first 100 state-run machine and tractor stations the Soviet government continued to give every assistance to co-operative machine and tractor columns, which continued to play an important role in the collectivisation movement. In fact, therefore, the number of columns not only did not fall but greatly increased. It was not until the next phase of the collectivisation movement that co-operative machine and tractor columns lost the importance they once had and were used as the skeleton for the new machine and tractor stations—MTSs.

The wide-scale establishment of machine and tractor stations began after the November 1929 Plenum of the Party's Central Committee, which approved the government's proposal to set up the first 100 MTSs in the key grain growing areas. This was made possible by the intensive economic development of the Soviet state and, above all, by the tremendous successes in the country's industrialisation and the collectivisation of agriculture. At the same time large-scale development of MTSs was the product of the general increase in the political, cultural and production activity displayed by the working class and the working peasants.

In establishing the first MTSs, the Central Committee of the Party and the Soviet government drew the attention of the local authorities to the need to ensure an efficient deployment of the stations in areas where they were most needed, at the same time

as establishing a radius of operation in servicing the surrounding collective farms. The task was to set up well-equipped centres with their own repair and logistical support facilities. The November 1929 Plenum of the Party's Central Committee pointed out that "in offering broad opportunities for exploiting the advantages of modern machinery by peasant farms the machine and tractor stations should become the organisers of total collectivisation in the areas they cater for".¹ To ensure organised establishment of machine and tractor stations the Plenum approved the setting up of the Tractor Centre as an autonomous body forming part of the Collective Farm Centre. This organisational measure meant the establishment of a centralised system of managing the machine and tractor stations.

As we shall be examining this question in greater detail later there is no need for us to consider it very closely here. In any case at that early stage in the collectivisation movement draught animals were still the principal source of traction and had to be used with maximum efficiency on both collective and individual farms. In the steppe zone of the Ukraine machine and horse pools were widely set up on the basis of pooling draught animals and implements. In the spring of 1929 the Ukraine had 400 such pools. Soon they became very popular in various parts of the Russian Federation as well, where in the North Caucasus alone as many as 114 machine and horse pools were set up.

In view of the positive experience gained by such associations the Collective Farm Centre planned to organise by the spring of 1930 as many as 2,500 machine and horse stations on collective farms in the Russian Federation which were to bring together about one million horses and work about 5 million hectares of collective farm land. Each machine and horse station was to have an average of 400 horses, 250 ploughs, 125 harrows, 60 row-cultivators, 30 seeding and 22 reaping machines, and was to carry out a full range of field operations over an area of no less than 2,500 hectares. The plan was considerably exceeded. Machine and horse stations were set up virtually on all collective farms. During the spring sowing campaign of 1930, there were over 7,000 such stations in the country. The correct employment of draught animals and tractors was of tremendous economic importance.

¹ *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 4, p. 348.

B. The State Farms

Alongside the wide establishment of MTSs the Communist Party and the Soviet government launched an extensive plan for setting up state farms. It should be borne in mind that considerable changes had occurred in the role played by the state farms. Far-reaching socialist transformations in the country had brought the state farms into a new phase of their development. The state farms were now to become major grain growing enterprises. The situation was more favourable for this now: first, the state gained a wealth of experience; second, the vastly increased material and technical opportunities of the Soviet state enabled it to provide more generous help to the state farms.

Relying on these real opportunities the Party put forward the following plan: on the one hand, to establish new big mechanised grain growing state farms and, on the other, to consolidate and develop the material and technical facilities of the existing state farms. The July 1928 Plenum of the Party's Central Committee passed a decision on establishing a series of new major grain growing state farms. This decision was adopted as a basis for a five-year plan of state farm development.

The plan envisaged the setting up of 280 new grain-growing state farms with a total cultivated area of 12 million hectares to be set up on unused lands in various parts of the Russian Federation and the Ukraine. These farms were expected to produce a total of 100 million poods of marketable grain in the final year of the five-year period. Work on the project got under way on a giant scale. In 1929, 51 state farms were already operating in various parts of the country with a total cultivated area of 2,295,000 hectares. Each farm had an average of 45,000 hectares. These were indeed large and well-equipped socialist farms. Within their first year they received 2,539 tractors, including 608 caterpillar ones, and 662 lorries, as well as engines and lathes for their repair shops.

The construction of giant grain growing state farms was launched on unused lands of the country's key grain-growing areas. In North Caucasus an area of 513,000 hectares was allocated for the future farms. In 1929 there were already 14 major grain growing state farms in the territory including Giant No. 1 in the Salsk Area which had 127,000 hectares, Giant No. 2 in the Don Area with 45,000 hectares, Shakhtinsky No. 3 with 80,000 hectares, and Shakhtinsky No. 4 with 54,000 hectares.

Giant grain growing state farms were also being set up in the Trans-Volga Area. In the Lower Volga Territory the cultivated area

of state farms of all types was increased from 1.5 million hectares to 6.5 million hectares in the space of three years. In the Middle Volga Territory over 2.5 million hectares were set aside for the grain growing state farms. During the economic year 1929/30, 26 new grain growing farms came into being in the Territory, including such giants as the Ponomaryovsky farm with 43,000 hectares, the Troitsko-Pilyuginsky farm—46,000, the Samarsky farm—58,000, the Ilekski farm—35,000, the Pogrominsky farm—56,000, and the Usmansky farm with 64,000 hectares.

These state farms injected new life not only into the state farm network but into the entire economic life of the Soviet countryside. From the outset they showed excellent organisation and efficiency. They fulfilled their production targets for the first year ahead of schedule. The spring sowing campaign of 1929 was carried out in an unprecedentedly short time: six to nine days. This could only be achieved by well-organised and efficiently-run farms.

It is interesting to note that tractor teams of various state farms gave a lot of help to individual farmers by ploughing up a total of over 300,000 hectares of land for them. This produced a deep impression among the working peasants. The harvesting campaign on the state farms was carried out in an even more efficient way. In 1929 the new grain growing state farms produced a total of 141,600 tons of grain including 82,500 tons of marketable grain for the state.

The wide setting up of new grain growing state farms and the organisational and economic improvement of the existing ones gave a powerful impetus to the development of the collectivisation movement in the areas under discussion. By the force of their successful work and experience they convinced the local peasants of the need to organise collective farms. The state farms were to become and did become not only powerful grain growing enterprises but also the champions of the Communist Party's policy among the working peasants. They also became centres for rendering technical and expert help to the local peasants. They were equipped with the most up-to-date technology, used advanced methods of soil cultivation, had the best agricultural experts, and, last but not least, among their staff were former industrial workers and rural proletarians.

Many state farms opened rental outlets offering agricultural implements and machinery, set up seed storehouses, veterinary and stock-breeding centres and other essential facilities which promoted the development of the productive forces in the countryside and helped the local peasants to improve their farming practices and

raise the productivity of their farms. The state farms also exerted a tremendous cultural influence on the mass of the peasantry. The recreation centres, libraries, reading rooms and the various study groups run by state farms attracted the local peasants, stimulated a thirst for knowledge among them, and a desire to take an active part in the social and economic life of their villages. Therefore, without belittling in any way the tremendous material and technical assistance the state farms gave the peasants we may say that their main role consisted in helping establish a new social and economic system in the countryside, in helping introduce new production relations, a new social labour discipline and in helping establish and develop socialist principles of life among the working peasants.

Let us examine the principal manifestations of the transformatory role of the state farms.

First, the state farms helped to improve the organisational and economic structure of the collective farms, and improve in their organisation and deployment of labour. As an example we can take team work. Its successful use on the state farms was largely responsible for its introduction on collective farms. Right until the spring of 1930 many collective farms conducted their field operations using the joint work of all members. This was the most primitive form of work organisation, doomed to low productivity. The switchover to team work on collective farms was the first progressive step toward eliminating the petty-bourgeois egalitarianism introducing personal responsibility and putting an end to the consumer principle in the distribution of the products.

Secondly, the experience gained by the state farms in setting up stockyards was also extended to the collective farms. The introduction on the collective farms of such a relatively advanced form of livestock-keeping as separate housing for different species of animals was a major step towards organisational and economic development of the collective farms.

Thirdly, the organisation of activist groups and the involvement of the staff in the management of the state farms were a good example for the collective farms to follow. Production conferences, an efficient form of public control over production and a means of stimulating the economic and political activity of the workers, were widely held on the state farms. In the summer of 1929 eighty-two per cent of the state farms held regular production conferences and seventy-six per cent of the state farms had production committees. These new forms of stimulating the activity of workers were used widely by collective farms as well and played an im-

portant part in the socialist education of the collective farmers.

And *fourthly*, the state farms played an outstanding role in spreading the socialist principles of the organisation of labour and payment for work, stimulated socialist emulation drives and the shock-labour movement and helped to improve the material condition of agricultural labourers who formed the hard-core of state farm staffs. The impressive economic achievements of the state farms were due above all to the fact that they succeeded in introducing on a wide scale the socialist principle of piece-work payment. In a situation when many collective farms used the petty-bourgeois egalitarian system of payment for work, the introduction of piece rates was one of the top-priority tasks facing the Party. That is why the role of the state farms in the spread of the piece-work system was invaluable to the development of collective farm production.

Piece-work payment was not only an efficient means of enhancing the material incentive of the working people, but also evoked tremendous enthusiasm for socialist emulation and shock-labour movement on the state farms. That this was so is illustrated by the following facts: of the 314 state farms registered in January 1930, 235, or 74.8 per cent were embraced by the socialist emulation drive. These farms had a total of 20,133 workers, or 77 per cent of the total number of state farm workers. This broad scale of socialist emulation and the shock-labour movement on the state farms in no way lagged behind the emulation movement at the major industrial enterprises and construction projects. It goes without saying that this represented a revolution in the minds of the agricultural labourers and peasants, who had cast in their lot with large-scale socialised agricultural production.

Thanks to the state and collective farms, this numerous and previously most backward sector of the peasant population received the opportunity to work as free men and to improve their living standards. Whereas in July 1927 the state farms had a total of 150,700 permanent and seasonal workers including about 10,000 skilled workers such as tractor drivers, fitters and blacksmiths, by July 1929 their numbers had reached 227,100 including 30,000 skilled workers. In August 1930 the state farms had about 400,000 workers of whom over 100,000 were skilled. The most notable feature of this development was the rapid improvement in the living standards of the state farm workers.

All these favourable factors which manifested themselves during the first year of the technical reconstruction of the state farms enabled the Party to make maximum use of this experience in its propaganda and agitational work among the mass of the peasantry

and in consolidating and developing the collective farms. Experience showed that this manifold creative work of the Party had achieved its purpose and produced remarkable results.

3. THE DECISIVE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The first year after the 15th Congress was marked by impressive successes scored by the Party in its work to rally the mass of the working peasants around the working class in its struggle against the capitalist elements of town and country. The peasant masses' drive to raise crop yields and boost agricultural production in general began to develop into an extensive, insuppressible striving by peasants towards the socialist transformation of the country's agriculture.

At the beginning of the first five-year plan period the Soviet countryside was making it clear that among the mass of the peasantry deep-going processes were at work revolutionising the peasants' economic life through further co-operation and collectivisation. This meant that the decisions passed by the 15th Party Congress on socialist transformation of agriculture enjoyed enthusiastic support among the mass of the working peasants.

A new alignment of class forces emerged in the Soviet countryside, a decisive socio-economic re-orientation took place towards the radical transformation of agricultural production. Through strengthening the alliance of the working class and the working peasants, accelerating the country's industrialisation and ousting capitalist elements from every sphere of economy, the Communist Party was able to direct the Soviet state's economic policy towards the development of the socialist sector in agriculture. Thanks to the continually growing all-round assistance accorded the working peasants by the Soviet state, conditions were being created in the countryside for mass collectivisation.

The collectivisation movement, developing as it did in the conditions of intense class struggle, was advancing unflinchingly, creating and consolidating the new socialist forms of farming in the shape of associations for joint tilling of the land, agricultural artels, communes, and other co-operative associations. Against the background of this movement, two tendencies clearly emerged in the socio-economic development of Soviet agriculture: on the one hand, the disintegration and elimination of large kulak farms, and on the other, the formation and consolidation of large collective

farms with simultaneous improvement in the economic status of the middle and poor peasants.

This meant that the Soviet countryside was embarking on the road of socialist development. Whereas before 1928 the kulak farms exhibited a noticeable, albeit modest, numerical increase and economic growth, by 1929 the development of the collectivisation movement and the offensive against the capitalist elements put an end to the expansion of the kulak farms, while some of their weaker sections, unable to withstand the economic pressure from the Soviet power, abandoned land renting and the hiring of farm labour ending their exploiter practices.

Let us trace this process taking as an example the situation in the North Caucasus, which was the most typical in the sense of the class stratification of the countryside. As we do so we must pay tribute to those Marxist agrarian experts who did a colossal amount of work subjecting to a scientific analysis the development of the various class groupings in the period under review. The data of the demographic surveys they carried out presented the following picture of the changes that occurred between 1927 and 1929 in the various class groups of the peasantry¹:

Class groups	Total number of farms in 1927	Farms joining the following groups by 1929 (per cent)				Taking the total number of farms registered in corresponding groups in 1927, average per farm			
		Proletariat	Semi-proletariat	Middle peasants	Kulaks	Sown area (hectares)		Means of production (rubles)	
						1927	1929	1927	1929
Agricultural proletariat	3,568	51.9	32.7	15.3	0.1	1.6	2.2	70	116
Semi-proletariat (poor peasants)	5,680	19.3	49.6	30.8	0.3	3.0	3.6	121	192
Middle peasants	16,515	1.6	9.7	86.2	2.6	3.3	7.8	761	715
Kulaks	1,510	0.5	2.5	79.9	17.0	13.9	10.4	2,013	1,400
Total in all groups	27,273	12.2	21.4	65.3	2.6	6.6	6.3	608	664

¹ See: *Kolkhozy Severo-Kavkazskogo kraya* (The Collective Farms of the North Caucasus), Rostov-on-Don, 1930, p. 7 (in Russian).

As the table indicates the greatest changes occurred among the kulak farms, as well as among the proletarian and semi-proletarian sections of the peasantry. Of the total number of farms classified as kulak in 1927, only 17 per cent had remained in their group by 1929. The proportion of these farms declined from 5.5 per cent in 1927 to 2.6 per cent in 1929. The middle peasant section expanded thanks to the absorption of part of the semi-proletarian and the kulak sections. The proportion of middle peasants rose from 60.6 to 65.3 per cent. The semi-proletarian section of peasants largely joined the middle peasant section and in turn absorbed part of the proletarian section. This resulted in its relatively modest expansion—from 20.8 to 21.4 per cent. The proletarian section of farms shrank from 13.1 to 12.2 per cent.¹

The changes occurring in the Soviet countryside altered considerably its socio-economic structure, increasing the proportion of the middle peasants. Thus the process of ousting capitalist elements from agriculture which benefited above all the poor and middle peasants was advancing in various directions. The material standards of the poor and middle peasants improved and they were increasingly involved in the economic and political life of the countryside and thus accelerating the growth of the productive forces in the country's agriculture. It was precisely on this basis, that is to say, on the basis of general improvement in their material condition of the mass of the peasantry and the increasing efficiency of their farming, that the collectivisation movement expanded and gained in strength, burying the remnants of capitalism and leading Soviet agriculture along the new socialist path of development.

At the same time as capitalist elements were being ousted from the sphere of agricultural production they were also being intensively edged out of the circulation sphere. The social sector in Soviet agriculture had by 1929 become predominant not only in wholesale but also in retail trade. The table below shows data on the situation in the different sectors of retail trade in three territories (per cent).²

¹ See: *Sdvigi v selskom khozyaistve SSSR mezhdru XV i XVI partsyezdami* (Changes in the USSR's Agriculture Between the 15th and 16th Party Congresses), Moscow, 1931, pp. 72-73 (in Russian).

² See: *Severny Kavkaz* (North Caucasus), No. 4, 1930, p. 141; *Sredneye Povolzhye* (Middle Volga Territory), No. 4, 1928, p. 51; *Nizhneye Povolzhye* (Lower Volga Territory), No. 10, 1929, p. 71.

Rural retail trade	North Caucasian Territory		Middle Volga Territory		Lower Volga Territory	
	1927/28	1928/29	1927/28	1928/29	1927/28	1928/29
State	7.7	8.1	11.1	11.5	29.9	25.3
Co-operative	59.1	76.7	61.7	66.1	53.8	64.6
Private	33.2	15.2	27.2	22.4	16.3	10.1

As the table indicates, the state and co-operative trade was growing steadily to 84.8 per cent in the North Caucasian Territory, 77.6 per cent in the Middle Volga Territory and 89.9 per cent in the Lower Volga Territory. At the same time the private trade shrank dramatically over these two years. It is indicative that the greatest increase in rural trade was maintained by the co-operatives, which were the main link between town and country.

Naturally, this deep-going socio-economic process in the countryside could not run altogether without hitches. The destruction of the old capitalist production relations and the formation of the new socialist economic structure in the countryside were attended by an intense and irreconcilable class struggle. With their backs to the wall the kulaks fought fiercely, hampering collectivisation in every way. Every new achievement of the collectivisation movement was accompanied by an increase in the ferocity of the struggle. In turn, the mounting struggle increased the political activity of the working peasants, strengthened their unity with the working class and consolidated the positions of the socialist elements in agriculture.

The Right-wing opportunists claimed that the growing resistance of the kulaks was due to their supposedly growing strength. In actual fact, however, it was a reflection of their weakness, the agony of a dying class. But as long as the kulaks, a capitalist class, still existed, they would not, of course, put up with the socialist development of the countryside. At the same time it would have been a mistake to underestimate the strength of this class, for of every one hundred farms four or five were owned by kulaks, amounting to a total of over one million farms, a considerable economic force. For all the firmness of the restrictive measures taken by the Soviet authorities against the kulaks they still had the best lands, the best farming machinery, implements and draught animals, they were in a position to exercise their right to rent land and hire farm labour and, finally, they had at their disposal considerable amounts of capital.

The kulaks took full advantage of their economic power in their struggle to win over to their side the mass of the poor and middle peasants. The kulaks did their utmost to prevent poor and middle peasants from embarking on the socialist road and draw them under their economic and political influence. That is why the 16th Party Conference gave the following formulation of this important political problem: "Whether the mass of the peasantry preserve their loyalty to the alliance with the working class or whether they allow the bourgeoisie to separate them from the workers, depends on which direction agriculture will develop in, the socialist or the capitalist one, and, accordingly, on *who will guide the development of agriculture—the kulaks or the socialist government.*"¹

Taking due account of the determination of the mass of the working peasants to raise the productivity of agriculture, the Communist Party countered capitalist farming by the socialist path through the building of a large-scale socialised agriculture. That was at the time the only possible course which was totally in the interests of the mass of the working peasants, since they, like the workers, had a vital stake in the triumph of socialism: only socialism held out the promise of rescue them from ruin, poverty and kulak exploitation. The resolution of the 16th Party Conference stated: "*Large-scale socialised agriculture should not be opposed to individual poor and middle peasant farms as a hostile force, but should be linked with them as a source of help, as an example of the advantages offered by large-scale farming, and as the organiser of assistance to them in the matter of uniting them gradually into a large-scale economy.*"²

The socialist reorganisation of agriculture was actually a revolution manifested in the development of new socialist forms of farming and provoking the kulaks' fierce resistance to these forms. The collective farms, machine and tractor stations and state farms were the focal points of intensive class struggle. The 14th Party Congress had pointed out that "one of the main forms of class struggle at present is the struggle between the capitalist and socialist elements in the economy, the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat to win over the mass of the peasantry. This struggle has a political expression as well, primarily in the attempts of the kulak elements in the countryside to win over the middle peasant sections..."³

¹ *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 4, pp. 208-09.

² *ibid.*, p. 210.

³ *ibid.*, Vol. 3, Moscow, 1970, p. 248.

Naturally, in that period the capitalist trend of development had considerable strength in the countryside, as it was kept up by small-scale peasant farming based on private ownership of the instruments and means of production. In 1929 the situation in the countryside considerably changed as a result of the provision of the necessary material, political and organisational conditions for transition to large-scale socialist agriculture. The mass of the peasantry were able to see for themselves the advantages of large-scale socialist farming and were increasingly taking the path of socialist development.

It was precisely on this basis that the class struggle in the countryside went on at the time. This struggle was called forth by the old capitalist elements' clinging to their way of life and the vigorous advance of the new socialist elements. In the course of the struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat to win over the mass of the peasantry, the bourgeoisie was defeated while the proletariat triumphed and rallied about itself the poor and middle peasant masses, leading them towards socialism.

CHAPTER V
THE RADICAL TURN
OF THE MASS OF THE PEASANTRY
TO THE PATH OF MASS COLLECTIVISATION

1. THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE
DRAWING NEAR TO ITS GREAT TRANSFORMATION

The Party's entire work in the countryside was concentrated on organising the mass of poor and middle peasants for an all-out effort to boost agricultural production and reorganise agriculture on socialist lines. The attention of all public forces of town and country was focussed on the efforts to resolve the key agricultural production problems. The first step towards solution of these problems was the preparation for the spring sowing campaign. The Party regarded the carrying out of this campaign as crucial for the country's economic development. Indeed, the preparation for the 1929 spring sowing campaign was carried on in a resolute and intensive way throughout the country. Wide-scale organisational work was conducted among the mass of the peasantry. During the preparation for and conduct of the sowing campaign a number of new forms of mass organisational work emerged in the countryside.

The valuable experience gained in promoting measures to improve farming practices in the North Caucasus was spread to all other agricultural areas of the Soviet Union. Such mass measures as the introduction of sowing plans, the agrominimum, production conferences, the appointment of functionaries to supervise agricultural measures, conferences of poor peasants, congresses and conferences to discuss ways to increase crop yields and other measures proved their worth as highly effective ways of propagandising collectivisation and stimulating poor and middle peasants to fulfil the tasks facing them.

In the winter of 1929 the Party organisations and government agencies launched large-scale campaigns in the villages to draw up sowing plans and arrange their discussion among the broad masses

of peasants. These plans as a concrete measure accessible for the mass of the poor and middle peasants were of exceptional importance in organising and running the spring-sowing campaign. In 1929, for the first time since the establishment of Soviet power, a sowing campaign was run on a planned basis, which was a major achievement in the work of promoting measures to improve farming practices.

Along with the centralised planning of sowing campaigns, many collective farms began to draw up their own production plans, which were a new form of the participation of collective farmers in the direct organisation of collective work and collective farm production. The participation of the peasant masses themselves in the drawing up and discussion of plans, apart from stimulating their political and economic activity, also involved them in the system of organisation and planning of agricultural production.

One form of direct participation of peasant masses in the planning and organisation of agricultural production was production conferences which originally were convened by rural Soviets and land societies and later held on a mass scale by collective farms. The significance of these new forms of organisational, economic and political work in the countryside lay in the fact that through the medium of such forms the Communist Party was able to stimulate the political and economic activity of the mass of the working peasants, strengthen the vanguard forces in the countryside, which helped to carry out successfully the spring sowing campaign.

To give an idea of how deeply the understanding of the need to boost agricultural production and remodel it along socialist lines had penetrated the minds of the peasant masses, it is enough to point to the tremendous energy displayed by the poor and middle peasants during the preparations for and the carrying out of the spring sowing campaign. According to incomplete statistics, the carrying out of the agrominimum project in the Russian Federation by the conclusion of the spring sowing campaign of 1929 involved nearly 125,000 villages or 60 per cent of the total. By the autumn of that year the percentage had risen to 80-90 per cent.

Thus, the mass of the poor and middle peasants took part in the discussion and carrying out of the agrominimum project. In this period the village meetings of peasants in the Russian Federation approved a total of some 300,000 decisions on carrying out the agrominimum project.

The rural production conferences in the Russian Federation embraced over 100,000 villages with a total number of their per-

manent participants reaching two million. Apart from the village production conferences a great organising role was played by district, area and territorial production conferences. These conferences also involved a vast number of peasant activists. For instance, during the 1929 spring sowing campaign alone over 5,000 such conferences were held in the major grain growing areas of the Russian Federation.

In the Middle Volga Territory over 72,000 peasants took part in the district, area and territorial production conferences. In the same period 470 various courses were organised which were taken by 30,000 peasant activists. A total of 4,700 agricultural study groups operated in the countryside. A total of over 25,000 lectures were delivered to peasants. Some 400,000 copies of booklets and leaflets on agricultural subjects were published and distributed among the peasants. In the Lower Volga Territory, the production conferences on the carrying out of the agrominimum project and sowing plans gathered nearly one million poor and middle peasants. Over 220,000 peasants took various agricultural courses and over one million copies of books, booklets and leaflets on agriculture were distributed among these peasants.

A vast army of agricultural agents came to the countryside, sent by land societies to exercise control over the fulfilment of agricultural plans. In the Middle Volga Territory there were more than 40,000 such officials, in the North Caucasus—32,000 and in the Lower Volga Territory—over 12,000. These figures clearly show the vast scope of the mass political work in the countryside and the scale of the organisational work carried on by the rural Party organisations among the peasant masses.

The Party organisations, apart from being the organisers of these new forms of mass political work, also exercised daily guidance of this work.

The main distinctive feature of the 1929 spring sowing campaign was the fact that for the first time urban workers assisted the peasants in the preparing for and carrying out of the campaign. The numerous worker teams, which were sent to the countryside for one and a half or two months brought all the necessary implements and materials. Members of these teams had their jobs kept for them and continued to receive their wages. Their prime task was to organise repair of the agricultural machinery and implements, set up and equip repair shops for the peasants and train repair workers from among the poor and middle peasants.

As early as the beginning of 1929 hundreds of workers from major industrial centres arrived in the countryside. From Moscow

and Leningrad alone over 23,000 industrial workers organised into teams arrived in the major grain growing areas. According to the data furnished by the trade unions 5,273 teams with a total membership of 40,479 men arrived in the countryside to help the peasants carry out the sowing campaign. The Middle and Lower Volga Territories received 30 teams each from Moscow and Leningrad. The North Caucasian Territory received 50 teams. In addition the major industrial enterprises of these territories sent scores more of their own worker teams. For instance, the towns of the Middle Volga Territory sent 208 teams to the countryside to help carry out the spring sowing campaign. The towns of the North Caucasus sent over 1,000 teams and the towns of the Lower Volga Territory—193 teams.

During the winter and spring of 1929 teams from Moscow repaired over 40,000 various agricultural machines and implements belonging to poor and middle peasants. It is also notable that repair work was usually done free of charge. According to far from complete figures, in 1929 alone the worker teams performed a total of 11,678,300 rubles' worth of repair work on peasant-owned farming machinery and implements. They organised hundreds of shops for the repair of peasant-owned machinery and implements and trained thousands of peasants, predominantly agricultural labourers and poor peasants, in various trades.

These facts show not only the size of the material and economic assistance given by the working class to the working peasants, but also the strength and indestructibility of the alliance between the two friendly classes. The peasants greatly appreciated what the worker teams did for them. We may quote here a few documents which recorded the decisions passed by the general meetings of peasants in the Lower and Middle Volga territories: "We have assured the workers and they assured us that given our combined efforts in the spirit of friendship we shall strengthen the union between town and country and thus fulfil Lenin's behests", "We say: the sending of worker teams to the villages is cementing the alliance of the workers and peasants", "We know now that to march in step with you workers means to consolidate the Soviet system".¹

The worker teams exerted tremendous influence on the entire social and political life in the countryside. Their greatest accomplishment was that they rallied around themselves the poor and middle

¹ CSAOR, f. 5451, op. 13, d. 94, l. 32-33.

peasants, thereby dealing a crushing blow to the kulaks' influence. In mobilising the peasant masses to fulfil production tasks the worker teams at the same time carried on large-scale political work among the peasants, helped to organise collective farms, propagated new advanced methods of organising collective work and launched many rationalisation measures.

The political and economic activity of the mass of the working peasants, which increased thanks to the assistance they received from the working class, was a vital precondition for mass socialist emulation and shock-work movements in the countryside. This new and unprecedented form of socialist education of the working peasants assumed considerable proportions during the 1929 spring sowing campaign. In the Russian Federation, for instance, nearly twelve per cent of the villages were involved in emulation.

The emulation between regions, territories, areas and villages developed on a wide scale. Admittedly it was accompanied by a good deal of ballyhoo, but even so this new beginning had a tremendous educative impact. By expanding socialist emulation in the countryside the Communist Party was developing new social relationships in Soviet agriculture, and fostered a new attitude to work among the peasants.

The efficient carrying out of the 1929 spring sowing campaign was an outstanding victory of the Communist Party, the working class and the working peasants. In the main grain growing areas the total sowing area, especially under crops, was considerably expanded. Compared with the 1928 level the sowing area increased by eleven per cent in the Middle Volga Territory, by ten per cent in the Lower Volga Territory and by 12.6 per cent in the North Caucasus. The main achievement, however, was the fact that these territories made impressive headway in collectivisation and co-operation among the peasant masses.

The measures taken to marshall the peasant masses in the drive to boost agricultural production as well as the extensive development of the new forms of putting the activity of the poor and middle peasants to proper use enabled the Communist Party to achieve remarkable success in developing the collectivisation of the peasants and promoting co-operation among them. The number of collective farms of all types in the first six months of 1929 nearly doubled in the Russian Federation to reach 39,530 as against 21,938 at the end of 1928.

It should be noted in this context that by that time considerable progress had been made in the collectivisation movement towards more efficient farming. The table provides good illustration of the

progress of the collectivisation movement in the first six months of 1929.

Types of collective farms	1928		by 1 July 1929	
	Absolute number	Per cent	Absolute number	Per cent
Communes	1,595	7	2,719	7
Artels	8,958	40	17,888	45
Associations for joint tilling of the land	11,385	53	18,923	48
Total	21,938	100	39,530	100

These figures illustrate not only the quantitative increase of all types of farms, but also the rapidity with which the agricultural artels proliferated by comparison to the other types of collective farms. In fact, the number of the artels grew far more rapidly than that of the communes and associations for joint tilling of the land taken together. This significant fact was a graphic distinguishing feature of the collectivisation movement in the first half of 1929, as compared with its development in 1928 when the progress of the collectivisation movement was mainly due to the increase in the number of the simplest type of collective farm, the associations for joint tilling of the land.

We should now turn our attention to another indicative fact, namely, the firm establishment of the leading role of the country's main grain growing areas in the collectivisation movement, areas which by then had reached the point where they were able to proceed to solid collectivisation of the peasants, the main stage in the socialist transformation of the countryside. It is noteworthy, however, that different grain growing areas showed different rates of progress in collectivisation. By now it was quite clear that the North Caucasus and the Lower and Middle Volga territories were far in advance. The degree of collectivisation in these three territories as of 1 April 1929 was as follows.¹

¹ CSAOR, f. 374, op. 9, d. 392, l. 101.

Territory	Number of collective farms	Number of peasant farms in them	Degree of collectivisation (per cent)
	thousand		
North Caucasus (without national districts)	9.0	149.5	12.0
The Middle Volga Territory (east of the Volga)	3.0	52.5	10.1
The Lower Volga Territory (without national districts)	3.3	55.4	8.0

Finally, further characteristics of the collectivisation movement were the increase of their publicly-owned assets and the enlargement of the collective farms. By 1 April 1929 the number of peasant farms in each collective farm had increased by an average of 7.5 farms and the average sowing area of each collective farm by 24.7 hectares. A major role in the growth and consolidation of the collective farms was played by the indivisible funds which had become more stable increasing through intra-collective farm accumulation.

Thus, the results of the first six months of 1929 showed that the vigorous work to boost agriculture was objectively developing into the insuppressible movement of the mass of the peasants for a radical transformation of agricultural production on a new, socialist basis. However, it was no more than a prelude to the mass collectivisation movement that later swept the entire country. Despite the steadily increasing tempo of collectivisation it still remained the movement of individual groups and sections of the more advanced part of the working peasants, and it would be an overstatement to call it a really mass collectivisation movement.

In the first place, at that stage of its development the movement predominantly concerned the agricultural labourers and the poor peasants. As for the bulk of the middle peasants, who accounted for 65 per cent of the whole peasantry, they were still displaying their characteristic vacillation, although there was a clear gravitation towards collectivisation among the more advanced politically aware section of the middle peasants.

Secondly, at that stage the simplest types of peasant associations, chiefly associations for the joint tilling of the land predominated in the collectivisation movement. The artels had not yet got into their full stride as a basic form of peasant association and was far from widespread in the collectivisation movement.

Lenin's doctrine on the socialist transformation of agriculture contains a clear indication that the elementary co-operative peasant associations—while being a necessary preliminary condition for the creation of a large-scale socialist agriculture—do not transform small-scale farming and for this reason are unable to eliminate the capitalist trends inherent in the very nature of small-scale peasant farming. The elimination of these trends is one of the key tasks of agricultural collectivisation. Until this task is fulfilled the construction of socialist society is impossible.

Nothing short of a transition to large-scale agriculture on a co-operative basis, that is, to the artel form of farming and its subsequent consolidation, can ensure the successful resolution of this major socio-economic problem. The mass collectivisation movement, as we shall see later, did not get properly under way until the second half of 1929 when instead of merely involving individual groups and sections of the peasantry as it had done before then it developed into a movement involving millions of working peasants, when the agricultural artels took preference over all other forms of association to become the predominant form in the collectivisation movement.

By implementing Lenin's co-operative plan the Communist Party prepared the ground for the peasants' transition to the highest stage of co-operative farming, that is, to the setting up of collective farms, which under Lenin's plan were radically to change the face of the Soviet countryside. The extensive drive for co-operative farming made it possible to expand the collectivisation movement and guarantee its powerful scope. But the decisive factor which accelerated mass collectivisation was the rapidly developing socialist industry. By relying on it the Soviet state built up vast material and financial resources to be used in remodelling agriculture on socialist lines.

2. THE PRINCIPAL GRAIN GROWING AREAS AS THE STRONGHOLDS OF TOTAL COLLECTIVISATION

The mass collectivisation of agriculture was successfully developing mainly in the country's major granaries: the North Caucasus, the Lower and Middle Volga territories and later spreading to the rest

of the country. *Just as the principal industrial cities, Leningrad and Moscow and some others, had been the strongholds of the socialist revolution in October 1917 so in 1929 the country's chief grain growing areas became the strongholds of a profound revolutionary transformation of the countryside.*

The question arises: how can one explain the fact that of all the grain growing areas only the North Caucasus and the Lower and Middle Volga territories took the lead in the collectivisation movement and why were these three areas later put in Group I in collectivisation teams?

Before suggesting an answer we should note that the rich diversity of socio-economic conditions caused the collectivisation process to advance at different rates in different areas. This was true not only of the country as a whole but also of the grain growing areas themselves. These areas had striking variety of economic forms of the collectivisation movement, forms which developed at different rates. Indeed, the map of the location of collective farms at the time gives an extremely motley picture both in terms of the deployment of the collective farms and in terms of their organisational and economic structure. In some areas the more elementary forms of collectivisation predominated while in others extremely complex types of collective farms were being set up. In some areas collectivisation advanced at a rapid pace while in others it made no headway at all. Also, collective farms came in all sizes: side by side with large collective farms there were minuscule ones which sometimes differed but little from peasant farms in the higher groups. Finally, the membership of some collective farms consisted mainly of poor peasants and agricultural labourers while others were dominated by middle and even well-off peasants.

So, as we have seen, the situation was very complicated and the practice of collectivisation posed a lot of intricate questions which demand an explanation. All the more so since they are of great interest from the historical, theoretical and especially practical standpoints. For correct answers to these questions it is necessary, above all, to examine the full diversity of the natural and historical conditions, the socio-economic relations and the specific features of the agricultural system which had taken shape in the course of history in each of the grain growing areas. Only a comprehensive analysis of these phenomena will reveal the real factors which eventually converted the country's chief granaries into areas of the widest collectivisation and which left their imprint on the rates of collectivisation, on the wide diversity of types of collective farms, and on their social composition and development.

First of all, in these grain growing areas capitalist agriculture had by the time of the October Revolution of 1917 made the greatest progress, albeit to a widely varying extent, and the feudal survivals in these areas had been less of a brake on capitalist development in agriculture than they were elsewhere. Lenin described the Trans-Volga Area, the North Caucasus, the Urals and Siberia as areas of commercial agriculture. He wrote that in the agriculture of these areas "the growth of the productive forces and the development of capitalism proceeded far more rapidly than in the central provinces",¹ that the peasant bourgeoisie was developing in these areas with greater success since it had more freedom there.

Let us examine how this idea of Lenin's applied to the situation in the North Caucasus, which before the Revolution had advanced capitalist relations in its countryside. The class antagonisms and the exploitation of the poor in pre-revolutionary Cossack villages of the North Caucasus were made worse by the fact that the Cossacks enjoyed privileges setting them above the non-Cossack peasants. By granting these privileges the tsarist government sought to camouflage the process of class stratification among the Cossacks and to pass the class struggle off as hostility between the Cossacks and non-Cossacks. However, this only made the class contradictions more salient than ever.

A comparison of the statistics on the proportions of the Cossacks and the peasant non-Cossack rural population in the Don Region and the amount of land in their possession will give a good idea of this. Out of the 202,300 farms the Cossacks owned 93,400 or 46.2 per cent, the rest were owned by different categories of non-Cossack peasants. An average Cossack farm had 30.2 hectares of land whereas only 0.09 per cent of the Cossacks were landless. Most of the non-Cossack peasants were landless or had pitiful plots of land. What is more, 20 per cent of these peasants did not even have kitchen gardens and had to rent land from Cossacks either for cash payment or on the *métayer* basis. A similar situation prevailed in the Stavropol Gubernia and in the Kuban region.²

Bearing in mind these statistics in the North Caucasus before the October Revolution it is necessary to establish whether there was a direct connection between these relations and the development of the collectivisation movement which came later. The answer

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Agrarian Programme of Social-Democracy", *Collected Works*, Vol. 13, 1967, p. 241.

² See: *Kolkhoznoye stroitelstvo na Severnom Kavkaze v 1931 godu* (Collective-Farm Development in North Caucasus in 1931), Rostov-on-Don, 1932, pp. 17-19 (in Russian).

to that question can be supplied by the facts and data which best indicate that from its inception in the territory the collectivisation movement was headed by the working sections of the non-Cossack peasants, precisely those sections who before the Revolution had neither livestock nor land. For instance, the membership of the collective farms in the Kuban Area may be illustrated by the following figures (percentage):¹

Types of collective farms	Non-Cossack farms	Cossack farms
Communes	92.3	7.7
Artels	86.9	13.1
Associations for joint tilling of the land	69.5	30.5
Average	83.5	16.5

As the table indicates the working non-Cossack peasants and the poor Cossacks were the leading force in collectivisation.

By nationalising the land and abolishing old exploiter land relations the October Revolution radically changed the alignment of class forces in the countryside in favour of the peasants with little or no land. However, the provision of peasant households with land did not in itself eliminate the possibility of economic stratification of the peasantry. The well-off peasants and kulaks, who had retained their productive potential after the Revolution, began to recover their strength in the years of New Economic Policy, encouraged by a favourable market situation, embarking on the use of hired labour and renting land from poor and middle peasants.

Capitalist relations were preserved in these areas even in the post-revolutionary period, despite the profound changes made by the agrarian revolution and they continued to grow to a greater extent than elsewhere in the country. Here is an example which shows the scale of labour hire in the villages, the first sign of the existence of capitalist relations. According to the 1927 census the proportion of agricultural labourers' farms to the total of peasant farms engaged only in agriculture was as follows: about 9 per

¹ See: *Na mezhe velikoi perestroiki* (On the Border of a Great Reconstruction), Moscow, 1929, p. 21 (in Russian).

cent in the Middle Volga Territory, and about 11 per cent in the North Caucasus and in the Lower Volga Territory.

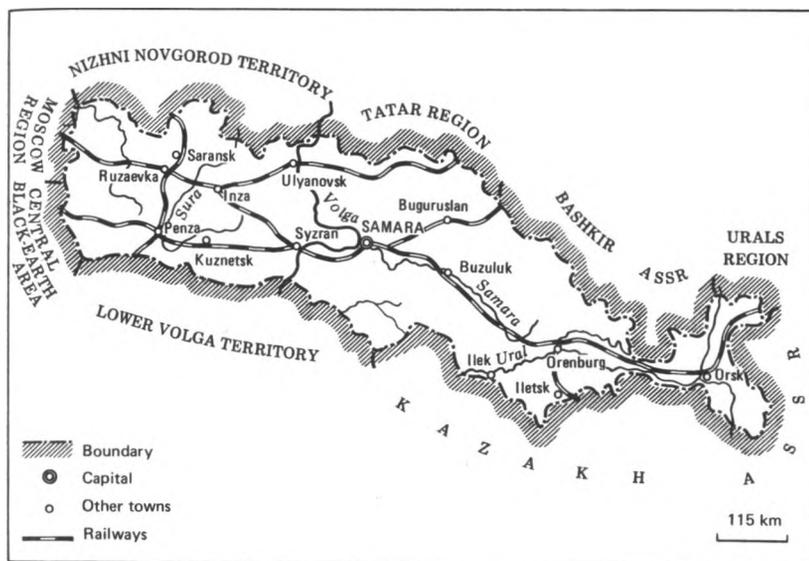
It is understandable therefore why the class struggle was particularly tense in the areas where capitalist farming had been most developed before the Revolution. This struggle reached a particularly high pitch of intensity in the North Caucasus, where class antagonism was complemented by contradictions between the Cossacks and the rest of the peasants, a phenomenon which persisted even after the Revolution to a certain extent. The class struggle was caused not only by the fact that the well-off Cossacks of yesterday were placed on the same footing in land use with the non-Cossack peasants and the poor Cossacks, it was also fuelled by the influence of the White emigrés. During the Civil War about 300,000 prosperous kulaks emigrated from the North Caucasus and they, naturally, did not lose hope of making a return.

The experience of the collectivisation movement showed that the new socialist production relations in agriculture developed fastest in those grain growing areas which had vast sowing areas and where the class stratification of the peasantry was well pronounced both before the Revolution and after it. Therefore, the collectivisation movement made greatest progress in those areas where market relations were best developed and class differentiation of the rural population was most clearly defined. Conversely, where agriculture was of a semi-subsistence character with less pronounced differentiation among the rural population, where there was a shortage of land, the collectivisation movement developed rather slowly and was far less successful.

It was no accident therefore that the Party's Central Committee in view of the wide diversity of historical, socio-economic and production conditions under which agriculture was developing put only the three major grain growing areas in Group I in the collectivisation terms: the North Caucasus (excepting national districts), the Lower Volga Territory (also excepting national districts), and the Middle Volga Territory (east of the Volga only). The rest of the grain growing areas were put in Group II.

Let us now consider the general historical and socio-economic features of these three areas which prompted their putting in Group I in terms of the rate of collectivisation.

One of these important conditions was, as mentioned above, the advanced state of capitalist relations in the agriculture of these areas before the Revolution, the more pronounced character of these relations in the Soviet period and the graphic class



stratification among the peasants. If we examine the differentiation among the peasants of these areas in terms of ownership of the means of production we will find that by November 1928 the situation in the North Caucasus was as follows: 33 per cent of all peasant farms owned a mere 3.3 per cent of all implements and machinery, 43.7 per cent of farms owned 34.3 per cent. Thus, 76.7 per cent of the peasant farms owned only 37.6 per cent of all agricultural implements and machinery. The remaining 23.3 per cent of the farms had 62.4 per cent of all implements and machinery. The top group of kulak farms which accounted for 5.9 per cent of all farms had over 30 per cent of all machinery and implements. These statistics give a clear picture of social relations in the agriculture of the North Caucasus where class differentiation among the peasants reached a high degree even after the Revolution.

A similar situation with regard to the distribution of the means of production among different class groups of the peasant population prevailed in the Middle Volga Territory¹ as well.

¹ Party Archive of the CC CPSU, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2507, l. 133; CSAOR, f. 5451, op. 2, d. 181, l. 117; *Nizhneye Povolzhye* (Lower Volga Territory), No. 1, 1930, p. 12.

The *second* highly favourable condition for collectivisation was the fact that these three areas had an enormous stock of free fertile land which provided tremendous scope for the development of agricultural productive forces.

However, while these areas had considerable land reserves vast areas of land were misused, the crop rotation systems were often neglected and many peasants had to travel long distances to reach their plots of land.

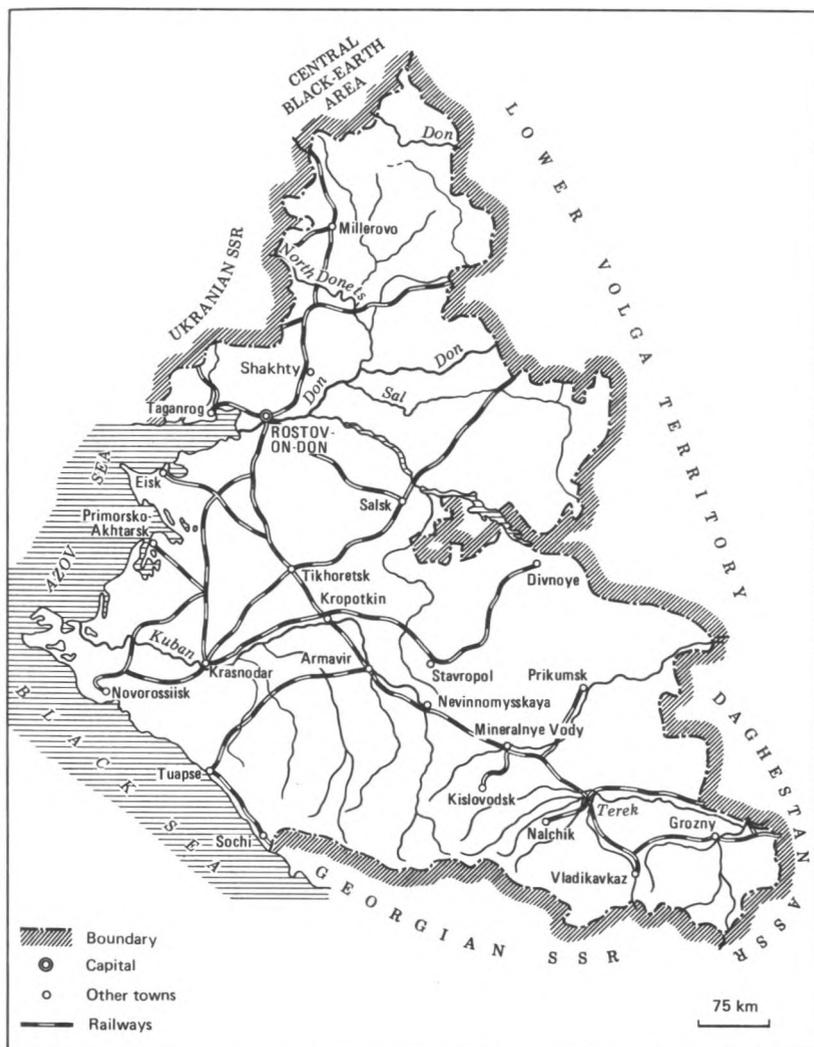
Not infrequently poor peasants did not even know where their plots were. Besides, strip farming was widely practiced and it often happened that plots of land wedged into others. All this was a bane on the life of the poor and middle peasants. Because of the remoteness of a lot of arable land from villages the percentage of its use was dwindling with every passing year and the area of fallow land increased respectively.

An extremely contradictory situation emerged: on the one hand, there was a vast amount of unused fertile land and, on the other, there was an acute scarcity of tilled land, caused by the meagre quantity and range of implements in possession of the peasants and the population frequently situated dozens of kilometres from the arable land. All this was the best argument for the peasant masses against small-scale individual farming through which it was impossible to develop the vast area of unused fertile land. The only solution for the peasants was to come together in collective farms.

This is the only explanation for the fact that an extensive movement arose among the poor and middle peasants at the time for re-settlement on undeveloped land and setting up collective farms there. And so, the enormous stocks of fertile land, the striving of the working peasants to develop this land, and the increased need for improving agricultural machinery and implements without which it would be impossible to open up all this land—all these factors stimulated the setting up of collective farms.

The *third* favourable condition for rapid collectivisation in these areas was their location in the steppe zone subject to drought. Drought was a regular occurrence in these areas causing tremendous damage to the peasants' fields.

Their own experience convinced the peasants that only by collective efforts would they be able to withstand the destructive forces of nature, something that was demonstrated by the work of the state farms. Despite the fact that the latter were located, as a rule, in areas subject to drought, they did not sustain



such enormous losses as did the small peasant farms. This circumstance also accelerated the passage of the peasants to large-scale collective farming, which more effectively combatted the destructive effects of natural calamities.

The *fourth* condition was the pronounced grain specialisation of their agriculture. Whereas the proportion of animal produce in the USSR's gross agricultural output was 32.2 per cent in 1927/28, it was just 24.2 per cent in these areas. But there was a positive side to this situation, since grain farming considerably accelerated collectivisation. Without doubt a grain growing collective farm of any type was easier to set up than a livestock breeding collective farm, for it would have the simplest form of economic and administrative organisations.

The situation in the areas growing industrial crops and especially in the areas of developed livestock breeding was different. Here the organisation of small peasant farms into collective farms called for a more extensive socialisation and more complex forms of collective farming and greater capital investments. That was the reason for the relatively slower advance of collectivisation in the areas with better developed livestock breeding than in the grain growing areas and the collective farms in these areas tended to be more complex in form and larger in size.

The *fifth* extremely important condition, which made these areas compare favourably with the rest of the grain growing areas, was their geographic situation, the closeness of the North Caucasus to Black Sea ports, and of the Lower and Middle Volga territories to Volga river ports, the proximity of these areas to major industrial centres and the existence of good communications with them. All this was evidence of the existence in these areas of an historically developed grain market, a major stimulant for boosting agricultural production.

This was the point on which the November 1928 Plenum of the Party's Central Committee emphasised in its resolution on the report submitted by the North Caucasian Territorial Party Committee. In the words of the resolution: "The exceptional significance of the North Caucasus on account of its favourable and economic conditions for agriculture and its closeness to railways and waterways provides broad opportunities for using this area in solving the grain problem of the country both from the standpoint of ensuring internal grain supplies and from the standpoint of expanding grain exports."¹ Similarly favourable opportunities for the development of agriculture existed in the Volga areas.

Finally, we should point to another favourable condition, namely, the communal form of land use, which facilitated collectiv-

¹ *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 4, p. 151.

isation and the socialisation of the peasants' lands. It may confidently be said that by the end of 1929 the local Party organisations and Soviets had gained total control of the land societies turning them into the levers of the transformation of the countryside on socialist lines.

The picture would not be complete, however, if we confined ourselves to an analysis of the objective conditions, and failed to account for the exceptional role played by the subjective factor in the acceleration of the socialist transformation of agriculture. We refer to the tremendous organising and leading role of the Communist Party and the Soviet government, who tirelessly paved the way for the working peasants towards socialism. The all-round and regular assistance the Party and the Soviet government generously provided to the working peasants ensured the decisive success scored in the socialist transformation of agriculture, chiefly in the country's principal granaries.

Thus, all these historical, socio-economic and production conditions of the development of agriculture provided the ground for the mass transition of the working peasants to collective farming. In equal measure they produced a situation in the North Caucasus, the Lower and Middle Volga territories, the three chief granaries, which allowed their putting in Group I in collectivisation terms.¹

The question arises: were there similar favourable conditions in other grain growing areas, in particular Siberia, the Urals or the Central Black Earth Area?

Naturally, to a varying extent there were. We shall not examine here the situation in the Central Black Earth Area as in many

¹ The Ukraine also scored impressive success in collectivisation. Although it was not put in Group I in terms of collectivisation rate, the level of production co-operation among the peasants of the Ukraine east of the Dnieper and the steppe zone of the republic was very high. This was due to the fact that objective conditions which had emerged in the course of history in the east-of-the-Dnieper and steppe areas of the Ukraine, like in the North Caucasus and in the Volga country, favoured the collectivisation movement. The collectivisation movement was at its most successful in the Nikolayev, Zaporozhye, Pervomaisk, Starobelsk, Mogilev and Lugansk areas. According to statistics supplied by the Ukrainian Collective Farm Centre, in 1929 70-100 per cent of the peasants in these areas united in associations for joint tilling of the land. The December 1930 Plenum of the Party's Central Committee was prompted by the tremendous success of the collectivisation movement in these areas to include them in Group I in collectivisation terms. Subsequently these areas were among the first in the country to carry out solid collectivisation by August 1931. (We mention this fact in footnote only because we are only concerned in passing with the collectivisation process in the Ukraine.)

respects conditions there were similar to those in the Middle Volga Territory, chiefly in its western part. As for the Urals and Siberia, in terms of their historical and socio-economic conditions they were similar to the North Caucasus and the Lower and Middle Volga territories. But for all the general similarity there were a number of specific differences as well. Thus, many areas of Siberia and the Urals, while possessing vast areas of free fertile land that could be used for grain growing had a fairly well developed livestock which farming usually demanded, a more complex process of collectivisation and incomparably greater capital investments. Furthermore, while blessed with favourable climatic conditions for agriculture these areas did not have a sufficiently closely situated grain market on account of their poor communications and remoteness from industrial centres. Finally, alongside the pronounced class differentiation among the peasant population there was a clearly-defined semi-subsistence type of small peasant farming with extremely low marketable output. This was the reason why Siberia, the Urals and the Central Black Earth Area were put in Group II in terms of the rate of collectivisation.

Thus, the experience of collectivisation movement showed that the new socialist production relations in Soviet agriculture were developing more successfully in those grain growing areas where vast tracts of land were available, where there was pronounced class stratification among the peasants and where commodity relations in agriculture were best developed. Conversely, in areas where agriculture was of the semi-subsistence type, where there was a land shortage and class differentiation among the peasant population was not clearly pronounced, collectivisation proceeded more slowly and had to contend with greater difficulties.

3. SOLID COLLECTIVISATION—A NEW STAGE IN THE COLLECTIVISATION MOVEMENT

In the latter half of 1929 new processes appeared in the collectivisation movement: millions of working peasants went over to large-scale socialist farming in numerous ways. The growth of the collectivisation movement was manifested in the setting up of larger collective farms, the evolution of elementary forms of association into higher ones, the enlargement of the smaller collective farms and the amalgamation of agricultural associations, etc. All this showed the heightened political and economic awareness of the peasants and their growing creative initiative which emerged

in the midst of the mass of the peasantry. Characteristically, their creative thought was increasingly moving towards finding ways to expand and accelerate the collectivisation movement.

The most pressing problems of the time included the identification of the correct and most efficient type of collective farm and the optimum size of collective farms. As early as March 1929 the Collective Farm Centre of the USSR worked out measures to set up large, *artel*-type collective farms in the country's major granaries which would demonstrate the great advantages offered by large socialist farms. It was planned to set up 147 such farms by the end of 1929 in the grain growing areas of the Russian Federation, but by mid-1929 the plan had been exceeded. Large collective farms had 727,862 hectares of socialised land, including 240,600 hectares of sowing area. Each member of a large collective farm had an average of 29.4 hectares of arable land, and 9.4 hectares under seed. Half the collective farms had between 2,000 and 4,000 hectares each, the other half—over 4,000 hectares.

The larger collective farms played a major role in promoting the collectivisation movement at the time. Thanks to tremendous organisational and economic assistance from the Party and the government the large collective farms began to forge ahead. The growth rate considerably exceeded the general growth rate of the collectivisation movement. In July 1929 an All-Russia conference of members of larger collective farms was held, which summed up experience gained on these farms.

The Central Committee of the Party and the Soviet government saw to it that collective farms were set up in an organised and planned way, sending them the best specialists and giving them material and technical assistance.

It is necessary to note the importance of large collective farms in setting the middle peasants on the path to collectivisation. Watching the economic activities of smaller collective farms, many middle peasants were doubtful of their ability to survive. But when these small collective farms merged to form larger farms and began to use tractors, complicated agricultural machinery and fertilisers, the middle peasants could no longer ignore the collectivisation movement. Seeing for themselves the great advantages of large-scale socialised farming, they took the road of collectivisation. Lenin's prediction came true. He had written that "the middle peasant cannot immediately accept socialism, because he clings firmly to what he is accustomed to; he is cautious about all innovations, subjects what he is offered to a factual, practical

test and does not decide to change his way of life until he is convinced that the change is necessary".¹

It is noteworthy that middle peasants, who brought their implements and livestock with them, prevailed in large collective farms. Thus, middle peasants made up more than 60 per cent of the members of large collective farms in the North Caucasian and Lower Volga territories. 116 of the large collective farms in these territories had 793 tractors at their disposal, and each farm possessed an average of 140 horses and 25 cows. These collective farms were really model socialist farms able to market maximum quantities of produce and to ensure a high income for their membership. The development of large collective farms thus largely determined the attitude of the middle peasants towards the collectivisation movement and was one of the important preconditions for solid collectivisation.

Large collective farms were usually established in two different ways—either by the development of various types of simpler co-operative associations into agricultural artels, or by the gradual merger of smaller collective farms. According to the reports of the collective farm agencies, the establishment of the vast majority of larger collective farms took place by one of these two methods. However, the first method was typical not only of the setting up of large collective farms in those days. It was at the same time quite characteristic of the collectivisation movement as a whole, which had by then entered a new stage in its development.

Simultaneously with the formation of large farms of the artel type the movement for the establishment of simpler co-operative associations was gaining momentum. The Party and the government attached great importance to these types of farms regarding them as a form of unification which directly showed the working peasant masses the way to the collective farm, this being the more complicated form of association. Therefore, even with mass collectivisation well under way, and the artels having come to the fore, it was necessary to take account of the simpler types of co-operative associations.

Taking consideration of this fact, the November 1929 Plenum of the CC CPSU(B), stated in its resolution: "The collectivisation movement, which is an inseparable part of Lenin's plan of co-operation and the highest form of co-operation, can develop

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Speeches on Gramophone Records", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 246.

successfully only by relying on the entire system of agricultural co-operation which is developing from co-operation in marketing and supplying operations and the simplest forms of production associations into a collectivisation movement.”¹

The convergence and coalescence of simple forms of agricultural production co-operatives and higher forms of association of peasant farms became evident in the second half of 1929. This convergence accelerated the extensive process of setting up agricultural artels, the main form of collectivisation. Whilst giving every possible support and encouragement to any forms of production co-operatives the Party and the government at the same time did enormous work to help organise farms of the artel type and amalgamate smaller collective farms which were already in existence.

An important role in this was played by associations of collective farms, which virtually became centres for exercising economic and organisational guidance of smaller collective farms. Such associations had emerged in 1927, but at that time they were a rather rare phenomenon. Their real importance only came to light in 1929, when the spontaneous collectivisation movement showed the necessity for amalgamating smaller collective farms and increasing the organisational and production assistance rendered them.

Supporting the initiative shown below, by the mass of collective farmers, the 16th Party Conference and especially the November 1929 Plenum of the Party, raised the problem of giving all possible assistance to the formation of agglomerations of collective farms. The resolution of the Plenum pointed out that “An important function is performed by the agglomerations of collective farms established on the initiative of the collective farms themselves. In the course of the collectivisation movement these agglomerations have fully demonstrated their practical value... They must become production centres and create the necessary material and technical prerequisites for the strengthening of small collective farms and persuasion of the mass of local peasant households to join these collective farms.”²

According to incomplete data, at that time there were 1,094 such agglomerations in the Russian Federation, which united about five thousand small collective farms of the artel type and a considerable number of associations for joint tilling of the land. In the North Caucasus, up to 64 per cent of all the collective farms

¹ *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 4, p. 352.

² *ibid.*, p. 349.

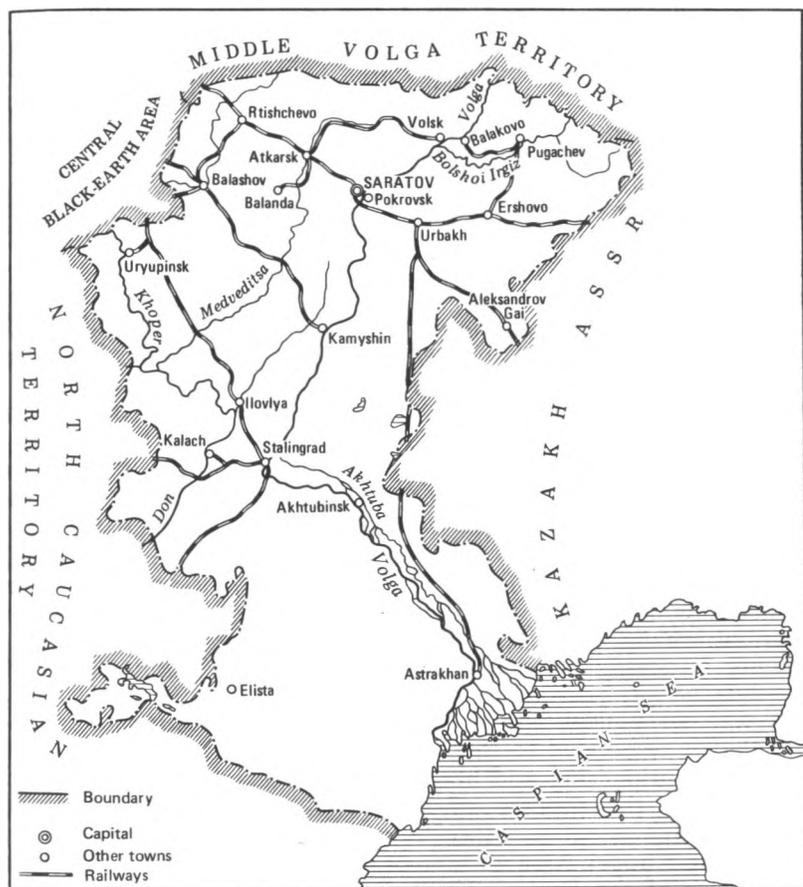
were united in 351 agglomerations; in the Middle Volga Territory 120 such agglomerations included 2,069 collective farms and associations for joint tilling of land, while in the Lower Volga Territory smaller collective farms formed 135 agglomerations. These agglomerations rendered organisational and economic assistance to collective farms and associations for joint tilling of the land and extended their influence to individual farmers, persuading many of them to join collective farms.

The main task of these agglomerations was to create a common material and technical base for the small collective farms united in them and to concentrate all available agricultural machinery, credit and processing shops in a single, sufficiently large centre. The unification of small collective farms and the simpler co-operative production associations made it possible to use material and technical resources in the most efficient way in order to advance the collective farming and expand and strengthen the collectivisation movement. Somewhat later machine and tractor stations were set up at the central collective farms of the agglomerations, which were industrial bases for the government guidance of and organisational and economic assistance to collective farms.

The drive for solid collectivisation, which spread extensively in some of the grain growing areas of the country, clearly showed that the collectivisation movement had reached a turning point. Consider the following facts attesting to the scale of the movement: according to incomplete data, by the middle of 1929, the grain growing areas of the Russian Federation numbered 332 villages, which, to a man, had joined collective farms, and about as many had more than half of their households belonging to collective farms.

Data pertaining to some areas of the Russian Federation show that 37 villages in the Middle Volga Territory and 41 in the Lower Volga Territory had become solidly collectivised, and that 33 large Cossack villages in the North Caucasus were on the way to solid collectivisation.

Before long, solid collectivisation spread over entire districts. By the middle of 1929 twenty such districts had appeared in the Russian Federation. Upon recommendation from the respective territorial committees of the Party all of them were included in a specially compiled list of model districts of solid collectivisation. The villages and districts of solid collectivisation, together with the network of co-operative agricultural associations, formed the kernel of subsequent mass collectivisation, a process which developed with increasing speed.



The solid collectivisation of entire areas began with the collectivisation movement in the Khoper Area of the Lower Volga Territory. Having begun in this area, solid collectivisation then spread over the whole country. The collectivisation movement in the Khoper Area is a vivid example of the struggle of the peasant masses against the kulaks, for the socialist reconstruction of the countryside. After the 16th Party Conference, the Khoper Area Party Committee together with local Party, government

and land agencies worked out a five-year plan for agricultural development in the area envisaging the carrying out of solid collectivisation during the period. All Party organisations in the area discussed this plan, and fulfilling it was the main task in the struggle for a socialist countryside.

The enormous work of carrying out this plan distinctly revealed the direction of the collectivisation movement and its decisive forces. The poor peasants and the farm labourers supported Party organisations over the entire area, while a considerable part of middle peasants remained undecided. As for the kulaks, they mounted their struggle against the poor and tried in every possible way to win over the middle peasants. But a breakthrough was soon achieved. The counter-revolutionary struggle waged by the kulaks did not attract the middle peasant; on the contrary, it rather decisively pushed the latter to the side of the poor, who supported the Party's policy. This enabled Party organisations to extend the range of collectivisation and to direct the poor and the middle peasants into the mass collectivisation movement. The kulaks thus found themselves isolated while the poor peasants and the bulk of the middle peasants formed a united camp, acting under the leadership of the Party organisation. The tremendous swing of the popular movement itself prompted essential changes to be made in the area's five-year plan, making it possible to carry out solid collectivisation ahead of schedule.

It was an outstanding merit of the Khover Party organisation that it responded to the spontaneous upsurge of the peasant masses, by organising and heading it in the right direction, thus speeding up the process of collectivisation. In August 1929, after the area congress of collective farmers, which decided to declare the Khover Area an area of solid collectivisation, the Area Committee of the Party submitted the decision for approval by the Party's Territorial Committee and sent a delegation to the USSR Collective Farm Centre to obtain its approval of the decision as well. However, the drive for solid collectivisation astounded some executives in the Collective Farm Centre, who disclaimed even the five-year plan of the Khover Area as unrealistic. Instead of supporting the initiative of the poor and middle peasants in the Khover Area, the Collective Farm Centre dispatched a telegram to the Collective Farm Union of the Khover Area demanding that "the population's view of solid collectivisation be resolutely rejected". The Khover Area Party Committee was perfectly right when it stated in a return telegram that this instruction showed

that its authors failed to understand the nature of the new stage in the collectivisation movement.

The progress of collectivisation in the Khover Area provides a striking instance of how a movement, which spontaneously originated among farm labourers and poor peasants, grew to become a vast and organised movement of the bulk of peasantry, the poor and middle peasants, who struggled shoulder to shoulder against the kulaks.

Let us examine this period of the collectivisation movement in greater detail. The table below shows the rate of collectivisation in the area during four months of 1929¹:

	August	September	October	November
Percentage of collectivised peasant farms	15	30	55	80

On 30 September 1929 the Bureau of the Lower Volga Territorial Committee of the Party examined the question of solid collectivisation in the Khover Area. It approved the initiative of the local peasants and pointed to its great political importance. The Territorial Committee sent a team of its officers to the Khover Area to support the local Party organisation in its efforts to consolidate progress in collectivisation. The experience of the Khover Area was widely publicised in the press. Somewhat later, the Council of People's Commissars of Russian Federation passed a decision declaring the Khover Area a model area of solid collectivisation. It decided to establish in 1930 ten machine and tractor stations in the area with a total fleet of 440 tractors. Urban workers gave support to the peasants of the Khover Area. The Moscow Motor Works was the first to make an agreement on socialist emulation with the Khover Area, sent two hundred experienced organisers out of its personnel

¹ Data on collectivisation in the Khover Area are taken from the following sources: Party Archive of the CC CPSU, f. 17, op. 21, d. 3655, l. 2, 36, 42; Archive of the Collective Farm Centre of the USSR, op. 209, sv. 25, d. 90; *Pravda*, 29 December 1929; *Povolzhskaya Pravda*, 2 January 1930.

to the area and established the first Society for Assistance to Collectivisation, which acted as a patron.

Thus, in the second half of 1929 the collectivisation movement reached a new stage, the spread of solid collectivisation. From separate villages and districts, this process extended and expanded, involving entire areas and regions. The initiative of the peasant masses of the Koper Area, the first to raise the banner of solid collectivisation, soon spread over the whole country, and especially over the grain growing areas.

The process of collectivisation continued to gather speed everywhere. During the autumn sowing campaign of 1929, the number of collective farms in the main grain growing areas considerably increased. As a result, by October 1929, collectivisation in these areas had reached a high level as is shown by the following figures:

Territories	Level of collectivisation (all numbers in thousands)			Percentage of collectivised farms
	Number of peasant farms	Number of collective farms	Number of peasant farms in them	
North Caucasus (without national districts)	1,188.4	10.0	213.8	15.9
Middle Volga Territory (east of the Volga)	515	4.3	128.0	23.0
Lower Volga Territory (without national districts)	896.1	3.6	114.2	13.0

It is obvious that by 1929 the main grain growing areas of the country had already embarked on mass collectivisation and that the ultimate victory of collectivisation was near. Owing to this, Party organisations in the areas where collectivisation had made greatest progress could determine concrete dates for the completion of solid collectivisation in these areas.

In November 1929 the Bureau of the Party Committee of the North Caucasian Territory, after examining the prospects

of solid collectivisation in the territory, adopted the following decision: "Considering that the movement has assumed a mass character and brings about solid collectivisation on the scale of entire villages, and that the bulk of the membership of the new collective farms is now made up by middle peasants ... the Territorial Committee believes that the North Caucasus should embark on solid collectivisation which should be completed by the summer of 1931." The committee set up a special body, to guide the solid collectivisation campaign, which was headed by A. Andreyev, the Committee's secretary.

The plenum of the Middle Volga Territorial Party Committee, which took place in November 1929, discussed the results of the local collectivisation movement and passed a decision envisaging the completion of solid collectivisation by the spring of 1931. The plenum's decision read: "The successes of the collectivisation movement for the last year and, especially, the broad extent of the recent drive towards collective farms among the poor and middle peasants, set before the territorial Party organisation the task of completing the solid collectivisation of agriculture in the territory during the next one and a half years."¹

In December 1929, a plenum of the Lower Volga Territorial Party Committee passed a decision on carrying out solid collectivisation in the territory during 1930. "The scale of the collectivisation movement is so large, and its motive forces are so powerful," the decision read, "that the Lower Volga Territory has already become a territory of solid collectivisation." Therefore, "the programme of collectivisation drawn up by the Bureau of the Territorial Committee, namely, the completion of the collectivisation of all poor and middle peasants by the end of this year" was approved.²

The dates set for the completion of solid collectivisation in the foremost grain growing areas of the country were undoubtedly realistic. They were subsequently approved by a decision of the Party Central Committee of 5 January 1930. Thus, the two years which had passed since the 15th Party Congress were marked by considerable achievements of the Party in its efforts to rally the bulk of the peasantry under the leadership of the working class. In strengthening the key positions of Soviet power, accelera-

¹ Party Archive of the CC CPSU, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2504, l. 106.

² *Izvestiya Nizhne-Volzhskogo kraikoma VKP (b)* [Bulletin of the Lower Volga Territorial Committee of the CPSU (B)], 1929, Nos. 17-18, p. 13 (in Russian).

ting the pace of industrialisation, and at the same time resolutely eliminating capitalist elements in town and country alike, the Party could direct the government's policy towards the consolidation and expansion of the socialist sector in agriculture. This policy created conditions for mass collectivisation and the development of the productive forces of the rural areas. The successful fulfilment of the historic tasks put forward by the 15th Congress was a sure guarantee of the subsequent achievements of the Party and Soviet people.

CHAPTER VI

DEVELOPMENT OF A TRULY SOCIALIST REVOLUTION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

1. GREAT REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IN THE LIVES OF THE PEASANT MASSES

From the second half of 1929 onwards the collective-farm movement among the peasant masses became widespread. Revolutionary change was radically altering the centuries-old way of life in the countryside and the Soviet peasantry was rallying round the socialist banner of the working class. The strength of the movement lay in the great historic change which had taken place within the peasantry itself, a change that was quite ripe by that time and took the form of this widespread mighty and unconquerable collective-farm movement among the millions of poor and middle peasants.

The economic and political development of the Soviet state up to this point, the growth of the material and technical basis of its economy, the extensive introduction of the co-operative movement in agriculture, the favourable experience amassed by the well-established collective farms, the development of state farms, machine-and-tractor columns and hire stations—all this created favourable conditions for a mass collective-farm movement and switched the bulk of the peasantry to the collective-farm track. Whole villages, districts and even regions in the country's main grain growing areas joined the collective farms. This testified to the sharp turn in the lives of the middle peasants.

“Every revolution means a sharp turn in the lives of a vast number of people. Unless the time is ripe for such a turn, no real revolution can take place. And just as any turn in the life of an individual teaches him a great deal and brings rich experience and great emotional stress, so a revolution teaches an entire people very rich and valuable lessons in a short space of time.

“During a revolution, millions and tens of millions of people learn in a week more than they do in a year of ordinary,

somnolent life. For at the time of a sharp turn in the life of an entire people it becomes particularly clear what aims the various classes of the people are pursuing, what strength they possess, and what methods they use."¹

From the political point of view, the turn of millions of peasants to large-scale collective farming was just such a revolution, such a great upheaval. The collective-farm movement was an integral part of the Soviet people's effort to fulfil the five-year plan, industrialise the country and socialise its agriculture.

The November 1929 Plenum of the Party Central Committee summed up the results of the first year of the five-year plan and issued directives concerning the control figures for national economic development in 1929/30. The plan for the first year of the five-year period was overfulfilled to a considerable extent, especially in several major sectors of the economy. "*As a matter of fact,*" the Plenum stressed in its resolution, "production is accelerating at rates we could not even have dreamt of before and which really make it possible for us to turn the optimum variant of the five-year plan into a *minimum* variant."²

The considerable growth in leading sectors of the economy also caused radical progress in the socialist reconstruction of agriculture, expressed in the intensive development of collective farms through the poor and middle peasants' participation. The five-year targets for collectivising peasant farms were overfulfilled. The number of peasant farms drawn into collective farms grew from 445,000 in 1927/28 to 1,040,000 in 1928/29 (the five-year plan envisaged the collectivisation of 564,000 farms). The collective-farm sowing area increased from 1.4 million to 4.3 million hectares or by 206.7 per cent for the same period. Gross output increased by 240.5 per cent and commodity output by 278.3 per cent. The share of the collective farms in the total commodity output of agriculture grew from 1.4 per cent in 1927/28 to 4.9 per cent in 1928/29, including a rise from 4.5 to 12.9 per cent in grain production.

An examination of the major success achieved in building new state farms is essential for an understanding of the speed with which the entire collectivised sector in agriculture developed during that period: the share of the gross yield of grain in the collectivised sector grew from 2.5 to 5.8 per cent during the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Lessons of the Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, 1964, p. 225.

² *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 4, pp. 325-26.

year and the share of the marketable grain—from 12.2 to 21 per cent. This made it possible for the state to do away with the shortage of grain and create a reserve of some 100 million poods. The Party Central Committee Plenum assessed the results achieved in the socialist reconstruction of agriculture during the first year of the five-year plan and stated that “the USSR has entered the period of the full-scale socialist reconstruction of the countryside and the building of large-scale socialist agriculture”.¹

The Party’s major success in developing socialist agriculture marked the failure of the false Trotskyite ideas about the inability of the working class to lead the peasant masses towards socialist construction. It also testified to the untenability of the anti-Leninist theory of the Right-wing capitulators, who prophesied that the peasants would not join the collective farms, that the development of the latter would lead to the peasantry’s estrangement from working class, that the attack on the capitalist elements in the countryside would leave the country without bread, etc.

The enemies of the Party and the Soviet state had miscalculated badly when they planned to disrupt the alliance of the working class and the peasantry so as to frustrate Lenin’s plan of building socialism in the country. The collective-farm movement, which the Soviet peasants mounted under the guidance of the working class led by the Communist Party, swept away all these theories and shattered the enemies’ treacherous plans.

The collectivisation of peasant farms under the Party’s leadership gradually became well-organised and systematic. A series of new forms of economic organisation were developed and the direction and motive forces of the great revolutionary change were determined. “Summing up the results of collective-farm construction,” the resolution of the November Plenum said, “we should note a sharp rise in the number of peasant farms embraced by collectivisation, the implementation of new organisational forms and methods of collectivisation, particularly those based on the experience of the machine-and-tractor stations; the building of big collective farms and strengthening of their role; whole villages joining collective farms; and total collectivisation in some districts and areas. *The collective-farm movement is already setting individual regions the task of total collectivisation.*”²

This confronted the Party with new complicated problems requiring immediate solution. Immense difficulties had arisen in

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions..., Vol. 4, p. 345.

² *ibid.* ..., (italics mine.—S. T.).

the course of the mass collective-farm movement and had to be rapidly disposed of. They included the low level of the collective farms' technical basis, the numerous alien elements in some collective farms, and the acute shortage of managers and agricultural specialists. The leadership of Party government and collective-farm bodies had to be reshaped in accordance with the large scale of the collective-farm movement.

In these conditions, as the resolution of the Plenum pointed out, "the task of the Party is, in every possible way and taking into account the complexity and variety of the ways in which tens of millions of peasant farms move to large-scale socialist agriculture, to develop the masses' initiative and independent action in collective-farm construction, while strengthening the Party's leadership of the collective-farm movement and developing new forms of the working class's links with and assistance to the bulk of the peasantry in reconstructing agriculture".¹

The Party Central Committee Plenum drew up a series of measures to overcome the difficulties and shortcomings in collective-farm construction. It approved the decision adopted by the Politburo of the Party Central Committee to set higher targets for machine and tractor building, to immediately start constructing two new tractor plants, each with a production capacity of 50 thousand caterpillar tractors a year, to expand chemical plants and those producing complex farm machinery, to start building power stations for socialist agriculture, etc.

Party and government organisations were required to ensure that the construction of these enterprises was rapidly completed, because the establishment of the material and technical basis for large-scale socialist agriculture and the fundamental technical reconstruction of agriculture hinged on them. The plans for the coming year included the establishment of 102 machine-and-tractor stations and the supply of 40,000 new tractors, which were to cultivate 1.5-2 million hectares of arable land. Capital investments in the collectivised sector were increased to 1.6 thousand million rubles as against the 0.6 thousand million rubles envisaged by the five-year plan.

At the same time, the Party Central Committee called the attention of Party organisations to the necessity of involving the peasants in financing this construction and of setting up a fund for the purchase of tractors abroad at the expense of collective farms and their members. To strengthen the leadership of the construction

¹ *ibid.*, p. 349.

of machine-and-tractor stations the CC Plenum approved the government's decision to set up a Tractor Centre as part of the Collective-Farm Centre, but with the rights of an autonomous body. An All-Union People's Commissariat for Agriculture was established by a decision of the Party Central Committee.

Especial attention was paid to the question of training personnel. Party, government and collective-farm bodies were to take prompt action to restructure the whole system of training personnel for the countryside such as agronomists, engineers, land surveyors, technicians, accountants and a huge army of ordinary workers. There were to be three channels for supplying the countryside with personnel: a) ever-growing assistance by sending personnel from the cities (the first action taken to implement this decision of the CC Plenum was the dispatch of 25,000 experienced industrial workers to the countryside); b) expansion of the network of agricultural colleges and of technical and specialised farming schools, and the utmost possible increase of the student body in them; c) organisation of a broad network of short-term courses to train workers in ordinary skills. A Central School of Organisers for Big Collective Farms was set up at the USSR Collective-Farm Center.

The Plenum urged ever broader participation in and leadership of the collective-farm movement by urban proletarian and rural proletarian and semi-proletarian elements, and pointed out the especial importance of organising poor peasants and farm hands in production co-operatives of the simplest kind. It characterised the methods used by class enemies to fight the collective farms and obliged Party organisations to ensure by their persistent and systematic work that the poor peasants and farm hands united as nuclei of the collective farms. Every effort had to be made to keep the kulaks off, immediately purge the collective farms of the kulak elements who had managed to get in, and launch a resolute struggle against sham collective farms, established to camouflage the kulak fight against the collective-farm movement.

It should be noted that before the November Plenum of the Party Central Committee there had been great confusion in local Party organisations concerning the attitude to be adopted towards the kulaks at the time of mass collectivisation. Thus, the Middle Volga Territorial Committee adopted the following resolution at its July 1929 Plenum: "Regarding the ousting of the kulaks' influence and the struggle against their subversive activities on the collective farms as a task of primary importance in the

near future, individual kulak elements may be admitted to such amalgamations.”¹

In fact, however, the kulaks agitated against the newly-established collective farms, to which it was not recommended to admit them, while they found the doors wide open to old, well-established collective farms, which they either destroyed from within or transformed into mere shams. The Lower Volga Territorial Committee of the Party issued similarly contradictory instructions. Although it was aware that kulaks had infiltrated the collective farms of the Balashov District and were disorganising them, the Bureau of the Party's Territorial Committee demanded “the expulsion of only those kulaks who failed to transfer all their means of production to be used as indivisible funds”²

The Party's Central Committee corrected these mistakes by proposing that the local Party organisations keep kulak elements away from collective farms and continue to keep them politically isolated. As requested by the Lower Volga Territorial Committee of the Party, the Politburo of the Party Central Committee set up a special committee led by Y. A. Yakovlev in the first half of December 1929 to study the problems posed by the new stage of the collective-farm movement. The leaders of the Territorial and Regional Party committees of the big grain growing areas as well as the secretaries of the Party organisations from fully collectivised areas were invited to take part in the committee's work.

The committee examined such issues as the rates and schedules of collectivisation, the material and technical basis for building collective farms, personnel, the organisation of farm management and production and the problem of the kulaks. It summarised the experience of total collectivisation in a few districts and worked out measures for further developing the collective-farm movement. The most important result of the committee's work was its unanimous conclusion that the kulaks should be eliminated as a class in the areas of total collectivisation and that the state should exert force against the kulaks by evicting them from the collectivised regions and depriving them of all rights to private ownership of the implements and means of production.

So 1929 went down in the history of the Soviet people's heroic struggle for socialism as the year of the great change

¹ Party Archive of the CC CPSU, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2504, l. 38-39.

² *ibid.*, d. 3656, l. 15.

on all the fronts of socialist construction, the year of socialism's resolute offensive against the capitalist elements in town and countryside and the year of heroic work and enormous progress in socialist industrialisation and collectivisation of agriculture. This change did not occur at one stroke or by itself. The Communist Party had made preparations for it over many years. By its enormous organisational and political work among the masses, by its uncompromising struggle against the numerous enemies of Leninism and by its stringent economy in everything, the Party had created the necessary political and economic conditions and accumulated the material resources and organisational experience so as to be ready at the right moment to mount a socialist offensive on a wide front against the capitalist elements in town and countryside and crown it with complete victory for socialism.

Only half a year after the XVI Party Conference, which adopted the first five-year plan, the Party could already register tangible progress in its fulfilment. This was chiefly due to the fact that the Communist Party's general policy enjoyed the universal support of the working class and the working peasantry. The Soviet people in their millions responded to the Party's appeal to fulfil the first five-year plan with a great upsurge of labour activity, with unprecedented enthusiasm and the mobilisation of all their forces.

There was a fundamental improvement in labour productivity. This was one of the most important achievements of that historic year, 1929. It was due to the Party's ability to awaken the Soviet people's enormous strength, creative initiative and energy and channel them into building socialism. The year was marked by the spread of socialist emulation and the shock-worker movement not only in industry, but also in agriculture and collective-farm construction.

The Party's second and principal achievement in socialist construction during the first year of the five-year plan was the considerable headway made in building up the major sectors of socialist industry. This occurred because the Party had largely solved the problem of internal accumulation for the capital construction of heavy industry. This, in turn, made it possible to speed up industrialisation and create the foundations for transforming the country into a top-ranking world power. The output of large-scale socialist industry increased by 23.7 per cent as against the planned 21.4 per cent, including an increase of 29.8 per cent as against 25.6 per cent in the output of the branches producing the means

of production. The capacity of electric power stations increased by 20.3 per cent as against the planned 14 per cent and the rail freight turnover increased by 21 per cent as against the planned 10 per cent.

And finally, decisive progress was made in the socialist transformation of agriculture. The great change in the countryside was marked by a revolution which led to a radical socialist alteration of the mode of agricultural production. This was the third important achievement of the Party, the Soviet government and the working people of Russia. Total collectivisation brought about basic changes in the social and economic life of the countryside and created the conditions to finally and completely eliminate the exploiting classes.

All this meant that the evolution of the collective-farm movement had exhausted its strength and created the conditions for a revolutionary leap from the old, capitalist to the new, socialist production relations in agriculture. These relations were the basis on which the kulaks could be eliminated as a class. This, in its turn, showed that the regrouping of class forces, which began after the 11th Party Congress, had culminated in complete victory for the alliance of the working class and working peasants. Relying on the might of this alliance and the strengthened socialist elements in the national economy the Communist Party could now organise the powerful forces of socialism and launch a full-scale offensive against the capitalist elements in town and countryside.

2. THE FIERCE STRUGGLE OF CLASS ENEMIES AGAINST COLLECTIVISATION

The collective-farm movement developed amidst the fiercest of class struggles, which became especially undisguised and acute in the second half of 1929. This was only natural since the growth of the collective farms was uprooting the kulaks from their last position—petty commodity production in agriculture. The socialist movement involving the peasant masses themselves was now the force resolutely completing the expropriation of the last capitalist class in the country. In their turn, the kulaks were well aware that the collective farms were their grave-diggers, and would bury forever bondage and the exploiters themselves. That is why the kulaks everywhere opposed collectivisation and stopped at nothing in their

struggle against it. All means, including arms, were used in an attempt to check the triumphant march of socialist change in the countryside and to retain their old status.

How did the kulaks wage their war against the collective farms?

In his analysis of the forms taken by the class struggle at different stages of the collective-farm movement, Mikhail Kalinin said: "In general, one can observe three stages in the development of the kulak struggle against the collective farms. The first stage belongs to the period when the idea of organising collective farms begins to grip the minds of peasants. At that point the kulaks conduct furious propaganda against the collective farms, spreading all sorts of lies about them to the effect that they represent 'serfdom'. The second stage belongs to the period when the collective farm is organised despite kulak propaganda. Then the kulak resorts to terrorism and arson. The third stage belongs to the period when the collective farm has grown strong and works well. Now the kulak appears to 'let mercy season justice' and himself rushes to join the collective farm to disintegrate it from within."¹

The first tactic of the kulak struggle against collectivisation was agitation against the collective farms. It took a variety of forms, but was always geared towards one aim—that of slandering the collective farms. The kulaks often used the church for this purpose. They entrenched themselves in church councils as clergymen and, playing on the religious feelings of peasant believers, poisoned their minds with anti-Soviet and anti-collective-farm agitation. In several districts there were numerous cases of such church councils putting up condemnatory lists of collective-farm activists on the walls of churches. Kulaks and sectarians set up underground circles for agitation against the Soviet system and the collective farms.

The second tactic of the kulak struggle consisted of terrorism against Communists, Komsomol members, government officials, village activists, and especially against the industrial workers who had come to work in the countryside. The frantic kulaks wreaked vengeance on those actively building collective farms and committed brutal murders. In the Middle Volga Territory, for instance, they committed 174 acts of terrorism within two months. These and many other facts meant that the kulaks and other counter-revolutionary elements had chosen the road of civil war in a bid to stop

¹ M. I. Kalinin, *Statji i rechi. 1919-1935* (Articles and Speeches. 1919-1935), Moscow, 1936, p. 325 (in Russian).

the collective-farm movement of the peasant masses by force of arms.

The third tactic of the struggle waged by the kulaks against the collective farms was sabotage, the undermining and destruction of collective-farm production and their economic basis. A most vivid instance of this was the mass slaughter of cattle. Kulaks in the Middle Volga Territory alone slaughtered 820,000 head of cattle in a short space of time. The productive forces of other agricultural branches were also destroyed. Kulaks demolished farm buildings, cut down orchards, destroyed farm machinery and implements and set fire to collectivised villages.

The fourth tactic of the kulaks' struggle against collectivisation was characterised by threats and provocations. Kulaks, former whiteguards and Socialist-Revolutionaries in the Kochkurovo District of the Mordovian Autonomous Republic set up a clandestine counter-revolutionary organisation, which actively opposed all measures connected with socialist construction in the countryside. This organisation proclaimed the slogan of the Constitutional-Democrats and Socialist-Revolutionaries as: "Long live Soviet power without the Communists!"

The fifth tactic of the enemy action against collectivisation was the wide use of intimidation and bribery. Kulaks tried to influence the more susceptible poor and middle peasants with bribes. They also made gifts of cattle, buildings, domestic utensils and grain to farm hands and poor and middle peasants and tried to become related to them by marriage.

And finally, though they did not abandon overt forms of struggle against collectivisation, the kulaks more and more frequently resorted to covert, camouflaged forms of struggle, which were the most dangerous of all. When they were convinced that collectivisation was making greater and greater progress, that the bulk of the peasantry firmly supported the Party's policy and that no force could stop this triumphant movement of the masses, the kulaks changed their tactics. They strove to join the movement by deceitful means and worm their way into collective farms in order to explode them from within and discredit them in the eyes of poor and middle peasants.

The appearance of some sham collective farms and instances of kulak infiltration of others resulted from the Right-wing opportunist practices of some co-operative-and-collective-farm bodies. The camouflaged opportunists and anti-Soviet elements on their staff frequently channelled government funds to support kulak holdings and sham collective farms.

All this meant that collective farms, as a socialist form of co-operation, were frequently used by class enemies as a safe place and a cover for achieving their own ends. So the creation of collective farms was only the first step in their establishment. The further development of large-scale collective farming wholly depended on efficient management. Everything hinged on who controlled the collective farms, who managed them and what content was put into this socialist form. So the removal of hostile elements and the organisational and economic consolidation of collective farms was one of the most important tasks facing Party and government organisations.

The practice of collective-farm construction has made it clear that only those collective farms whose poor and middle peasants were solidly united and whose leaders were true Bolsheviks consolidated rapidly and developed along socialist lines. Such farms carried weight with the working peasants and were good promoters of collective farming. But if kulaks infiltrated collective farms and took management into their hands, the farms fell into decay, the socialist form of collective farming soon acquired an anti-Soviet content and the collective farms became enterprises of a capitalist type.

Thus, as collective-farm construction progressed the kulaks changed their tactics in the struggle against collective farms. Ever more frequently they abandoned overt for covert struggle, but under no circumstances did they lay down their arms. Nor were they alone in their fight against collectivisation. Within the country they were supported by numerous class enemies that still survived—former landowners, capitalists, merchants, whiteguard officers, Socialist-Revolutionaries, counter-revolutionary clergymen and most of the old bourgeois specialists, who were hostile to Soviet power. The kulaks were inspired in their struggle against collective farms by their ideologists from the Trotsky and Bukharin camp.

All the bitterest enemies of Soviet power united to fight collectivisation and socialist construction in the Soviet Union. Suffice it to say that in 1930 and at the beginning of 1931, the state security organs uncovered and rendered harmless such major counter-revolutionary centres as the Industrial Party, The All-Union Bureau of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party (Mensheviks) and the kulak and S.-R. centre of the so-called Working Peasants' Party. All these counter-revolutionary organisations which had acted separately during the restoration period, drew closer together and formed a united front against socialist construction during the first five-year plan. The kulak and S.-R.

party was to play an important part in this struggle. It was to organise and lead kulak revolts. After the defeat of the Menshevik counter-revolutionary centre it came to light that the kulak and S.-R. party had undertaken to organise kulak revolts, supplying the insurgents with arms and provisions, to conduct organisational counter-revolutionary work among agricultural specialists and to commit acts of sabotage in different branches of agriculture.¹

The saboteurs from the kulak and S.-R. party wormed themselves into the land, planning and credit organisations and did all they could to undermine collective-farm construction and disrupt the financing and supply of machinery to collective and state farms and machine-and-tractor stations, always giving priority to individual and kulak farms. The enemies of Soviet power selected former landowners, capitalists and merchants for the staff of land organisations and stationed them so as to damage the collective-farm movement as much as possible.

At the time when the Party and the entire Soviet people were doing everything possible to fulfil the first five-year plan, to build socialist industrial enterprises and create collective and state farms and machine-and-tractor stations, foul traitors set out to sabotage the socialist projects. The enemy camp hoped to receive the support it lacked within the country from the imperialist states. In its turn the world bourgeoisie understood perfectly well that the rout of the kulaks would shatter their last hope of restoring the capitalist system in the USSR. The imperialists tried to involve the USSR in war. The British and French General Staffs drew up plans for a new intervention in the USSR which they intended to carry out in 1929-30. The US government continued policy of non-recognition of the USSR and invested thousands of millions of dollars to help Germany restore its powerful industry in preparation for aggression against the Soviet Union.

The bourgeois press started a campaign of slander against the socialist country, calling for a "crusade" against the USSR in order to liberate the "faithful" and "suffering", meaning the kulaks. Thus the imperialists hid their true aims, giving their spiteful campaign against the USSR a religious colouring and calling upon Pope Pius XI to head the campaign. They tried to give their aggressive, imperialist actions the appearance of a crusade. Their lackeys—all sorts of Right-wing socialists, Trotskyites, Mensheviks

¹ This merciless struggle of the class enemies against collective-farm organisers is very vividly and truthfully depicted in *Virgin Soil Upturned*, a novel by an outstanding Soviet writer Mikhail Sholokhov.

and S.-Rs—did not wish to lag behind their masters and joined the imperialist campaign against the USSR.

They pinned their hopes on the Bukharin-Rykov group, praising it to the skies in the bourgeois press. The well-known Menshevik Dalin, for example, wrote in *Sotsialistichesky Vestnik* (the Menshevik organ abroad): “The Right-wing opposition represents an enormous step forward for Menshevism or Social-Democracy and for that reason the Mensheviks will support it.” The S.-R. Kerensky wrote, adding to Dalin’s comments: “In their struggle against Leninism the Bukharinites must break the circle of dictatorship and openly admit that the experiment of establishing proletarian socialism in a peasant country has fallen through for good.” The notorious Ustryalov was the frankest of all in speaking about ideologist of the Right-wing opportunists. “As a matter of fact, when Bukharin speaks from the bottom of his heart, the non-Party fellow-travellers from the right can keep silent.”

All these expectations from the rabid enemies of Soviet power show that the imperialists and various other “socialists” were anxious for the victory of the Bukharin-Rykov group seeing it as a buttress for all the anti-Soviet forces within the country. But the imperialists never undertook the intended armed intervention for their aggressive plans failed ignominiously. The workers of the world protested wrathfully against the imperialist plot. The demonstrations and meetings in defence of the USSR held in many countries exposed the plans of the reactionary forces. The working class and peasantry of the USSR responded to the malicious attacks of the imperialists by uniting still more firmly around the Communist Party and the Soviet government.

The camp of the kulaks and other hostile forces proved to be immeasurably weaker than the consolidated alliance of the working class and peasantry. Supported by the mighty force of the alliance, the Communist Party firmly and consistently carried out the Lenin’s policy of industrialising the country and collectivising its agriculture. The Central Committee of the Party and the Soviet government took drastic measures to purge the land organisations of hostile elements and simultaneously replenished them with Bolshevik staff and specialists. Over 700 Communists and about one thousand agricultural specialists were sent to work in the land organisations at the end of 1929 and the beginning of 1930. Mobilising Communists for work in agriculture made it possible to rapidly strengthen the land organisations with reliable personnel.¹

¹ Party Archive of the CC CPSU, f. 17, op. 54, d. 36, l. 98.

Guided by the Party Central Committee's instructions, the local Party organisations started training personnel on large scale. The Middle Volga Territorial Committee of the Party decided to launch a territorial collective-farm and scientific farming campaign within half a year, planning to involve no less than 1,600,000 people, including 30 per cent of women; train at short-term courses 400,000 field-crop cultivators, 300,000 cattle breeders, 150,000 hemp and 100,000 fruit and vegetable growers. The organisation of the territorial campaign was the responsibility of territorial headquarters, while that of district campaigns was placed in the hands of headquarters at district Party committees.¹

The idea of organising the agricultural campaign was supported by the Lower Volga Territory, which emulated the Middle Volga Territory. The attendance at the courses here was to be no less than 700,000-800,000 people, 50,000 of whom were to be trained as agricultural, livestock and veterinary experts and low-level agronomists. The North Caucasus Territorial Committee of the Party conducted a month's campaign for collective-farm and scientific farming training. Courses were organised in all villages to train personnel for collective-farm production and 170,000 people were trained at different trades. The Party Territorial Committee sent 90 scientific farming promotion groups, 200 agronomists and senior students at agricultural colleges to the districts to direct the courses.

In addition to such short-term training of collective-farm personnel, there was a countrywide network of regular courses. They were attended by 221,123 students by the time of the 1930 spring sowing campaign. The number included 50,373 collective-farm chairmen, 42,423 tractor drivers, 42,760 accountants, 1,646 agronomists, 1,970 engineering personnel, 27,574 managers of different agricultural branches, 43,540 skilled workers (fitters, turners, etc.) and 8,887 cultural and educational workers.²

The Party Central Committee and the Soviet government took measures to reorganise and broaden the network of agricultural colleges and specialised secondary schools and to improve the whole system of training of young agricultural specialists. The result was a considerable expansion of the network of agricultural colleges and an increase in the worker and peasant contingent of the student body. The following table serves to illustrate the training of party-affiliated specialists for agriculture.³

¹ See: *Volzhskaya Kommuna*, 28 October 1930.

² Party Archive of the CC CPSU, f. 17, op. 54, d. 36, 1. 133.

³ *ibid.*, d. 42, 1. 183.

Educational establishments	1927/28			1928/29			1929/30		
	Faculties or departments	Student body	Teaching staff	Faculties or departments	Student body	Teaching staff	Faculties or departments	Student body	Teaching staff
Colleges	63	26,985	3,363	74	30,694	4,383	103	34,291	4,287
Technical schools	204	29,910	3,430	207	32,167	3,754	222	37,691	3,850
Vocational schools	357	26,756	2,631	373	32,567	3,043	393	39,900	3,393

These measures to reinforce the personnel of the land organisations and collective farms dealt a crushing blow at the counter-revolutionary elements who had tried to frustrate collectivisation. The problem of personnel for the socialist countryside was solved in a revolutionary way. Foiling the schemes of external and internal enemies and overcoming the difficulties of socialist construction, the Communist Party led the people towards the triumph of socialism in town and countryside.

The Right-wing opportunists and the kulaks were defeated because the socialist transformation of agriculture and the victory of the collective-farm system were objectively necessary. The success of the all-out socialist offensive was ensured by the Party's enormous organisational work, the leading role of the working class, the consolidation of its alliance with the peasantry and the fundamental changes in the peasants themselves.

3. THE INTERNATIONAL PRESS ON THE GREAT REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IN THE SOVIET COUNTRYSIDE

The foreign bourgeois press could not ignore the giant spread of the collective-farm movement and the outstanding events in the Soviet countryside in the second half of 1929. At the end of August 1929, the American newspaper *Chicago Daily News* printed a message from its Moscow correspondent James Farson to the effect that the world was accustomed to astounding news

from Soviet Russia, but that nothing could cause greater surprise or even shock than the marvellous growth of collective agriculture, which has developed with such speed that, if the present tempo be sustained, it could soon cause a decisive change in agricultural economy and maybe even in the Soviet Union's political situation. The correspondent went on to say that he had just returned from a trip to the Ukraine, stretching for a thousand miles, where he saw collective wheat growing as far as the eye could see, American tractors ploughing the soil, red-haired youths and girls loading sacks of grain, this veritable gold of Russia's fields, and Red caravans on their way to the elevators near the railways.

Walter Duranty of the *New York Times* reported from Moscow in August 1929 that the big harvest in Russia was helping the communist programme, that the peasants showed a growing interest in collective farming and expected good results. Referring to his interviews with Maurice Hindus, an American writer of Russian descent, author of the book *Broken Earth*, the correspondent gave a detailed account of the writer's impressions of his trip to his native village in Byelorussia and tour of Ukrainian villages. Maurice Hindus said that formerly there had been much talk about collective farming and that now it had become a reality. The correspondent on the whole agreed with this but concluded that it was still too early to say that collective farming was sure to be a success, although it was definitely there to stay and was greatly assisting in revolutions in peasant life, in the finest sense of the word.

Michael Farbman, Moscow correspondent for the British paper *The Daily Herald*, contributed four articles about his travels in the USSR to several issues of his paper in September 1929. He enthusiastically described the progress made by the collective farms and cited data about the revolution caused by the introduction of machinery into agriculture, both as regards the methods of field cultivation and in social life. The only drawback he saw was the great difficulty of satisfying the collective farms' colossal demand for machinery. Observing collective-farm construction in the Lower and Middle Volga territories and the Northern Caucasus he tried to establish how viable the collective farms were and to what extent the Soviet peasants were ready to meet their government halfway in its campaign to modernise and improve agriculture.

He said in a report published by the same paper in August 1929: "The origin of the *colhoz* movement can be traced to a

number of causes. The most important are the penetration into the villages of ideas of cooperation—the growing signs of inability among the peasants, especially the poor ones, to persevere in their present state—and the sudden awakening to the importance of a better technique of mechanical aids in agriculture.... The implications of a system of cooperation on such a scale are obvious—especially when one realises that nearly half of the peasant population, the ‘poor’ peasants, lacking even the most primitive means of production, lived under the constant menace of further impoverishment and ultimate proletarianisation....”¹ He stressed in another report, published in September: “Even going full speed in a modern motor-car on tolerable roads one sees for hours and hours not a single tree, not the slightest curve, hill or mountain—nothing but interminable, treeless, brownish-green fields. Not a dwelling or a living soul. Not a beast or man. But, suddenly, as by magic, the desert turns into a paradise—and you pass through a magnificent newly gathered harvest and enjoy the peculiar splendour of enormous tracts of freshly ploughed black soil.... Here you visualise in succession Russia’s past and her future. You begin to understand the paradox of the poverty and backwardness of a people in this most fertile desert. You realise clearly the extraordinary possibilities of modern agriculture on these endless plains....”

He remarks that collectivisation had opened extraordinary good prospects for the development of Russian agriculture: “When you enter a *colhoz* there is nothing to distinguish it from any other Russian village. But, once you approach its nerve-centre, the threshing of the grain, you get into a new world. The noise of the tractor supplying energy to the machine is strange and unusual on these patriarchal fields. But to me the wonder was not the machine, it was the peasants gathered round it.”

Further on, he wondered: “Are these the same people who for centuries were starving, and yet guarding their individual possessions with the grimmest determination? Now they seem to be content to pool their efforts and are proud of the mountain of grain, though it is impossible to distinguish one’s own from that of one’s neighbour.... Anyone who knows, or believes he knows, the psychology of the Russian peasants would readily deny the remotest possibility of such a change. To-day it dawns on one as a reality.... And I must add another admission. Talking to the

¹ Michael Farbman, “Farming in Russia”, *The Daily Herald*, 30 August 1929.

peasants and listening to their conversations and the speeches at their meetings, I often rubbed my eyes at their intelligence, clearness of aim and ability to express themselves..."¹

Of interest is the following passage from one of Farbman's articles: "From whatever angle one looks at the *colhoz* movement—whether as an elemental, spontaneous growth from below, a movement of the peasants to improve their position with the help of a higher technique, or a movement from above by the Government—it will be seen as a new and an important stage in the class struggle in the villages.... The initial success cannot be doubted.... The atmosphere in the villages is more friendly to the Government than at any moment during the last three or four years...."²

The German paper *Berliner Tageblatt* also wrote about the success of collective-farm construction in the USSR. In August and September 1929 it printed four articles by its Moscow correspondent, who described his impressions of a trip to the agricultural regions of the Soviet Union.

In his first article, he spoke about the activity and enthusiasm of the peasant masses, especially the poor. He wrote that the scope, even in the most remote areas, of the conflict of thought with the humdrum reality of the Russian village was astounding to a traveller. The scepticism with which Europe frequently ignored the experiment, which was long past its laboratory stage, and in which the Soviet state intended to invest a considerable amount of its strength, was out of place here.

Speaking of the difficulties of this profound process the correspondent emphasised that the achievements proved the viability of the new system and consequently the possibility of effecting the greatest economic change ever undertaken. The new attempt overshadowed even the socialisation of Russian industry.

He wrote in the second article about a collective farm in the south of Saratov district, close to the boundary of the newly-organised Lower Volga Territory equal in size to Germany. This farm was a striking example of what had been achieved by the socialist policy pursued in Russia by the ruling party straining its willpower and means. This farm had sprung up overnight a year previously and the whole village had joined it. There had

¹ Michael Farbman, "The Russian Peasant of To-day", *The Daily Herald*, 3 September 1929.

² Michael Farbman, "Class Issue in Russian Villages", *The Daily Herald*, 4 September 1929.

been no preliminary forms here, like there in other places. The members immediately went over from individual to socialist forms of farming.

The correspondent went on to say that the collective farm had 3,400 hectares of land and 1,070 members. When they still farmed the land individually, these people had tilled only 500 hectares of arable land the rest being meadows and pastures. The state had received 3,000 poods of grain from this village in 1928. Now that the land was being farmed collectively the farm hoped to give 100,000 poods of grain to the state and to towns.

The correspondent wrote that Europe had seen the old village as an object of curiosity, but that the collective-farm movement had changed that opinion. This development was obviously the reverse of the principle of stabilising peasant farms as free and independent units. The new village could not make a clean break with the old world, but it was influencing agriculture away from individual farms in a truly revolutionary manner. It was eliminating the scanty use of land by the old village, those thousands of tiny plots, by resolutely implementing socialised land use.

Developing the idea of communal land tenure, the correspondent wrote that formerly everybody had been astounded by the socialist colouring of the Russian village seen in the regular return of land to society. This tradition had been, perhaps, a kind of preparatory school for what was happening at the time of writing. The old world encouraged the development of the peasant's most individualistic notions, whereas the time had now come for a complete renunciation of property, which was at a far greater remove than the distance the old village had been from the purely capitalist system of ownership.

In a report dated 20 September 1929, the correspondent gave an account of his trip to the steppelands of Kirghizia and the Volga area. He said that he had attended a meeting in Saratov district, where the leader of the "Common Collective Cause" – the Collective-Farm Centre – spoke frankly and very truthfully. What a speech that had been! It had called to mind Lenin's time when nobody had been afraid to speak frankly. Such an open exchange of opinion and in such a simple way was enviable.

The correspondent spoke favourably about the peasants' mood and noted that the old Russian village was about to disappear. If Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky could have come back they would hardly have recognised their "eternal" muzhik and "wonderful" peasant. It was quite possible that he would forget himself

when he climbed up onto the seat of the miraculous tractor. It all depended on whether the Bolshevik state would be able to hold the stream after it had boldly destroyed the dam.

In his last article of 27 September, the correspondent of the *Berliner Tageblatt* spoke at length about the great role of economic levers like tractor columns, contracts and co-operation in spreading collectivisation. He wrote that the latest Party resolutions were quite definite in stating that the lower forms were needed only to pave the way to higher forms, to pure socialism, to communism. The scheme was swiftly becoming a reality. The picture of the Soviet agrarian economy of the future was developing remarkably rapidly, a planned economy with organised production, consumption and distribution, was already close at hand. At any rate, according to the law of economic logic, more or less purely socialist societies were already emerging from "innocent" co-operatives on Soviet soil.

The foreign press carried many similar articles on collective-farm construction in the USSR. All of them testified to the unquestionable greatest historic change in the modes of agricultural production prepared by the whole course of Soviet society's political and economic development.

Foreign historians have written many books and pamphlets on the history of collectivisation. The better known of them include: *Marx Against the Peasant* by David Mitrany, professor of Harvard University, *Die Landwirtschaft der Sowjetunion. 1917-1957* and *Das Agrarsystem der Sowjetunion* by Otto Schiller, *Communism and the Russian Peasant* by Herbert S. Dinerstein, *The Socialized Agriculture of the USSR. Plans and Performance* by Naum Jasny, scientific worker at the Washington Institute for the Study of the USSR, and others.¹

We shall not analyse all these writings since the Soviet press has already exposed the devices used by these researchers to falsify the facts. We shall only note that some other works by foreign authors contain the real facts and objective conclusions about the history of collectivisation in the USSR. The well-known American journalist Anna Louise Strong, for instance, visited the USSR in the period of collectivisation and truthfully described her personal impressions of the great process

¹ D. Mitrany, *Marx Against the Peasant*, The University of North Carolina Press, 1951; O. Schiller, *Die Landwirtschaft der Sowjetunion. 1917-1957*, Tübingen, 1957; O. Schiller, *Das Agrarsystem der Sowjetunion, Entwicklung Seiner Struktur und Produktion Leistung*, Tübingen, 1960; H. S. Dinerstein, *Communism and the Russian Peasant*, Glenkoe, 1955; N. Jasny, *The Socialized Agriculture of the USSR. Plans and Performance*, Stanford, Calif., 1949.

of the collective-farm movement in the Soviet countryside in her book about the Soviet Union (New York, 1956).

In reply to the lies and slander of the reactionary propaganda about the allegedly forced collectivisation in the USSR, she said: "This is untrue. I travelled the countryside those years and know what occurred.... I saw collectivization break like a storm on the Lower Volga in autumn of 1929. It was a revolution that made deeper changes than did the revolution of 1917, of which it was the ripened fruit. Farmhands and poor peasants took the initiative, hoping to better themselves by government aid. Kulaks fought the movement bitterly by all means up to arson and murder. The middle peasantry, the real backbone of farming, had been split between hope of becoming kulaks and the wish for machinery from the state. But now that the Five-Year Plan promised tractors, this great mass of peasants began moving by villages, townships and countries, into the collective farms."¹

The British public figure, M. Philips Price, who visited Russia before and after the Revolution, gave on the whole truthful estimate of the significance of the socialist changes in agriculture. He made an unbiassed analysis of the need for collectivisation in the countryside and stressed that the Bolsheviks had foreseen the inevitability of war with fascist Germany and hurried to boost Soviet economy so as to be able to repel the enemy. That was why Russia had to advance its technology and heavy industry. "If she was to have these industries, she must have more food. The peasants, therefore, must produce more, and farming must become more efficient with more machinery. Small peasant holdings could not carry out the change to higher production quickly enough, for time was pressing. So Stalin took the plunge...." Appraising the social and economic upheaval in the countryside, effected on the basis of collectivisation, Price said: "This was the second agrarian revolution which was more fundamental even than the revolution that had removed the landlords."²

It is evident that the revolutionary change in the countryside was highly progressive. Even Walter Hildebrandt, bourgeois ideologist, editor-in-chief of the West German handbook *Osteuropa*, had to admit the historic and economic necessity of collectivising the rural economy in the USSR. In his book *Die Sowjetunion. Macht und Krise* written in a spirit of hostility to the Soviet

¹ A. L. Strong, *The Stalin Era*, New York, 1956, pp. 35-36.

² M. Philips Price, *Russia Forty Years On*, London, 1961, pp. 80, 79.

socialist system, he said: "The marketability of agriculture had to be raised to the maximum because the economic development of the state was doomed to fail from the outset if the towns and cities and the planned new industrial districts were not well supplied. Furthermore, the countryside was to supply the people who would take up the hammer in place of the sickle. Who but peasants withdrawn from the land could move into the foundries and mines, the engineering plants and construction sites? And who else could make the material sacrifices to finance the giant projects of accelerated industrialisation if the state did not want to fall back on foreign capital and thus make the entire experiment dependent on the favour of foreign countries...."

Speaking of the revolutionary change in the countryside Hildebrandt had to admit its historic significance. "No one could expect Russia's peasants to accomplish in the brief span of five, ten or at most fifteen years what it took the lifetime of more than two generations in the advanced countries of Central and Western Europe to achieve, and for this the Russian peasants had to be taken in the tongs of a deep-cutting revolution.... It is one of the greatest social revolutions in human history accomplished in so short a time."¹

We have cited this evidence as a reminder to those bourgeois historians who show an interest in these bygone events that they should be impartial and truthful, and that their presentation should be scientific.

¹ Walter Hildebrandt, *Die Sowjetunion. Macht und Kreise*, Darmstadt, 1956, S. 88, 89, 91.

CHAPTER VII

THE PARTY PROCEEDS FROM THE POLICY OF RESTRICTING THE KULAK ELEMENTS TO THAT OF ELIMINATING THEM AS A CLASS

1. THE THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE NEW CLASS POLICY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The collective-farm movement had already involved the broad masses of the working peasants by the beginning of 1930 and had begun total collectivisation of whole villages, districts, areas and even individual regions and territories. This meant that the mass collective-farm movement had reached the highest stage of its development. Taking into account the new alignment of class forces in the countryside and the profound economic changes in agriculture, the Communist Party proceeded at the beginning of 1930 from its old policy of restricting and squeezing out the kulak elements to a new policy, the policy of eliminating them as a class on the basis of total collectivisation.

The Communist Party followed Lenin's directions to the effect that "Marxism requires of us a strictly exact and objectively verifiable analysis of the relations of classes and of the concrete features peculiar to each historical situation. The Bolsheviks have always tried to meet this requirement, which is absolutely essential for giving a scientific foundation to policy".¹

At all stages, the main task of the Communist Party's agrarian policy was to consistently develop the class struggle in the countryside, awaken the revolutionary initiative and self-awareness of the peasant masses, win them over to the side of the working class and by joint efforts to ensure victory in the struggle for power and socialism. Taking Lenin's analysis of the economic development of society as its basis, the Communist Party formulated the laws governing the class struggle in the countryside and determined how to conduct the socialist transformation of agriculture. It worked out the correct policy of establishing

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Letters on Tactics", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, 1964, p. 43.

relations between the working class and each stratum of the peasant population and consistently pursued it at every stage of the revolutionary struggle. A convincing example of the correctness of the Communist Party's class policy is the successful solution of one of the most complicated tasks of the socialist revolution—that of eliminating the kulaks as a class and removing the causes that gave rise to this exploiting class.

Defining how the socialist reconstruction of agriculture should be conducted, the classics of Marxism-Leninism scientifically substantiated the proposition that the elimination of the kulaks as the last bourgeois class in the countryside was a historically natural and inevitable measure of the socialist revolution, but that this could only be achieved at a later stage, in the course of socialist construction. Not only did the classics of Marxism-Leninism substantiate theoretically the historical necessity for the inevitability of eliminating the kulaks, they also indicated the ways and methods by which this difficult and complicated task could be accomplished. Engels favoured resolute revolutionary measures against the big landowners, but thought it possible to buy up their private property in the implements and means of production. However he made this possibility dependent on the concrete historical situation in a given country.

Lenin analysed this Marxist proposition in terms of Soviet Russia and came to the conclusion that because of the kulaks' savage struggle against Soviet power it was first necessary to suppress resolutely their counter-revolutionary actions and only then, given certain material, technical and social conditions, to proceed to the complete and final expropriation of the kulaks as a class. Referring to Engels' assumption that the victorious proletariat might avoid reprisals against the kulaks, Lenin said in his speech at the Eighth Party Congress: "In Russia, this assumption did not prove correct: we were, are, and will be in a state of open civil war with the kulaks."¹

This revolutionary approach in regard to the kulaks was based on the facts of history in the making, on a profound analysis of the economic and social conditions necessary for the development of this class. The kulaks represented capitalist enterprise in agriculture and lived on capital accumulated by exploiting the working peasants. In pre-revolutionary Russia this class represented a great economic and political force and was

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 159.

the most treacherous enemy of the working class and working peasantry. Although the economic positions of the kulaks were greatly weakened after the October Revolution, they still had the right to lease land and hire labour and continued to own a large amount of land, draft animals and farming implements for some time. But the main thing was that the prevailing petty-commodity peasant farming was a breeding ground for the kulaks.

The Russian kulaks had amassed great experience of political struggle against the revolutionary movement of the working class and working peasants. Their class interests were expressed and defended by the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois parties. In the period of preparing for and accomplishing the socialist revolution, during the Civil War, foreign military intervention and socialist construction, the kulaks acted as rabid enemies of the working people, aligning themselves with the foreign oppressors and all the counter-revolutionary forces within the country. "Everywhere the avaricious, bloated and bestial kulaks joined hands with the landowners and capitalists against the workers and against the poor generally. Everywhere the kulaks wreaked their vengeance on the working class with incredible ferocity. Everywhere they joined hands with *the foreign capitalists* against the workers of their own country."¹

Naturally, the Soviet government had to take drastic measures of prevention and suppression against the kulaks in order to stave off the threat to the revolutionary gains of the working masses. Lenin foresaw the inevitable aggravation of the kulaks' counter-revolutionary struggle after the victory of the proletariat over the capitalists and landowners. He said: "The revolutionary proletariat must therefore immediately begin the ideological and organisational preparation of the forces necessary to completely disarm this stratum and, simultaneously with the overthrow of the capitalists in industry, to deal this stratum a most determined, ruthless and smashing blow at the very first signs of resistance..."²

The Communist Party always looked upon the poor peasants as the main striking force in the struggle against the kulaks because their economic, social and political position made them align themselves directly with the urban proletariat and rally under its revolutionary banner. The urban proletariat, in its

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Forward to the Last Decisive Fight", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 55.

² V. I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft Theses on the Agrarian Question", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 159.

turn, organised and led them, guaranteeing victory in town and countryside. The Communist Party always paid special attention to organising of the rural proletarians and poor peasants as an independent political force for the defence of their class interests. Only these poverty-stricken strata of the rural population, vitally interested in the victory of proletarian dictatorship, could become the most loyal and reliable supporters of Soviet power and staunchly defend it against the kulaks and the village rich.

But it should be kept in mind that the organisation of the rural proletariat and poor strata as an independent class force involved enormous difficulties even under Soviet conditions. The extreme backwardness of the rural poor, their great dispersion, direct dependence on the exploiters, and the absence of their own organisational forces—all this increased the difficulties of creating an organised revolutionary force in the countryside and undoubtedly called for assistance from the urban proletariat.

The experience of the socialist revolution showed clearly that, in alliance with the working class and under its guidance, the poor peasants represented an enormous and invincible force. Relying on this force, Soviet power crushed the capitalists and landowners and dealt determined blows at kulaks' very first attempts at counter-revolution.

The first blow was dealt in the summer of 1918, when the kulaks joined the whiteguard gangs, capitalists and landowners in an attempt to overthrow Soviet power by force of arms. This revolutionary blow ended in considerable expropriation of the kulak class. The number of kulak farms decreased threefold and 50 million hectares of expropriated land was turned over to working peasants. A regrouping of class forces took place in the countryside during the fight against the kulaks, characterised by the still closer rallying of the poor peasants round the working class and by the middle peasants joining them. The result was a considerable broadening of the base for further consolidating working class's alliance with the masses of working peasants. All this made it possible for the Party to proceed to a new class policy in the countryside at the beginning of 1919, a policy proclaimed at the Eighth Party Congress. The policy essentially had a triple purpose: reliance on the rural poor, alliance with the middle peasants and struggle against the kulaks. The turn of the middle peasants towards supporting the Soviet government's measures represented an enormous victory for the Communist Party's policy.

The second blow was dealt at the kulaks in the spring of 1928. This time the middle peasants as well as the rural poor were active in the struggle against the kulaks. In reply to the counter-revolutionary action of the kulaks, who used the country's grain difficulties in an attempt to frustrate socialist construction, the Soviet government took emergency measures of revolutionary law against them, forcing them to give their surpluses to the state and abandon their plans of organising anti-Soviet activities. This blow ended in a new regrouping of class forces in the countryside, the consolidation of the alliance between the poor and middle peasants, the political isolation of the kulaks and a basic turn of the bulk of the peasants to the collective-farm movement.

The third and decisive blow was dealt at the kulaks in 1930. It ended in the rout of this last and most numerous exploiting class, the destruction of the old, capitalist production relations and the establishment of a new socio-economic system in the countryside. This revolution, which ended in the outstanding victory of the working classes, displayed the great and invincible force of Lenin's idea of the alliance between the working class and the working peasantry. As a result of this revolution new, socialist production relations became firmly established in agriculture—the largest and formerly the most backward sector of the national economy.

So the experience of socialist construction in the Soviet Union has shown that the elimination of the kulaks as the last and most numerous exploiting class was a historically natural and objectively inevitable measure of the socialist revolution. This revolutionary measure however could not have been achieved without a radical reorganisation of agriculture, that is, without rechannelling it towards socialist development. In the conditions prevailing in the USSR the solution of this problem was delayed and took a whole decade, during which the struggle against the kulaks did not abate.

This gives rise to the question: how do we explain the fact that the October Socialist Revolution expropriated the capitalists and landowners immediately, but could not do the same with the kulaks, who also belonged to the capitalist class?

The explanation lies in the special socio-economic conditions of the development of the countryside and the complex interweaving of class forces in it. We should also remember that the kulaks were a bourgeois class with deep economic and social roots in the very system of petty-commodity peasant farming,

which bred capitalist elements spontaneously, constantly and on a mass scale, a class that persisted after the triumph of the socialist revolution. That was why the victorious proletariat, which swept the capitalists and landowners from its revolutionary path, could by no means immediately expropriate the kulak class. "...The expropriation even of the big peasants (kulaks.—S.T.) can in no way be made an immediate task of the victorious proletariat, because the material and especially the technical conditions, as well as the social conditions, for the socialisation of such farms are still lacking."¹

The primary prerequisite for eliminating the kulaks as a class was a highly-developed socialist industry, capable of changing radically the whole social and economic structure of petty-commodity peasant farming, rebuilding it in a socialist way and thereby doing away once and for all with the economic foundation itself, which breeds and nurtures this exploiting class. It was only on the basis of industrial development that the working class could unite and rally round itself the bulk of the working peasants and lead them along the path of socialist development.

Lenin said during the transition to the New Economic Policy: "If you can give the peasant machines you will help him grow, and when you provide machines or electric power, tens or hundreds of thousands of small kulaks will be wiped out."² Consequently the elimination of the kulaks as a class is organically connected with the industrialisation of the country, the socialist transformation of its agriculture and the mass movement of the working peasants to join collective farms. This is essentially a single economic and political task, leading to the socialist reconstruction of agriculture and to the completion of the socialist transformation of the entire national economy.

Having provided a comprehensive theoretical substantiation of the historical inevitability and economic necessity of eliminating the kulaks as a class, Lenin, in the Political Report of the Central Committee to the 11th Party Congress in 1922, noted that the Party would have to fight the last and decisive battle "against Russian capitalism, against the capitalism that is growing out of the small-peasant economy, the capitalism that is fostered by the latter.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft Theses on the Agrarian Question", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 158.

² V. I. Lenin, "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 225.

Here we shall have a fight on our hands in the immediate future, and the date of it cannot be fixed exactly.”¹

2. THE ELIMINATION OF THE KULAKS AS A CLASS ON THE BASIS OF SOLID COLLECTIVISATION

Guided by Lenin's directives, the Communist Party correctly timed this last and decisive battle against Russian capitalism—the kulaks. It wisely chose the decisive moment for the radical socialist transformation in the village: when all the necessary political and economic conditions for this transformation had been prepared and when broad peasant masses had profoundly grasped the imperative need to switch to the building of a new, socialist life. Aware of their great strength and no longer content with the old ways, they launched a resolute drive to eliminate the last capitalist class—the kulaks in the Soviet Union.

We have already mentioned that the new class approach to the kulaks was first formulated in the documents of the Politburo committee set up to study issues of solid collectivisation. The conclusions it made after analysing the collective-farm movement and the class shifts that had by then taken shape in the Soviet Union, substantiated the new rural policy of the Party and revealed the historical, economic and social causes underlying the need to eliminate the kulaks as a class. The committee decided that, in the completely collectivised areas, it was high time to evict the kulaks from the areas of solid collectivisation and to deprive them of their instruments and means of production. In his speech at the 1st All-Union Conference of Marxist Students of Agrarian Questions on 27 December 1929, Stalin made use of the committee's conclusions to provide the theoretical substantiation of the Party's new class policy in the countryside, a policy of eliminating the kulaks as a class on the basis of solid collectivisation. This marked the socialism's full-scale offensive.

Naturally, the question arises whether the moment for the offensive was well chosen, whether the Party's new class policy was not premature.

Life has proved that the Party did not miscalculate in taking this responsible political step. Therefore Stalin was right when he said at the 16th Party Congress that the launching of the full-scale offensive at the end of 1929 was timely.

¹ V. I. Lenin, “Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 277.

“Yes, that moment had already arrived. Yes, the Party chose the right moment to move to the offensive along the whole front.”¹ The transition to this policy had been prepared by the Party’s preceding work and its tireless efforts to implement Lenin’s co-operative plan. A new, socialist base resting on the state and collective farms was set up in agriculture. Already in 1929 these farms were ahead of the kulaks in the production of marketable grain. Consequently the Party’s new policy in the countryside was based on the possibility of replacing the petty-commodity mode of production by large-scale socialist production.

The radical changes in the development of agriculture are best seen from the example of grain production during the two years preceding the mass collective-farm movement. While the kulak farms produced over 617 million poods of grain in 1927 and its marketed share (that consumed outside the countryside) amounted to 126 million poods, the state and collective farms produced only about 80 million poods, including some 36 million poods of marketable grain. Obviously at that time the state and collective farms were unable to replace kulak production. The situation was quite different at the end of 1929, by which time state and collective farms had become a serious economic and political force. Suffice it to say that in 1929 they had produced no less than 400 million poods of grain, including over 130 million poods of marketable grain. In 1930 the socialist sector provided 600 million poods of marketable grain.

The further co-existence of two opposite agricultural sectors—the capitalist and the socialist—had become impossible under the circumstances. What is more, the abolition of kulak farms had been started by the poor and middle peasants united in collective farms. On their own initiative, they took the best land away from the kulak and confiscated their machines, implements and draught animals to cultivate the collective-farm fields. Consequently the expropriation of the kulak farms in the areas of solid collectivisation was no longer mere administrative measure, but an integral part of the effort to continue mounting collective-farm construction.

The machine-and-tractor stations and tractor columns played an enormous role in the socialist transformation of agriculture. The renting of land and the hire of labour stopped in the places where they were in use.

¹ J. Stalin, “Political Report of the Central Committee to the Sixteenth Congress of the CPSU(B)”, *Works*, Vol. 12, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, 1956, p. 316.

As a rule, kulak plots of land in the villages and stanitsas of total collectivisation in the Northern Caucasus and in the Lower and Middle Volga areas were added to collective-farm land. But the intrusion of the peasant masses themselves into kulak private property did not stop at this. As collectivisation became more intensive the collective farms expropriated other means of production owned by the kulaks: draught animals, farm implements, machinery and industrial enterprises (flour mills, millet scourers, carding factories, forges, etc.).

Mass meetings of collective farmers in the areas of solid collectivisation adopted decisions to deprive the kulaks of their plots of land, to confiscate their draught animals, implements and machinery and to evict them from the collectivised villages. An illustration in point is the decision adopted by the collective farmers in the Balashov District of the Lower Volga Territory: "Although he has lost his sting, deprived of his means of production, the kulak remains a kulak; therefore we request that kulaks be evicted so that the poor and middle peasants may build their collective-farm economy without fear of vengeance from them."¹

So the policy of eliminating the kulaks as a class stemmed from deep economic and social causes and was the immediate result of the radical changes that had taken place in rural economy and the alignment of class forces in the countryside. Naturally, the kulaks, who were the last bourgeois class, furiously defended their last positions and absolutely refused to lay down their arms. Supported by the Bukharin-Rykov group, whose stand ultimately meant the restoration of capitalism, the kulaks and all the counter-revolutionary forces within the country put up the fiercest resistance to the mounting mass collective-farm movement. They resorted to the basest means and methods of struggle in order to prolong their existence and check socialist construction.

The transition to the policy of eliminating the kulaks as a class brilliantly confirmed the correctness of Marxist-Leninist science, which proved on the basis of the laws of society's economic development and the enormous historical experience of the class struggle, that *not a single exploiting class in the history of social development had ever given up its positions without a fight*. This has been tested and confirmed by socialist construction in the Soviet Union. Suffering from the kulaks' ferocity and treachery

¹ *Povolzhskaya Pravda*, 3 March 1930.

during the struggle for collectivisation, the poor and middle peasants unanimously demanded that the Soviet government enact a law on state coercion against the kulaks.

The decision on "The Rate of Collectivisation and State Measures to Assist Collective-Farm Development", which the Party's Central Committee adopted on 5 January 1930, was a most important landmark in the history of the collective-farm movement. *This historic decision officially proclaimed the Party's new class policy—a policy of eliminating the kulaks as a class on the basis of solid collectivisation.* Defining the ways to advance the collective-farm movement, the Central Committee proceeded from the fact that the rates of collectivisation laid down in the five-year plan had been fulfilled ahead of time and that the movement was involving ever broader masses of the working peasantry as it progressed.

Taking account of the new correlation of class forces in the countryside and the degree of the development of the collective-farm movement in different parts of the country the Central Committee of the Party divided all the regions and republics of the USSR into three groups with different rates of collectivisation. Accordingly, different schedules for completing collectivisation were set for different areas, depending on the diversity of conditions in them.

The *first group* included the principal grain growing districts—the Northern Caucasus and the Lower Volga (minus the national regions) and also the Middle Volga (the Left Bank)—where collectivisation was to be completed in the main by the spring of 1931. The Central Committee chose these areas for the first group of collectivisation because of the especially favourable production and socio-economic conditions that had arisen historically in the development of agriculture there. The Central Committee also took into consideration the fact that the Party organisations in these areas had been able to get ahead of the other districts in organising the poor peasants as an independent political force, winning over the middle peasants and creating a strong nucleus of village activists who had passed through a serious school of class struggle during the grain-purchasing campaigns and had considerable experience in fighting the kulaks. The Party consolidated these districts more than the others by sending cadres from the industrial centres and supplying more tractors and farm machines. As a result they later evolved into bases for the mass collective-farm movement.

The *second group* included the grain growing areas of the Ukraine, the Central Black Earth Area, Siberia, the Urals

and Kazakhstan—where the plan was to complete collectivisation in the main by the spring of 1932.

The *third group* included all the rest of the territories, regions and republics—the Moscow Region, the Transcaucasus, the Central Asian republics and other parts of the country, for which no time schedule for completing collectivisation was set.

The Central Committee's decision envisaged enormous organisational and material assistance to collective-farm construction. State loans to the collective farms were almost doubled for the year 1929/30—from 270 million to 500 million rubles. The construction of plants producing tractors, combines, complex agricultural machines and tractor-drawn implements was accelerated, and the output of farm machines at the old plants increased. The Central Committee pointed out that "Party organisations should lead and shape the collective-farm movement arising spontaneously from below so as to ensure the organisation of *truly collective production* in the collective farms and on that basis not only achieve full realisation of the planned expansion of the sowing area and increase in crops, but also make the present sowing campaign the starting point of a new advance in the collective-farm movement in accordance with the decision of the November Plenum of the Central Committee".¹

The Party condemned the damaging attitudes adopted by a number of workers who were oriented to the sole use of machines in the collective farms and ignored the conventional farm implements and draught animals, which resulted in the numerous cases of squandering implements and horses. The decision emphasised the exceedingly great importance, at that stage, of setting up horse-and-machine bases and tractor-and-horse bases on collective farms, as a transitional measure. At the same time the Central Committee of the Party demanded that the Party organisations act decisively to overcome the Right-wing opportunist attempts to check the development of the collective-farm movement because of a shortage of tractors and complex machinery. It also warned against "any attempts whatsoever to 'decree' the collective-farm movement from above, which might lead to the danger of substituting mock-collectivisation for real socialist emulation in the organisation of collective farms".²

¹ CPSU in *Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 4, p. 386.

² *ibid.*

The practical experience of the collective-farm movement suggested that the agricultural artel was the main form of organisation. Taking this into account the Central Committee instructed the USSR People's Commissariat for Agriculture to draw up the Model Rules for the agricultural artel as speedily as possible and with the broad participation of the collective-farm organisations. The Central Committee's decision of 5 January 1930, "On the Rate of Collectivisation and State Measures to Assist Collective-farm Development", was of great importance for ensuring the victory of the collective-farm system in the countryside. It was later approved by the 16th Congress of the Party. The collective-farm movement became a mighty avalanche, sweeping away kulak resistance.

Guided by the Central Committee's decision, the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR adopted a decision on 1 February 1930, "On measures to Strengthen the Socialist Reorganisation of Agriculture in the Areas of Solid Collectivisation and Combat the Kulaks". *This historic document legislatively confirmed new policy of the Communist Party and the Soviet government in the countryside.* The laws abolishing the renting of land and the employment of hired labour deprived the kulaks of land, farm hands and the instruments of production. This undermined the economic basis of the existence of this last exploiting class. The territorial and regional Soviets were given the right to take the necessary measures to fight the kulaks up to the complete confiscation of their property and their eviction from some districts, regions and territories.

This important step by the Party and the government fully satisfied the interests of the poor and middle peasants. The October Socialist Revolution, which abolished landlord property rights for good, was the first step towards the establishment of a new system in agriculture. The transition to collective farming and the elimination of the kulaks as a class represented the second, and moreover, the decisive step in building a socialist system in the countryside, a step that marked a most important stage in laying the foundation of a socialist society in the USSR.

The Soviet government bodies issued special instructions providing for the following measures against the kulaks: a) the kulaks who carried on counter-revolutionary agitation against Soviet power, committed acts of terrorism and provocation and threatened village activists, were arrested, tried and punished in conformity with the law; b) the kulaks who owned economically powerful farms, lived by exploiting the labour of others and actively opposed collectivisation, were banished to the northern districts; c) the kulaks who owned

less powerful farms but also exploited the labour of others were moved to special settlements outside the collective farms. The last two groups were given the opportunity to work in their new places of residence.

Special commissions were set up in territories, areas, districts and at village Soviets to implement these measures in an organised way. They were to establish the categories of the kulak farms, draw up and check lists of the farms whose owners were to be dispossessed, take stock of and keep safe the property of the dispossessed and transfer to the collective farms or to financial bodies to cover collective-farm arrears. In the areas of total collectivisation all the commissions, from top to bottom, were set up in January 1930.

The removal of kulaks and other counter-revolutionary elements belonging to the *first group* started first. This was done by state security bodies. All those included in this group were arrested and sentenced in accordance with the laws of the Soviet state.

The kulaks belonging to the *second group* were evicted with their families to districts far removed from their places of residence by the organs of local government with the active participation of the public, chiefly poor peasants, farmhands and collective farmers. Those banished were allowed to retain the necessary minimum of property—clothes, footwear, food and domestic utensils. The bulk of the property—the productive livestock, draught animals, buildings, machines and enterprises—was transferred by deed to the collective farms in question.

The question of the *third group* of kulaks, who were to be moved to special settlements outside collective farms, was settled in the following way. They were deprived of the right to a plot of land within the boundaries of their village, were given plots remote from it and were required to move there. They were allowed to retain the necessary means of production and given certain privileges for settling in new places.

Bourgeois apologists slanderously declare that the expropriation of the kulaks was tantamount to their extermination. This nonsense is easily disproved by facts. It stands to reason that no mercy could be shown to the counter-revolutionaries who tried to frustrate collective-farm construction by acts of terrorism and sabotage. The bulk of the kulaks, however, were re-educated by means of labour, of which we shall speak below. The facts prove this. Of the 50,000 farms formerly owned by kulaks in the Middle Volga Territory, 12 per cent belonged to the first group, 40 per cent to the second and 48 per cent to the third. The ratio was

approximately the same in the Lower Volga and North Caucasus territories.

The elimination of the kulaks as a class was an integral, organic part of solid collectivisation and could be successful only on the basis of the growing new collective farms, which united the bulk of the working peasants. All attempts to use the new policy as a mere administrative measure inevitably led to the weakening of the collective-farm movement and disruption of the unity of the poor and middle peasant masses in their struggle against the kulaks.

The transition to the policy of eliminating the kulaks as a class on the basis of total collectivisation opened up a new stage in the socialist development of the countryside, characterised by the transition from the spontaneous movement of the masses to planned collective-farm construction, which became stronger and more organised. This in turn, placed enormous responsibility on the Party organisations to correctly implement the Party's new policy in the countryside.

3. THE IDEOLOGICAL DEFEAT OF RIGHT-WING OPPORTUNISM AS AN ESSENTIAL CONDITION FOR THE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Guided by the decisions of the 15th Congress, the Party continued its onslaught on the capitalist elements clearing the way for mass collectivisation. But at this decisive stage, its policy was openly opposed by a Right-wing opportunist group led by Bukharin, Rykov and Tomsky. The Communist Party which had just routed the Trotsky-Zinoviev opposition, found itself faced with another danger, in the form of this Right-wing opportunist opposition.

The emergence of this new opposition, which presented a great threat at the new stage of socialist construction, did not come as a surprise. Its ideologists had never been known for their loyalty to Marxist-Leninist principles. For instance, at the April Conference of 1917 Rykov had openly come out against Lenin's policy of socialist revolution and had taken a capitulationist stand in the first Soviet government. Much the same could be said of Tomsky, who had never been ideologically sound. As for Bukharin, the ideologist of Right-wing opposition, his position deserves closer attention.

All Bukharin's errors stemmed, to quote Lenin, from his "failure to understand Marxist dialectics". He was a scholastic

theoretician, who knew all the Marxist formulas, but was never able to apply them creatively to concrete reality. So there was nothing surprising in the fact that he always veered from one extreme to the other: he had held an ultra Left position, as at the time of the Brest Peace discussions, and a middle-of-the-road conciliatory stand during the discussions on the trade unions and then became ultra Right during the period of extensive socialist construction.

His mistaken theoretical concepts made themselves felt at crucial stages in the history of the Party. At the Sixth Congress Bukharin opposed Lenin's line of an armed uprising, maintaining that the peasantry was not ready to back the proletariat; in the first year after the victorious October Revolution he came out against Lenin's principles of economic construction, declaring that the main danger lay in state capitalism, not in petty-bourgeois economic anarchy. At the subsequent stages of economic construction Bukharin also held a very dubious stand.

The struggle against Trotskyism is one example. At the 14th Party Congress, while speaking out against the new opposition, Bukharin made a number of other serious mistakes. The first signs of a shift to the Right in Bukharin's views became evident as early as 1925. It was he who then put forward the slogan "Get Rich!" and backed the erroneous call voiced by Syrtsov, who held basically the same views, "Pile up your wealth, and good luck to you". In his article "The New Economic Policy and Our Tasks" Bukharin wrote: "On the whole, we should tell all sections of the peasantry to get rich, pile up their wealth and develop their farms." These slogans were put forward at the height of the New Economic Policy, under the influence of petty-bourgeois economic anarchy. Consequently the ideology of the Right wing reflected this petty-bourgeois influence.

The roots of these erroneous views of Bukharin's should be sought in his failure to understand the nature and essence of the socialist revolution and its motivating forces. In his numerous articles Bukharin invariably interpreted the socialist revolution as the victory of an alliance between the working class and the *entire* peasantry and from this erroneous standpoint attempted to explain the essence of the dictatorship of the proletariat. Bukharin failed to see the dividing line between a bourgeois-democratic and a socialist revolution.

It is quite true that a bourgeois-democratic revolution requires an alliance between the working class and the entire peasantry and a dictatorship of the two classes, but a socialist revolution needs

a different alignment of class forces, and this was something Bukharin was unable to see. His obviously anti-Leninist concepts prevented him from understanding the essence of the socialist offensive, from taking a correct view of the alignment of class forces and appreciating the increased strength of the alliance between the working class and the working peasants. Hence Bukharin's views may be described not as Marxist-Leninist, but as those of a petty-bourgeois revolutionary who had failed to understand fully the objective processes of social and economic development and the laws of the class struggle.

The group led by Bukharin and Rykov came out against the Party in 1928, just at a time when the country was faced with a grain crisis and was suffering the effects of sabotage on the part of the kulaks, who were stockpiling grain and refusing to sell it to the state at steady prices. It was in this extremely tense situation in the countryside that the Bukharin and Rykov group openly went over to the side of the kulaks and all the reactionary forces in the country. This group attracted all kinds of discontented, politically unstable elements. It openly attacked the Party policy on the issues of industrialisation and the collectivisation of agriculture.

In 1929, first at the April Plenum of the Party Central Committee and then at the 16th Party Conference, this Right-wing group openly came out against rapid industrialisation and maintained it was necessary to slow down the pace of socialist construction. Like the Trotskyists, it had no faith in the strength of the working class, or in its ability to lead the mass of the peasantry in the building of socialism. It opposed the five-year plan, describing it as unrealistic, and proposed a two-year plan that would have led the Party away from industrialisation and collectivisation had it been implemented. The ideologists of the Right-wing opposition did their utmost to change the Party's policy on the collectivisation of agriculture.

Their anti-Leninist arguments against Party policy were piled on, one after the other: they claimed that the country did not have the necessary objective conditions for collectivisation, that the peasants would not join the collective farms since they were not sufficiently mature politically to understand socialist ideas, that collectivisation would leave the towns without grain and would lead to a split between the working class and the peasantry, etc., etc. In other words all their arguments were practically identical to the ones they had put forward on the eve of the October Socialist Revolution. Then, too, they had argued that the objective conditions did not exist in Russia for a socialist revolution, that

she was not ready for socialism, that the peasants would not support the working class, that the proletarian revolution would inevitably suffer defeat. In a word, they maintained that Russia should wait until civilised Europe had paved the way to socialism. Such was the reformist outlook of the Right-wing opportunists.

The leaders of the opposition formulated a political programme that virtually repudiated the political alliance between the working class and the working peasants and denied the possibility of establishing the right kind of relations between town and country. In contrast to Marxist-Leninist theory, they argued that the road to socialism in agriculture lay not through the production process, but through circulation, and mainly through trade co-operation. In an article entitled "Some Aspects of Economic Life", Bukharin wrote: "We shall achieve socialism (in agriculture - S.T.) through the process of circulation and co-operation, not directly through the production process." In another article "The Road to Socialism and the Alliance Between the Workers and the Peasants" he wrote: "Peasant co-operatives will inevitably become part and parcel of the proletarian economic system, just as in bourgeois society they become integrated in the capitalist economic system."

The Right-wing opportunists insisted on encouraging the development of individual, predominantly kulak-type farms which would have cleared the way for the capitalist development of agriculture. They considered the collective and state farms as model farms without an important role in the socialist development of agriculture. In his article "The Road to Socialism and the Alliance Between the Workers and Peasants", Bukharin claimed that the collective farms were not the highway along which the peasants would advance to socialism. In his article "The Current Situation and the Basic Principles of Our Policy" he wrote: "The highway will pass through ordinary co-operatives - through marketing, purchasing and credits - in one word, through agricultural co-operatives."

It was no accident therefore that the Right wing openly opposed the Party at the very moment when there emerged in the villages a movement of the poor and middle peasants towards collectivisation and a reduction in the number of kulak farms. Seeing that the kulak farms were doomed, the followers of Bukharin clamoured that agriculture was on the decline because the "most economically stable elements", i.e. the kulaks, were being suppressed. It was clear that this argument was merely a ploy to justify a capitalist form of development in the countryside. They refused to admit that the cutback in the area under crops of the kulak farms and the increase in that of the collective and state farms was

the result of Party policy in the countryside, and that this process would grow in strength with every passing year, since that was the nature of the socialist offensive on the capitalist sector, entailing the victory of the former over the latter.

The Right-wing capitulationists tried to impose on the Party a policy that would have put an end to socialist construction. They wanted the Party to call off the offensive against the kulaks and proposed that grain be imported from abroad at the expense of reducing imports of equipment for industry. So what they were virtually advocating was that the country remain economically backward and at the mercy of foreign capital.

In trying to draw the Party, the working class and the working peasants away from the struggle against the kulaks, they preached the bourgeois theory of "class peace", the theory that the class struggle would gradually die down and the kulak farms would become a part of the socialist system. An astonishing transformation had taken place: Bukharin, the one-time leader of the "Left" Communists had turned into an ultra Right-wing liberal. "The social origin of such types is the small proprietor ... who hysterically rushes about seeking a way out, seeking salvation, places his confidence in the proletariat and supports it one moment and the next gives way to fits of despair."¹

Bukharin and his supporters urged that every encouragement should be given to the kulak farms, that concessions should be made to them, and that prices for their grain should be raised, because then, they claimed, the class struggle would die down, the kulaks would cede their position without a fight and would join the rest of the peasants in building socialism. Bukharin envisaged the prospects of socialist construction in the villages thus: "In the network of co-operative organisations, alongside the poor peasant, middle peasant and mixed units, there will exist kulak units, sometimes perhaps even purely kulak ones." The supply and marketing co-operatives would produce favourable conditions for the poor and middle peasant families "to attain the standard of life enjoyed by the well-off villagers".

Summing up his arguments in favour of the kulaks, he wrote: "Consequently, the central network of our co-operative peasant organisations will consist of co-operative units not of the kulak type, but of the 'working' type, units that will grow into the system of state bodies and thus become links in the single chain of the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Immediate Tasks of the Soviet Government", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 276.

socialist economy. On the other hand, kulak co-operative 'nests' will go over to this system in the same way through banks, etc." This would have virtually meant the restoration of capitalism in the country.

The Communist Party shattered this bourgeois-reformist theory, showing how it was directly connected with the theory put forward by Western renegade Social-Democrats that capitalism would automatically disappear, growing peacefully into socialism. Bukharin's theory that the kulaks would go over to socialism would have led, as the 16th Party Conference pointed out, to "*the disarmament of the working class in the face of its class enemies*, would have lulled its revolutionary vigilance and weakened its ability to overcome economic difficulties on the basis of the Party's general policy".¹

When the Party set about implementing the policy of eliminating the class of kulaks, it knew full well that it would face immense difficulties and a bitter class struggle, and that the task could not be accomplished through the state's coercive measures alone. It was also necessary to do an immense amount of organisational and political work among the peasants, to bring about the closest possible unity between the poor and middle peasants and the working class, establish a high standard of ideological education within the Party ranks, and launch the irreconcilable struggle against all manifestations of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology. It was essential not only to disarm the bourgeois class politically and economically, but also to smash it ideologically. This could be achieved by exposing the anti-Leninist agrarian theories being spread at the time by the Right-wing opportunists, and by other enemies of the working class and labouring peasantry. This task was successfully accomplished by the Party.

The first theory to be smashed was the anti-Leninist *theory of an "equilibrium of two systems"*—the capitalist and the socialist. This theory suggested that the Soviet economy be based on the peaceful development of two opposite and antagonistic sectors—the capitalist and the socialist. As a result of the harmonious combination of these two systems, class differences would gradually be obliterated and the internal contradictions within society would disappear. This anti-Leninist theory which incorporated the idea that the kulaks would go peacefully over to socialism ignored the bitter class struggle in the country, and the life-or-death battle between the forces of socialism and the remnants of capitalism now on the eve of defeat. In preaching this theory of "equilibrium",

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions.... Vol. 4. p. 214.

the Right wing was aiming to safeguard the kulaks, save the individual peasant holdings, delay the organisation of the collective farms and halt the mass collectivisation movement.

The Communist Party also showed up another anti-Leninist theory, *that of "spontaneous" socialist construction*, which was also preached by the Right-wing ideologists. At the same time it emphasised the significance of the Marxist-Leninist theory on the leading, transforming and organising role that the socialist towns and industry were to play with respect to the countryside. In capitalist society, the countryside does indeed spontaneously follow the towns, basically because the urban capitalist economy and small-scale peasant-farming in the villages are of the same type: both are based on private ownership of the means of production.

A completely different relationship was developing between town and country with the new Soviet economic system. Socialist production in the towns and small-scale peasant farming in the villages are two different types of economy, since they are based on entirely different forms of ownership of the means of production. Naturally the small-scale peasant holdings could not change spontaneously into the same socialist production units that existed in the towns. The October Socialist Revolution opened up great opportunities for developing the productive forces in agriculture and created the necessary conditions for socialist development in the countryside. But this socialist development could only take place under the leadership of the working class, with socialist industry and the towns exercising a direct, leading and organisational influence.

In resolutely rejecting the anti-Leninist theory of spontaneous socialist construction, the Party demonstrated how its proponents intended to set the country on a road that would inevitably lead to the restoration of capitalism. To have taken this direction would have discredited the great achievements of the October Socialist Revolution, reduced the leading role of the socialist towns, undermined the working class's guidance of the working peasantry and destroyed the alliance between the workers and the peasants. Once it had shown up this bourgeois theory, the Communist Party laid even greater emphasis on Lenin's attitude to working-class leadership of the working peasants and showed convincingly that the only way for the countryside to reach socialism was through the collective and state farms.

Finally, a third anti-Leninist theory, *that of the so-called stable economy of small-scale peasant holdings*, was also shown up for what it was. The Party demonstrated that the supporters

of this theory were no friends of the working peasants and were in fact apologists for the capitalist system and champions of the kulaks. In rejecting the Marxist-Leninist theory of expanded reproduction, they claimed that large-scale economic units were advantageous only in industry, not in agriculture. In seeking to perpetuate small-scale peasant holdings in agriculture, and to strengthen the merciless capitalist exploitation of millions of working peasants these social-democratic theoreticians, such, for instance, as Vollmar, David and Hertz, sought to prove that the small peasant land-holder was very tough, patient, and ready to bear any amount of deprivation to retain his small property. This was their explanation for the stability of the small peasant farms in their struggle against the larger ones.

In seeking to revive this theory the mistakes in which had long before been exposed by Lenin, the opportunists were pursuing a definite goal: they were bent on discrediting the transforming role of the Soviet agrarian laws, on preventing socialist progress in agriculture and on redirecting the latter along capitalist lines. Soviet reality, however, offered plenty of convincing arguments to refute this anti-Leninist theory. One of these was the nationalisation of the land, which put an end, once and for all, to private ownership of land and the servile attachment of the small peasant to his tiny plot, as is found in capitalist countries.

The experience of the collective farms in the USSR has shown that nationalisation of the land not only makes it much easier to organise correct and rational land use, but is also a means of winning the peasants over to the side of the proletariat and strengthening the alliance between the working class and working peasants. The nationalisation of the land enabled the Soviet government to set up big socialist farms on a large scale, reclaim vast tracts of virgin land, introduce correct land use and improve agricultural techniques. The nationalisation of the land was also an important instrument in the hands of the working class, allowing it to exercise its leadership over the poor and middle peasants and guide them towards the socialist transformation of agriculture. It was the immense revolutionary significance of the Soviet agrarian laws that the Right-wing opposition with Bukharin at its fore, failed to understand.

All these Right-wing theories were effectively nothing but a rehash of old bourgeois agrarian theories. After the October Revolution these theories were brought up by theoreticians of the old school, trying to prove that Soviet agriculture could not develop along socialist lines. Their arguments were based on such time-worn

hostile theories as that of spontaneous socialist construction, the theory of the stable economy of small-scale peasant holdings, and that of the peasant's age-old attachment to his small holding. At that time there were *two schools of thought*, variations of the bourgeois agrarian theory that resisted Marxist-Leninist theory and opposed the restructuring of agriculture.

The *first* school, clearly a bourgeois one, comprised academics, agrarian specialists Kondratiev and Litoshenko. They claimed that the October Socialist Revolution had changed nothing in the life of the peasants and the laws of agricultural development, and hence believed that the Soviet countryside was bound to follow the capitalist road. They suggested a policy that would further develop and consolidate the capitalist mode of production. They wanted foreign capital to be given free access to Soviet agriculture in the form of long-term loans and extensive patronage on the part of capitalist monopolies.

Kondratiev and his followers working in central land agencies as agrarian experts did their utmost to slow down the development of the large socialist farms—collective and state—and gave every encouragement to the kulaks. Under the pretext of looking for ways to increase the productivity of agriculture they produced theories seeking to prove the advantages of large-scale capitalist farming and demonstrate the benefits it would bring Soviet agriculture. Moreover, they sought to spread the system of individual farms on the pattern of those brought into being by Stolypin and to get them financed by the Soviet state. Thus their policy was effectively designed to return the Soviet peasants to the gloomy days of landlord-capitalist oppression, to cast them back into the chains of serfdom and foreign enslavement.

The *second* school of thought was typically petty-bourgeois. It comprised such neo-Narodniks as Professors Chayanov, Chelintsev, Makarov and others. These ideologists were the direct advocates of the kulaks' interests. Although they criticised capitalist forms of exploitation and rejected the idea that the laws of capitalist development applied to agriculture, Chayanov and his followers tried to prove that small peasant farms were particularly viable and stable. The theories of these neo-Narodniks were based on the socialist-revolutionary concept that the direction of industrial development is contrary to that in agriculture. While large-scale capitalist production ousts the small producer in industry, in agriculture it is the small-scale working peasant farmer who ousts the large-scale farmer. Chayanov and his supporters also regarded the peasants as a community of working people, just as the Social-

ist-Revolutionaries had done, and therefore took a negative view of the laws of class struggle.

This being their stand, the neo-Narodniks denied the possibility of large-scale farming and sought to provide a theoretical proof of the impossibility of using big machines and scientific achievements in agriculture. Their main argument was that the peasants were too backward to be able to run large farms, that they were too immature to cope with large-scale farming. Consequently they proposed developing the individual peasant farms and then gradually merging them into the independent supply and marketing co-operatives of the working peasants. Since, as Chayanov claimed, these would be labour co-operatives rather than capitalist ones, they would be most advantageous and also most acceptable to the individual peasants. Had this petty-bourgeois theory been implemented it would have doomed the working peasants to endless backwardness and slavery.

Thus the kulaks had their own ideologists and theoreticians, both outside the Party—in the shape of Kondratiev, Chayanov and their supporters—and inside it—in the Trotskyists and Bukharinists. Their close ideological affinity often brought them together in the fiercer periods of the class struggle. The Kondratievists and the Chayanovists, for instance, operated separately during the period of economic reconstruction, but formed a united front in their opposition to industrialisation and the collectivisation of agriculture, forming an underground “Working Peasants’ Party” to fight the Soviet government.

The same applies to the Trotskyists and Bukharinists. Each of these camps acted on its own and had demonstrated hostility to each other in the past, but at this point they found a common language and united in fighting the Party. In the new situation which arose, with socialist construction in full swing, the Trotsky-Zinoviev group and the Bukharin-Rykov group were in effect the mouthpieces of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology and propagated this among the peasantry. The Party rejected their theories as alien to the interests of the working class and the peasants.

And so, at one of the most crucial moments in building socialism the Party had to fight the powerful forces of internal reaction, united under the black banner of Trotskyism and Right-wing opportunism. To overpower these hostile forces, to save the great achievements of the October Revolution and build socialism, it was of course essential to implement firmly, and consistently, the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat, to raise the

revolutionary consciousness of the working people and strengthen their unity.

In examining the nature of ultra-“Left” revolutionary groupings, the first thing one notices is the similarity of its social and ideological roots to those of Right-wing reformism. The two differ only superficially and have what is virtually a common revisionist foundation. They could be described as two shoots from a common root, growing in the soil of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois ideology. It is thus not surprising that throughout their history, both Left- and Right-wing groups have always been able to find a common language and join forces behind the back of the Party. They have taken a common anti-Party stand at every major turning-point in the history of the Revolution.

The social base of Right-wing reformism and ultra-“Left-wing” revolutionary anarchy has always been the petty bourgeoisie—the social strata between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. In a class society, the petty bourgeoisie, in towns and villages alike, is a fairly numerous section of the population and its ideology is very widespread. Occupying an intermediate position, the petty bourgeoisie vacillates continuously between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. They grumble and dash around clinging now to one side, now to the other. Like the capitalist, every petty bourgeois is a commodity producer and therefore always seeks to exploit somebody else’s labour, doing it whenever possible. At the same time a considerable section of the petty bourgeoisie lives in conditions very similar to those of the proletariat and the poor peasants, being constantly in fear of ruin and poverty.

All the specific features of petty-bourgeois ideology and its reactionary nature stem from this. And the political behaviour of the petty bourgeoisie depends on the circumstances—either they are depressed and pessimistic, seeking consolation in liberalism, philistinism, and poisoning society with their apathy and sense of doom and hopelessness, or, on the contrary, they suddenly pose as militant non-conformists, resorting to extreme measures, ultra-revolutionary action and political intrigues. But in either case they never let go of their unrealistic dreams of being able to unite all the other classes around them and thus create a new, broader and stronger movement than any purely class movement. It is this claim to a leading role in political life and their hope of creating a supra-class or non-class movement that the petty bourgeoisie tries to impose on political parties.

A general analysis of the history of anti-Marxist and anti-Leninist trends reveals that as a rule they nearly all originated in a departure from basic theory. Georgi Dimitrov put it very aptly: "Betrayal in politics usually begins with revisionism in theory." This applies equally to the revisionists of Right-wing reformism and of the ultra-"Left". Both these political groups have a long history of betraying the cause of the working class.

In the theoretical field this can be seen in their open or disguised revisionism and in practice in their complete break with Marxism-Leninism and switch to the ideological positions of the bourgeoisie. Typical of both groups is their misunderstanding or rejection of dialectical materialism, replacing this usually with eclectic or sophistic quibbling. Both groups lack both a creative spirit and a realistic approach to life. It was not surprising that Lenin described the ideologists of these trends as scholastics, hopeless doctrinaires, miles away from reality and everyday life. Most typical of these two trends are their social and national narrow-mindedness, a very narrow ideological and theoretical outlook, and their failure to understand or accept the laws of class struggle and social development.

In the political field this is apparent in their open denial of the need for a united revolutionary party of the proletariat, their support for anarchy, for hesitation and splits in the communist revolutionary movement, their total disregard for revolutionary discipline and their refusal to believe in the inherent rightness of the socialist cause. So it is not surprising that in their practical activities the two groups have failed to produce any more or less scientifically consistent strategic or tactical line: Right-wing revisionism usually ends up in reformism and opportunism, while ultra-"Left" revisionism leads to adventurism, narrowness, intrigues and anarchism.

The Communist Party, armed with the scientific theory of Marxism-Leninism, soon exposed the methods and manoeuvres of both the Left and Right. It showed these causes to have a lot in common: both relied on the old bourgeois classes and the policy they advocated would have led to one and the same end—the restoration of capitalism in the country. The ultra-"Left" were in effect Right-wing reformists turned inside out. Their only difference was that they pursued the same goal from the opposite directions.

Thus, the Trotskyists demanded the development of industry at the expense of harsh exploitation of the peasants, while Bukharin's followers insisted that agriculture be developed at the

expense of a slower pace of industrialisation and large cuts in investment in industry. It is therefore evident that both groups sought to push the Party along a disastrous road, a road that would end in the destruction of the alliance between the working class and working peasantry.

The Trotskyist ideologists maintained that the stratification of the rural population in the Soviet Union followed the same lines as in capitalist society—a gradual polarisation into the rich—the kulaks—and the poor peasants, with the section of middle peasants gradually being eliminated. The Bukharin group on the other hand insisted that no stratification was taking place in the villages—they considered the peasantry to be a uniform mass of middle peasants. Hence the political policy of the two groups: the Trotskyists were against any alliance between the working class and the middle peasants, while the Bukharinists tried to impose an alliance with the counter-revolutionary kulaks on the working class.

The Trotskyists wanted to do away with co-operatives in the villages, denied the socialist nature of Soviet co-operatives and rejected the idea that the bulk of the peasants could be drawn into socialist construction through co-operatives. Reversely, the Bukharinists were all for co-operatives, but insisted they should only cover trade. Co-operatives, they maintained, had no role to play in production. This explains their negative attitude towards the setting up of collective farms as production co-operatives.

The Trotskyist economic policy on the peasants would have inevitably led to the expropriation of the working peasants, turning them into a rural proletariat hired by state financed agricultural enterprises. The Bukharinists, who held ideologically opposite views, suggested that complete freedom be given to the petty-bourgeois economy, which, having passed through a period of commodity-money relations, would eventually develop into a large-scale organised socialist economy without outside interference. This explains their policies: the Trotskyists insisted on a harsh policy of economic diktat with regard to the villages, a policy which would artificially fan the class struggle, while the Bukharinists advocated a “classless” policy that would have dissolved the revolutionary proletarian ideology in the sea of petty-bourgeois anarchy. One can only imagine the disastrous consequences that would have ensued had either of these dangerous policies gained the upper hand.

Although the Right-wing and “Left” opportunists pretended that serious differences existed between them, in their practical

activity they always found a common platform from which to fight the Party and Leninism. What united them in this was their common petty-bourgeois nature. Indeed, it was revealed that early in 1929 Bukharin's camp had entered into negotiations with the Trotskyists on forming a united front to fight the Party and its Leninist leadership. In the new situation the initiative in this anti-Party conspiracy was taken by the Right-wing opportunists, who took on the job of uniting all the anti-Party forces. The Central Committee of the Party exposed the criminal activities of the Right-wing capitulators at its Plenum in November 1929 and declared that the Right-wing opportunists' views were incompatible with Party membership. This decision was confirmed by the 16th Party Congress in 1930.

The Party Central Committee constantly emphasised that socialism could not be built, nor a policy of industrialisation and collectivisation be carried out, so long as the capitulators and apologists of capitalism remained, for these were men conspiring against the interests of the workers and peasants behind the Party's back. Lacking the support of the working class and working peasants they were exposed and routed by the Communist Party like the earlier Trotskyists.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ALL-OUT OFFENSIVE OF SOCIALISM IN ALL SPHERES OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE AND THE STRENGTHENING OF THE PARTY'S ORGANISATIONAL ROLE IN THE VILLAGES

1. THE STRENGTHENING OF THE PROLETARIAN NUCLEUS IN THE RURAL PARTY ORGANISATIONS AND THEIR GROWING ROLE IN THE COLLECTIVISATION MOVEMENT

As the country embarked on the socialist reconstruction of the national economy, the Party was faced with the task of organising an all-out offensive against capitalist elements in towns and villages alike. The preparations for this, begun after the 15th Congress, were complete by mid-1929. At this new stage of socialist construction the Party had to come to grips with the main difficulties and mobilised the entire nation into the struggle to overcome them.

On the basis of the decisions taken by the 16th Conference, the Party launched a campaign to fulfil the country's first five-year economic plan. Following the lead of the working class, the Soviet peasants took an active part in this work. *The industrialisation of the country and the collectivisation of agriculture were the common foundation which welded the working class and the working peasantry into an unbreakable alliance and directed their efforts to accomplishing the historic task of turning a backward agrarian country into one with a first-class industry and a highly-developed socialist agriculture.*

As the country entered this all-out socialist offensive, the task of building up the collective farms became one of major importance. The country had developed in such a way as to make this the focal point of the socialist offensive. This resulted from the fact that it was an extremely difficult problem to solve, and from the particular intensity of the class struggle in the villages. Therefore, collectivisation became the foremost cause for the entire Party, working class and all progressive Soviet people. It would be a mistake to think that such an exceptionally complicated task as setting the millions of peasants on the road to socialism could have been accomplished by the rural Party organisations alone.

They were, indeed, a very influential political force in the villages, but nevertheless they could not, on their own, have coped with this immense task.

Many of the village Party organisations were not only small but also lacked political maturity. The New Economic Policy, which had strengthened petty-bourgeois ideology in the country, had naturally made an impact on the minds of the rural Communists. Some of them had petty-bourgeois private-ownership interests. This made itself felt most of all during the grain procurement campaigns. In a number of places—the North Caucasus, the Volga area and Siberia—some of the village Communists went so far as to oppose this highly important economic and political measure. Similar attitudes could be observed towards the policy of collectivisation. It was obvious that if the rural Party organisations were not politically strengthened the entire socialist offensive in the villages might be in jeopardy.

The need to strengthen these organisations was not prompted by transient or temporary considerations. The reasons were much more serious and deep-rooted than might seem at a cursory glance. Lenin had pointed out that the chief difficulty for the Party would be to unite and re-educate the small peasant producers. “They surround the proletariat,” he wrote, “on every side with a petty-bourgeois atmosphere, which permeates and corrupts the proletariat, and constantly causes among the proletariat relapses into petty-bourgeois spinelessness, disunity, individualism, and alternating moods of exaltation and dejection.”¹

It was this disease that had unfortunately infected certain village Communists: some of them had merged with and become accustomed to the alien class elements, while others had even built up quite prosperous farms. Moreover, Right-wing opportunist ideology had fairly deep roots in the petty-bourgeois climate of the villages. Thus the struggle against petty-bourgeois ideology within the Party itself became particularly important. To overcome its corrupting influence, as Lenin pointed out, “the strictest centralisation and discipline are required within the political party of the proletariat in order to counteract this, in order that the *organisational* role of the proletariat (and that is its *principal* role) may be exercised correctly, successfully and victoriously”.²

The chief measure taken to strengthen the rural Party orga-

¹ V. I. Lenin, “‘Left-wing’ Communism—an Infantile Disorder”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 44.

² *ibid.*

nisations was an extensive campaign of criticism and self-criticism. This was launched by the Party in 1928 and was of tremendous significance in exposing hotbeds of petty-bourgeois ideology and raising the efficiency of the rural Party organisations. It was, however, only the first step towards increasing the political activity of the Communists and mobilising them in the struggle against alien and corrupt elements within the Party. Naturally, this alone could not resolve all the problems within the Party. Other more radical measures were also needed to raise the political awareness and efficiency of the rural Party organisations. These included *first*, a general check-up and purge of the Party membership, *second*, the strengthening of the proletarian nucleus in the rural Party organisations, and, *third*, Marxist-Leninist education of the Communists.

The general check-up and purge of the Party membership was carried out in keeping with the decisions taken by the 16th All-Union Party Conference from May 1929 to May 1930. It resulted in the expulsion of 170,000 members and candidate members, or about 11 per cent of the total membership. The purge affected the rural Party organisations most of all, where 15.4 per cent of the membership was expelled. This was because the rural Party organisations included considerable numbers of socially and ideologically alien elements.

More than half of those expelled were in the highest agricultural tax bracket—33.6 per cent of the expelled paid a tax of from 50 to 75 rubles; 42.3 per cent—75 to 100 rubles, 44.8 per cent—100 to 150 rubles; and 68.3 per cent—more than 150 rubles. These men were rich in fact, and had long given up their communist principles. They made up one-fifth of those expelled. Another category of Communists, also one-fifth of those expelled, were found to have direct connections with kulak elements, and had been blatantly hampering the Party's economic and political measures. Having got rid of this dead wood, the rural Party organisations naturally became stronger and more efficient.

But while getting rid of alien, unstable and corrupt elements—which was necessary for the Party's development—it also did a great deal to draw into its ranks the more advanced members of the working class and working peasantry, primarily agricultural labourers. The influx of new members considerably changed the qualitative composition of the Party—it became more homogeneous and a genuine workers' party. Thus by 1 January 1928 57.8 per cent of Party members were workers, while two years later they accounted for 65.8 per cent of the membership, with 48.6 per

cent of them working directly on the factory floor. In strengthening and purging its ranks, the Party became more united and efficient.

The composition of the rural Party organisations also changed. Among admitted to the Party in the second half of 1929, 58.8 per cent were exempt from agricultural tax, while 24.2 per cent paid only 10 rubles per farm. What was particularly important was that the rural Party organisations gained in strength through increasing the proportion of workers in their membership. The proletarian nucleus in them increased almost threefold, from 29,821 to 82,455, excluding the 25,000 workers sent to the villages, of whom more than 70 per cent were Party members. Also of great significance in strengthening the rural Party organisations was the fact that their ranks were swelled by newly-admitted collective farmers. The following table shows the changes in the rural Party organisations (per cent):

Year	Workers	Collective farmers	Individual farmers	Office workers, etc.
1928 (January)	9.8	2.9	42.8	44.5
1930 (January)	21.8	35.0	13.3	29.9

Apart from expanding and strengthening the network of Party organisations, another factor of major importance was the complete reorganisation of the Party administrative apparatus, carried out at the end of 1929. This was necessary because the tasks facing the Party in its guidance of the building of a socialist industry, collectivisation in the countryside and the cultural revolution were extremely complex. The situation seemed to call for an expansion of the Party administrative apparatus, but the Central Committee was quite correct in choosing to reduce the Party apparatus, especially at the centre, to a minimum.

In this reorganisation the Party set itself three tasks, the first of which was to make the machinery flexible, efficient and able to concentrate on instructing and checking fulfilment; the second was to draw the attention of Party workers to the selection, training and placing of personnel in the main fields of Party, government and economic work, and the third was to simplify, reduce and cut the cost of the Party central apparatus while strengthening and expanding its grassroots at the same time.

As a result of the reorganisation the following changes took place in the structure and staff of Party bodies: the Central

Committee staff was reduced from 534 in December 1929 to 345 by 1 May 1930, while the number of senior workers was cut from 192 to 121. This means that the Central Committee staff was reduced by 189 workers, or 36 per cent, with a 37 per cent cut in senior workers. There was a similar picture in the Party central committees of the Union republics and in the regional, territorial and area committees.

The situation was entirely different in the local Party organisations, especially in rural areas. Their staffs had increased by 2.8 per cent from 1927/28 to 1928/29, and by 14.8 per cent from 1927/28 to 1928/29, the staff of local Party bodies simultaneously receiving pay increases.

All this naturally improved the work done by the district Party committees and rural Party organisations. First and foremost, this affected the composition of the distinct Party leadership, and raised the level of organisational and political work done by the rural Party organisations as a whole. But most significant was the extensive replacement of the leadership of district Party bodies by Communist industrial workers. Thus, the most important result of the Party's efforts was the strengthening of the rural district Party organisations with ideologically stable class-conscious personnel.

At the same time steps were taken to ensure that village Party personnel received a good education in Marxist-Leninist ideology. The tremendous scale of socialist construction set the Party new and more complicated tasks which required that the Party organisations pay much more attention to the theoretical training of leading Party workers. To this end the network of Communist and Soviet Party schools was extended considerably. In 1929 there were already 141 such schools attended by more than 29,000 students. In addition, more than 50,000 Communists took extra-mural courses at these schools. Training and refresher courses were also arranged by the Party for between 50,000 and 60,000 Communists.

It was, however, the mass Party education system that expanded most of all. Suffice it to say that in 1929 there were 27,977 Party education groups and schools in the rural Party organisations, which embraced 193,503 Communists or 46.4 per cent of the membership. This allowed the Party to improve its agitation and propaganda work in the villages, drawing into it large numbers of non-Party activists and members of the YCL and other public organisations. Political education, the expansion of agitation and propaganda work, and the organisational strengthening of the rural

Party organisations increased their influence on all aspects of political life in the villages.

With the strengthening of the progressive forces in the countryside, the rural Party organisations exercised greater influence on the masses, their ties with them grew stronger still and their struggle against class enemies became more purposeful. That they were viable, truly militant and class-conscious organisations is borne out by the fact that in the first half of 1930 their membership included 40,878 farm labourers and state-farm workers. The strengthening of the rural Party organisations was above all the result of the mounting influence of the working class on the working peasantry and of their growing political activity and class consciousness. The Communist Party scored a decisive success in the socialist reconstruction of agriculture, relying on the improvements it had made in the social and organisational forces of the villages and rallying the working peasantry around the working class.

The rural Communists were in the vanguard of the collectivisation movement.¹ By April 1930 the bulk of the rural Communists (75.3 per cent) had joined the collective farms. In the major grain growing areas the percentage of Communist collective farmers was even higher. Thus, in the Lower Volga Territory 98 per cent of all Communist peasants had joined the collective farms, while in the Middle Volga Territory the figure was 92 per cent, and in the North Caucasus—90 per cent. In the first three months of 1930, 85.4 per cent of the peasants admitted to the Party were collective farmers.

The following statistics provide a vivid illustration of this growth²: by 1 January 1928 there were 6.3 collective farmers for every 100 peasant Party members engaged in agriculture. By 1 October 1929 there were 37.3, by 1 January 1930—52.1, and by 1 April 1930—75.3.

As the rural Party organisations concentrated on collective-farm production, the form of their organisation changed. In the past the rural Party organisations had been set up on the territorial principle, but this began to take place on the production principle, with an increase in the number of grassroot organisations in the collective and state farms. The following table illustrates this trend:

¹ Party Archive of the CC CPSU, f. 17, op. 21, d. 2507, l. 217.

² See: *K XVI syezdu VKP(B). Materialy k organizatsionnomu otchotu TsK VKP(B)* (For the 16th Congress of the CPSU(B). Statistics for the CC report), Part I, Moscow, 1930, p. 212 (in Russian).

	Total number of grassroots organisations	Including percentage		
		Production		
		Territorial	Collective-farm	State-farm
1 July 1928	20,930	94.1	2.9	3.0
1 July 1929	23,458	89.7	4.7	5.6
1 July 1930	24,750	63.4	6.0	30.6

With the total number of rural Party organisations increasing in two years by 18.2 per cent, the number of collective and state farm organisations rose from 1,234 to 8,997, i.e. more than sevenfold. The number of territorial Party organisations during the same period fell by 20.3 per cent.

Thus in the immense preparatory work it had done in the villages to set up large-scale socialist production units, and to oust, restrict and subsequently eliminate the class of kulaks, the Party rallied around it the mass of agricultural labourers, and the poor and middle peasants, and created a firm foundation for strengthening the rural Party organisations; improving their social composition, raising their efficiency and increasing their role in all spheres of rural economic and intellectual life. All this made it possible for the Communist Party to organise an all-out socialist offensive of socialism despite kulak resistance.

2. THE VANGUARD ROLE OF THE WORKING CLASS IN THE COLLECTIVISATION MOVEMENT

The Party sent immense forces into the collectivisation campaign, activating the entire state apparatus—the bodies of government, trade unions, co-operatives, the YCL and other mass public organisations. All these powerful forces were to act in the interests of achieving the socialist transformation of the countryside.

The task of industrialising the country was a tremendous one, but the main task, the most difficult and complex one, was that of introducing collectivisation in agriculture and drawing the working peasants into socialist construction. This was why the Communist Party placed the working class in the foreground right from the very beginning of the mass collectivisation movement. In response to the Party's appeal to help the countryside, numerous volunteer teams of industrial workers began to emerge in the towns.

Tens of thousands of the best representatives of the working class declared their willingness to go to the villages to join the poor and middle peasants in building a new life.

Mass workers' meetings took place at many factories to discuss the decisions of the November 1929 Plenum of the Party Central Committee on assistance to the socialist forces in the villages. Everywhere large numbers of workers volunteered to go to the villages to help the poor and middle peasants set up collective farms. Although the number of workers to go to the villages had been set at 25,000, approximately 60,000 people applied to go. Almost 10,000 Leningrad workers volunteered in just six days to work on the collective farms, while in Moscow the number of applications reached 17,696. In Ivanovo-Voznesensk the number of volunteers reached 5,000, in the Ukraine—16,000 and in Nizhni-Novgorod—3,380.¹

The very best people were chosen, those most loyal to the cause, good organisers, capable of fighting together with the poor peasants for the victory of collectivisation. Each candidature was discussed first by a general workers' meeting in the factory and then by special selection committees, which included representatives of various public organisations. The following table gives an idea of the criteria for which the final 25,000 were chosen (data for Moscow and Leningrad only)²:

	Total	Length of service			Party members	Cand. members	YCL members	Non-Party
		Up to 5 years	From 5 to 10 years	Over 10 years				
From Leningrad as a percentage	4,641 100	422 9.2	1,483 32.3	2,686 58.5	3,140 68.1	399 7.3	381 8.3	754 16.3
From Moscow as a percentage	5,629 100	734 13.7	1,651 30.8	2,975 55.5	3,566 64.1	671 12.0	393 7.1	935 16.8

As can be seen from this table, about 89 per cent of the workers selected to work in the villages were people who had worked

¹ See: *Bednota* (The Poor), 21 January 1930.

² CSAOR, f. 5451, op. 14, d. 85, l. 27.

for many years at their particular factories, and more than 75 per cent were members or candidate members of the Communist Party. The workers chosen firmly believed in the victory of the great cause of building socialism. Thus the workers of the Karl Marx factory in Leningrad, the first to volunteer their help, wrote: "We are fully aware of the responsibility and difficulties we shall face. We are going precisely because we know that there are difficulties and that to overcome them the villages need firm proletarian leadership and assistance.... Our first task is to become the shock-workers of the villages, bringing with us our firm factory discipline."¹

The press carried numerous reports from the countryside, citing striking cases of the fraternal unity between the workers and peasants. Here are just some of these. A *Pravda* correspondent wrote on 3 January 1930 that he had attended a big meeting of poor and middle peasants in the village of Borskoye in the Middle Volga Territory which had decided that the entire village, 1,200 farms in all, would run their affairs on the basis of the Rules of the Agricultural Artel. After discussing organisational and production matters at the new collective farm, the meeting decided to start collecting money to pay for 14 tractors and to begin preparations for the spring sowing.

The peasants gave the situation serious consideration and came to the conclusion that they needed experienced people to manage the complex work done at the collective farm. They thus decided to appeal through *Pravda* to the Moscow workers to send them good managers. In their letter the Borskoye peasants wrote: "Dear comrades, in deciding on the final form of transition from private farms to a large co-operative one, we have come up against a lack of experienced leaders, both in the organisational and technical fields. Your direct participation in this tremendous transformation of agriculture is required immediately."² The same issue of *Pravda* carried many other examples of peasants asking urban workers for help.

The arrival of 25,000 factory workers in the villages to work on the collective farms was the first act of practical assistance given to the working peasants by the workers. The urban workers brought their production experience, culture, organisation and discipline to the villages. They lost no time in getting closely involved in social and production work, some leading collective farms,

¹ *Pravda*, 4 January 1930.

² *Pravda*, 3 January 1930.

machine-and-tractor stations and farm teams, and others sitting in on farm boards. But this was only the beginning of a vast movement that was soon to involve the entire working class.

We refer to the sponsorship movement, which spread swiftly through the country from the end of 1929. It was headed by the major industrial centres: Moscow, Leningrad, Ivanovo-Voznesensk, etc. These were the first to draw up economic and political agreements with the major farming areas. Moscow took charge of the Moscow Region, the Middle Volga Territory, the Central Black Earth Area, the Khoper Area of the Lower Volga Territory, Tajikistan, and part of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Leningrad took charge of the Leningrad Region, the Lower Volga Territory, part of the Central Black Earth Area and Siberia, Buryat-Mongolia and part of Central Asia. Ivanovo-Voznesensk offered its help to its own region, part of Uzbekistan and the flax growing areas of the Western Region.

What was new about this movement was that the sponsorship was founded on mutual agreements, covering chiefly economic matters and fostering socialist emulation for the economic transformation of the countryside. At the beginning of January 1930 workers from Moscow arrived in the Middle Volga Territory to draw up an economic and political agreements with the peasants. Leningrad workers sent delegation to the Lower Volga Territory for the same purpose.

In these agreements the Moscow and Leningrad workers undertook to help the local working peasants speed up the restructuring of agriculture by sending them repair teams, tools, books, cultural workers, organisers and technicians. Thus the Moscow workers despatched 1,700 workers to settle and work permanently in the villages, and 75 worker teams to help with the spring sowing. In turn, the peasants undertook to apply all the necessary technical measures in the field, to increase crop yields and the amount of marketable produce, to strengthen and develop collectivisation.

By 1930 the sponsorship movement involved all the industrial centres of the country. At many of the major industrial enterprises mass sponsorship societies were founded to advance collectivisation and help develop farm production.

The following figures provide the best illustration of the scale of this movement. In Moscow and the Moscow Region something like 220,000 people were involved, about 161,000 of whom were in Moscow itself. The city's factories sponsored 24 machine-and-tractor stations and 41 districts in which there was solid collectivisation.

The sponsoring societies not only took shape organisationally in a short space of time, but also became mass independent bodies almost everywhere and succeeded in drawing large numbers of workers into active participation in the socialist reconstruction of agriculture. In the preceding years urban sponsorship of the countryside had largely been confined to the cultural sphere, but from the spring of 1929 onwards it changed radically and became predominantly production sponsorship.

All this meant that the operation between town and countryside, and equally the alliance between the working class and the working peasantry had taken a step further, the basis of each becoming broader and firmer. The 16th Party Conference, in adopting the first five-year economic plan, pointed out that "the new period and the new forms of co-operation require *more active inter-course between the urban proletariat and the rural population to strengthen the leading role of the working class in the country*". In view of this the Conference emphasised the necessity to "promote the formation of workers' teams, as one of the most viable ways of constructing ties between the working class and the peasantry and of strengthening the leading role of the working class in the countryside".¹

This viewpoint met with wide support from the working class. It has already been mentioned that workers' teams began to leave for the villages from the spring of 1929 onwards. But this was only the beginning. Following the November 1929 Plenum of the Communist Party Central Committee, the towns' production sponsorship of villages developed into a vast movement of the working class. This is vividly illustrated by the following figures which show the increase in the number of worker teams engaged in the preparations for the spring sowing.

Year	Total number of teams sent	Number of people in teams	Types of teams			
			Repair	Cultural and agitation work	Women's	Others
1928	133	1,064	34	99	—	—
1929	1,515	8,570	1,117	160	74	163
1930	10,422	72,044	7,391	1,500	459	1,070

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions..., Vol. 4, pp. 221, 222.

In two and a half years no less than a quarter of a million people were sent from the towns to the villages to conduct economic and political campaigns and work there permanently. The presence of worker teams in the villages radically changed the political situation there. The workers not only provided tremendous help in production matters, but also rallied the peasants to struggle against the kulaks. This role was vividly described by a metalworker sent to the North Caucasus. "We divide our time between repair work and drawing the poor and middle peasants away from the influence of kulak propaganda."¹

The worker teams were engaged in all kinds of activities. *In the political sphere* they played a large part in revolutionising the collectivisation movement and the peasantry, in raising their ideological consciousness, and organising the education of rural activists. Together with the rural Party organisations and poor peasants, these representatives of the industrial proletariat strengthened the poor peasant groups and local Soviets, and made great efforts to turn the mass of the peasantry into an organised force capable of standing up to the kulaks and ensuring the completion of the socialist transformation of agriculture. *In the economic field*, they helped the peasants to organise collective-farm production, plan, organise and keep account of collective-farm labour. Sometimes they even took over the organisation of new collective farms. In 1929 workers from Moscow founded 800 collective farms.²

Finally, *in the cultural and educational sphere*, they helped set up village clubs, reading rooms, libraries and various amateur groups. In the Russian Federation, for instance, the number of reading rooms in the villages rose from 9,475 in 1927/28 to 12,118 in 1929/30, libraries increased from 15,362 to 19,145 and the number of wall newspapers put out from 80,000 to 200,000. An immense amount of work was also done to wipe out illiteracy: in 1928 1,318,000 people learned to read and write, in 1929 2,800,000, and at the beginning of 1930 up to eight million people were engaged in such study.³ There can be no doubt that all this was largely due to the efforts of the workers, who brought advanced socialist culture to the countryside.

Many of the workers' sponsorship societies had large funds at their disposal, accumulated through special overtime shifts worked at the factories and also from trade union donations. In Leningrad,

¹ CSAOR, f. 5451, op. 15, d. 308, l. 174.

² See: *Bednota*, 5 December 1929.

³ See: *For the 16th Congress of the CPSU(B). Statistics for the CC Report*, Part II, pp. 110-39.

for example, the workers contributed about one million rubles from special overtime work, and in Moscow they provided more than two million rubles. The sponsorship societies and trade unions not only financed worker teams going to the countryside but also gave considerable financial assistance to the poor peasants and hired labourers. The mounting patriotic initiative of the workers produced many new forms of aid to the countryside. Along with the sponsorship societies, other mass organisations began to emerge, in the form of unions of workers connected with agriculture. 50 such unions, for instance, were set up in Moscow early in 1930. At the Red Triangle Factory alone, 1,300 workers with families in the villages engaged in farming belonged to such unions.¹

In its decision of 27 May 1929 on the work of the trade unions in the villages, the Party Central Committee pointed to the need for the trade unions to step up their work among the workers associated with farming so as to use them as organisers in the socialist transformation of agriculture. The Central Committee believed that one of the main tasks of the trade unions was to organise class education among the workers connected with the villages, particularly among those who had just arrived, and thus use them to exercise a proletarian influence on social development in the villages. This was all the more important in that there were at this time quite a number of workers with close ties with the villages, undoubtedly able to provide a considerable reserve force in collectivisation. Here are some figures:

Trade union	Membership as of 1 January 1930	With ties with the villages	
		Number	Percentage
Textile workers	872,000	170,000	19.5
Railwaymen	1,092,490	301,527	27.6
Miners	522,000	156,000	30.0
Metalworkers	1,085,442	251,651	23.0

These workers, as has already been said, played an important part in the collectivisation movement. In the Moscow Region, for instance, 65.7 per cent of them had joined the collective farms by the beginning of 1930.

¹ CSAOR, f. 5451, op. 13, d. 100, 1. 1-6.

The non-industrial trade unions in the villages were another active reserve force in the collectivisation movement. There were a great many of these, a fact which is illustrated by the following figures on the number of trade union members who lived and worked in the villages (1 January 1930)¹:

Trade union	Total membership	Working in the villages	
		Number	Percentage
Agricultural workers	1,777,000	1,470,000	86.0
Commercial employees	1,282,421	547,748	42.7
Medical workers	568,632	96,854	24.0
Education workers	835,454	430,259	51.5

The trade unions had an important organisational role in the socialist transformation of the countryside. Thus, the Union of Commercial Employees had organised 1,092 collective farms and drawn about 29,000 of its members into existing ones by the beginning of 1930. The Union's Central Committee sent 7,759 accountants to help 10,000 collective farms, training another 15,000 accountants at various courses. The Educational Workers' Trade Union was also very active.

Thus, the all-embracing and truly revolutionary political and organisational steps taken by the Party in the first years of the five-year plan awakened the immense strength of the people and channelled it into building a new socialist society. Having overcome immense and numerous difficulties and obstacles, the Communist Party confidently led the Soviet people along the Leninist road, the road to socialism.

3. THE EMERGENCE OF NUMEROUS PEASANT ACTIVISTS—THE RURAL STRONGHOLD OF THE PARTY

The immense assistance given by the working class to the working peasants considerably furthered the political activity of the agricultural labourers and poor peasants, improved their organisation, strengthened the alliance with the middle peasants and raised the efficiency of all the political and organisational work done in the

¹ *ibid.*, I. 33.

countryside. The measures taken by the Communist Party to organise the masses and make it possible for them to solve the main economic and political tasks, brought a large number of activists into being from among the poorer peasants, activists who championed the Party cause among the broad masses of the peasantry.

Whereas by the end of 1927 there were about two million non-Party peasant activists in the villages of the Russian Federation, by mid-1930 their number had increased to 4.5 million. This included 1,447,928 members of village Soviets, 500,000 agricultural agents, 100,000 co-operative representatives, 300,000 leaders of agricultural labourer and poor peasant teams, one million members elected by agricultural co-operatives, 160,000 members elected by consumer co-operatives, 420,000 members of collective-farm boards, 50,000 local trade union leaders, and 600,000 mutual aid committee officials. These were people who had considerable production and socio-political experience and had borne the brunt of the fierce struggle against the kulaks. They also had cultural and agricultural training. Various short-term political and agricultural courses were taken by two and a half million non-Party peasant activists in the Russian Federation, and by four million in the country as a whole.¹

The Communist Party always attached great significance to organising the rural proletariat and poor peasants into an active independent class force able to defend its economic and political interests. This numerous section of the peasantry was closely linked with the working class and was vitally interested in the victory of socialism. The political activity of the agricultural labourers and poor peasants increased most markedly during the elections to the Soviets that took place in October 1929. More than 16,000 meetings of poor peasants with a total attendance of over 800,000 people were held during the Russian Federation election campaign. The poor peasants were also very active during the elections to the peasant mutual aid committees and boards of agricultural co-operatives. As a result, the proportion of poor peasants elected to these bodies considerably increased.

The decision taken by the Party Central Committee on 20 October 1929 played a large part in activating the poor peasants and agricultural labourers. This decision stressed the need to step up Party work among the agricultural labourers and poor peasants. The most urgent task was to strengthen the poor peasant groups, and to increase their role and influence in all spheres of

¹ See: *For the 16th Congress of the CPSU(B)...*, Part II, p. 37.

economic, social and state work in the countryside. What a powerful political force in the countryside these poor peasant groups were is evident from the statistics for 14 territories and regions of the Russian Federation (1 January 1930)¹:

Types of groups of poor peasants and agricultural labourers	Number of group	Member-ship	Social composition (percentage)			Party composition (percentage)		
			Agricul-tural work-ers (all cate-gories)	Poor pea-sants	Middle pea-sants	Party mem-bers	YCL mem-bers	Non-Party mem-bers
Groups under Rural Soviets	11,939	138,770	14.0	61.6	24.3	15.9	7.7	77.7
Groups under Peasant Mutual Aid Societies	4,997	50,714	16.3	60.0	23.7	12.1	7.0	80.9
Groups under Consumer Co-operatives	2,772	37,039	15.7	58.8	25.4	17.1	7.8	76.1
Groups under Associations for the Joint Tilling of the Land and Artels	2,750	35,448	15.6	55.2	29.2	13.8	10.8	75.4
Groups under other types of agricultural co-operatives	1,549	20,640	16.3	56.6	27.1	16.7	6.6	76.7
Groups under various other organisations	81	953	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	24,088	283,564	15.0	59.8	25.2	14.8	7.5	77.7

The poor peasant groups rallied around them the vast masses of working peasantry and drew the middle peasants into the task of building socialism. The campaign for setting up these groups reached its peak in the first half of 1930. By this time such groups existed in almost all the elected bodies in the countryside, in rural Soviets, collective-farm and co-operative association boards,

¹ *ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

etc. Thus, in the Lower Volga Territory there were 1,717 such groups by the beginning of 1930 and 2,046 by May of that year; in the Middle Volga Territory there were 2,900 groups by December 1929 and as many as 3,857 by the following May.

Naturally the tasks facing the poor peasant groups changed drastically as the mass collectivisation movement got under way. While the aim of the work done among the poor individual peasants was to persuade them to join the collective farms, the main tasks of the poor peasant groups inside the collective farms was to consolidate and improve them in all spheres. The poor peasants and the rural proletariat proved to be a reliable bulwark of the working class in countryside, and the decisive force in collectivisation. Their revolutionary struggle against the kulaks and for the socialist transformation of agriculture showed them to be an immense and indomitable force once organised and rallied around the working class.

One of the most difficult tasks facing the Party in the country was that of drawing the peasant women into active political and economic work, since although they were the largest group in the rural population, they were also the most backward. The women played a very important role in agricultural production, despite the fact that it was they who bore the main burden of the old social and economic relations in the villages—they were the most down-trodden and exploited of all the peasants. The kulaks took advantage of the surplus of labour in the countryside and the low cost of female labour to exploit them mercilessly, paying them only a fraction of what they paid the men.

Because of their cultural backwardness and great economic dependence the peasant women often blindly followed the rich peasants and often under the influence of kulak propaganda opposed the measures of the Party and Soviet government. Great efforts were therefore required from the Party organisations to raise the cultural level of the peasant women and draw them into active economic and political life. The new organisational forms of such work, as introduced in 1929, played an immense role in this. The agrominimum project, sowing plans, production meetings, conferences, along with other mass measures, helped considerably to develop the political and production activity of the peasant women.

But important as all these measures were, they were not always sufficient. It was also essential to organise the peasant women, especially the labourers and poor among them, into an independent political force acting under the guidance of the Party organisations. Experience showed that the best way to organise, rally

and educate the peasant women was to hold numerous regular assemblies for representatives of the rural female population. The Central Committee of the Party attached great significance to these assemblies and insisted that Party and Soviet bodies give them constant practical help.

These assemblies were particularly active in 1929/30 when urban workers, many of them women, came to the villages. The scale of their work can be judged from the fact that in 1928/29 in the Russian Federation there were 21,317 such assemblies, attended by 506,614 women, while a year later this number had risen to 23,063, with an attendance of 707,067 women. The peasant women were particularly active during the campaign to re-elect the assemblies. The number of women attending the re-election meetings rose from 1,931,166 in 1928 to 3,098,956 in the autumn of 1929. The most important result of the work of these assemblies' activities was their participation in peasant co-operatives and the collectivisation movement. Whereas in 1928/29 there were 27,948 assembly delegates on the collective farms, i. e. 4.6 per cent of all the delegates, by the first quarter of 1929/30 their number had risen to 156,490, i. e. 22.2 per cent of all delegates.¹

Thus, the assemblies were an active reserve force in furthering collectivisation. In rallying around themselves large numbers of women activists, and in protecting women from injustice and exploitation they became a major force in the villages, breaking down the old way of life, emancipating the peasant women and opening the door to a new life for them.

The rural YCL organisations were also an active militant force in the collectivisation movement. They did a considerable amount of organisational work among young people and initiated many useful undertakings. Thus, the YCL organisations in the North Caucasus, and the Lower Volga and Middle Volga territories which had joined the socialist emulation movement organised youth campaigns to achieve a good harvest and further develop collectivisation. This initiative soon expanded into a mass socialist emulation movement between areas, districts and grassroot YCL organisations involving large numbers of young people.

Young people from the cities exerted great influence on those in the villages. For example, young shock workers from the industrial enterprises in the North Caucasus called on all YCL members to introduce the methods they employed at their factories in

¹ See: For the 16th Congress of the CPSU(B)..., Part II, pp. 92-93.

the collective farms, and to organise youth shock teams on the collective and state farms and in the machine-and-tractor stations. Their call was received warmly by the young people in the villages.

It is common knowledge that the YCL did wonders in helping to fulfil the first five-year plan. A true prop to the Party, always responsive to its appeals, the YCL was one of the chief initiators of socialist emulation, which subsequently developed into an extensive and indomitable movement first in the towns and then in the villages. As this movement made headway, the YCL initiated such new ways of organising labour along socialist lines, such as shock teams, counter-plans, "Light Cavalry" teams, etc. One could cite many examples, a few of which follow. In the North Caucasus YCL members collected about 80,000 rubles to set up tractor teams, organised more than 300 repair teams and over 300 collective farms, and drew 4,000 people into agricultural co-operatives.

Demobilised servicemen were another important reserve force in advancing collectivisation. On their return home many of them set up collective farms. In 1929 alone they founded 150 large collective farms mostly in the newly settled lands in the main grain growing areas of the country. But the Red Army's role in the socialist reconstruction of the countryside was not confined to this alone. The army trained and sent 20,000 organisers and collective-farm leaders to the villages. They also launched the enormous task of training 100,000 administrative and technical personnel for the collective farms. These included 17,500 collective farms chairmen, 13,600 field workers, 9,250 horticulturists and market gardeners, 22,000 livestock breeders, 25,000 tractor drivers, and 13,800 accountants and cultural workers.¹

The picture would be incomplete, however, without a mention of the village Soviets and their role in organising progressive forces in the countryside. The social composition of the Soviets improved greatly following the re-election campaign of December 1929 in which more poor and middle peasants were elected. The Soviets were now able to consolidate their standing among the peasantry and strengthened their position as the bodies of state power in the villages. Having rallied around themselves the bulk of the peasantry, the village Soviets succeeded in establishing their influence and control over the land societies. This proved to be one of their most important achievements. In organising and activating the various social forces in the villages, the Party strengthened

¹ *ibid.*, p. 221.

its influence over all aspects of political and economic life in the countryside.

4. THE DECISIVE STAGE IN THE COLLECTIVISATION MOVEMENT

The collectivisation movement gaining increasingly in momentum, was succeeding in sweeping away the resistance of the kulaks and clearing the way for the victory of socialism in the countryside. January and February 1930 saw the greatest revolutionary upheaval in the villages. In March collectivisation reached a peak. The decisive changes that had taken place in the collectivisation movement were not just the result of the immense organisational work done by the Party in the countryside, but also of the experience of collectivisation in previous years, which had given the working peasantry practical proof of the advantages of large-scale collective farming. The collective farms, embodying the decisive advances made by socialism in the countryside, became part and parcel of the Soviet countryside.

It was a highly significant feature of this stage that the process of collectivisation had penetrated all spheres of agricultural production. This process was continuing not just in grain growing, but also in stock farming areas, and in the areas growing technical crops. The rate of collectivisation is obvious from the following figures for the Russian Federation (1930):

	20 January	1 February	10 February	20 February	1 March
Percentage of collective farms	22.5	34.2	45.5	55.1	58.0

The working peasants in the main grain growing regions remained in the forefront of the movement, with the spread of total collectivisation and the abolition of the kulak class. The progress of collectivisation which took place in these areas for the same two months of 1930 can be seen from the following table¹:

¹ CSAOR, f. 374, op. 9, d. 392, l. 101.

Group I in collectivisation terms	Percentage of collective farms				
	20 January	1 February	10 February	20 February	1 March
North Caucasus	46.5	60.7	71.5	75.5	76.8
Middle Volga Territory	39.0	48.4	52.2	54.3	56.4
Lower Volga Territory	20.0	58.7	62.1	66.1	67.8

The fast rate of collectivisation in these areas was of exceptional importance for the country as a whole. Along with the growth in the number of collectivised peasant farms, steady progress was made in socialising the main means of production, strengthening the economy of the farms and developing their organisational and economic structure. As a result, both of the number of collectivised peasant farming and of the concentration of the main means of production (land, draught animals, farm tools and machinery), the collective farms of these areas became the most important factor in the countryside, the principal and decisive force in the economic structure of agriculture.

It was obvious that the collectivisation movement had assumed an exceptionally wide scope. But in many parts of the country it was still not properly organised. Thus although the general picture was one of success, there did emerge a certain amount of unsubstantiated showiness, pseudo-revolutionism and a blind driving for high results. In these cases attention was focussed on getting the greatest possible number of peasants to join the collective farms, without proper care for the organisational and economic strengthening of the latter. In these circumstances the main tasks facing the Party were to consolidate the achievements made in collectivisation, help the young collective farms organise large-scale farming properly, make sure that it was planned scientifically, and help them organise their labour and production distribution.

The Party repeatedly pointed out that the results of collectivisation in each district, area, region and territory should be assessed not only according to how well the Party organisations had coped with these tasks, but also according to how well they were strengthening the collective farms politically, organisationally and economically and how well they were combining their efforts to achieve total collectivisation with their preparations for the spring sow-

ing. In order to increase the production potential of the collective farms, the Party Central Committee drew the attention of the Party organisations, government and collective-farm bodies to the need to increase the assets commonly owned by the farms and insisted that peasants adding the greatest number of livestock, machines, seeds, etc. to the indivisible funds be given the fullest encouragement.

These new tasks affected the Party Central Committee decision of 15 February 1930 "On the Main Economic Problems of the Middle Volga Territory". This stated that the Central Committee of the Party believes it to be one of the most important goals of the territorial Party organisation to ensure the best possible leadership of the collectivisation movement and to achieve the highest production results on each individual collective farm and in the territory as a whole.¹ The Central Committee warned the territorial Party organisations against premature attempts to set up state and collective farm agglomerations and insisted that attention should be concentrated both on setting up more state farms and, particularly, on the organisational and economic strengthening of the collective farms.

As the collectivisation movement developed, it posed many new economic tasks. This was only natural, since the movement had entered a new and higher stage of development. It had not only spread to all parts of the country and to all branches of agricultural production, but had also made a qualitative leap from the simpler forms of agricultural co-operation to more complicated forms of co-operative production.

The most significant feature of the period under examination was that in the course of the mass collectivisation movement it was the artel type of collective farm that predominated and proved to be the most widespread, being the most acceptable to the peasants themselves. It was on the basis of the artel that the process of collectivisation moved further forward, and the possibility emerged of collectivising the main means of production and strengthening the socialist property owned in common on the collective farms. The following figures on the various forms taken by the collective farms are a convincing demonstration of the profound qualitative changes that took place in the collectivisation movement²:

¹ *Spravochnik partiinogo rabotnika* (Guide for a Party Worker), Issue 7, Part II, p. 152 (in Russian).

² CSAOR, f. 5451, op. 15, d. 320, l. 56.

Types of collective farms throughout the USSR (percentage)

	Communes	Artels	Associations for joint tilling of the land
As of 1 June 1929	8.2	33.5	58.3
As of 1 May 1930	8.9	73.7	17.4

Thus considerable changes had occurred in the ratio of different types of collective farms: the number of communes remained practically the same, while the proportion of associations for joint tilling of the land fell by more than two-thirds, and the proportion of artels more than doubled. This shows that in just one year a tremendous qualitative change had taken place, radically changing the nature and direction of collectivisation.

Indeed, less than a year earlier the most common type of collective farm was a simple association of peasants for joint tilling of the land, in which the basic means of production was privately owned by the peasants. In the artels the means of production became the joint property of all the members of the collective farm, in other words, it became collective-farm property. Considerable achievements had already been made in this respect in the main grain growing areas, where the main means of production became social collective-farm property held on an artel basis. Thus, *the development of the simpler types of co-operative association into a higher type of production association reached immense proportions in the second half of 1929.*

The bulk of the middle peasants, who had become the active builders of a new life, joined the collective farms. The social composition of the collective farms of this period differed in that the middle peasants started to predominate, bringing with them fresh impetus, increasing the economic power of the farms and the means of production owned in common. *Collectivisation of the middle peasants meant above all that the leading role of the working class had grown stronger as socialist base in the countryside had become much broader, and as millions of middle peasants were no longer so much allies as a firm and reliable bulwark to Soviet power in the villages, active builders of socialism.*

All this meant that the task of transforming the fragmented and disunited small peasant holdings into big commonly owned farms, a task set in Lenin's co-operative plan, was being accomplished

on a wide scale. Quite clearly, the age-old village system was being destroyed, along with the economic basis for the stratification of the peasantry. The Soviet countryside was firmly on the road of socialism.

This historical transition from an old quality to a new one, from the bourgeois form of individual peasant holdings to socialist collective farms signified a major revolutionary change. This stemmed from the specific historic, social and economic conditions in the Soviet Union. But this revolutionary transformation should not be regarded as an accident, the outcome of a spontaneous process. Throughout the years following the October Socialist Revolution, the new bodies of state power—the Soviets—had displayed constant concern for the socialist development of agriculture. With each passing year more aid was given to the working peasants in developing the productive forces in the countryside, ensuring the transition from individual peasant holdings to collective socialist agricultural production.

The Soviet government did its utmost to protect the working peasants from kulak exploitation and to unite the poor peasants under the leadership of the working class in the joint struggle against the kulaks and set them on the road to socialism. As a result, the forces of socialism in the countryside grew stronger, with a corresponding weakening in the private capitalist elements. By the end of 1929 the new socialist forms of agriculture (the collective and state farms) had become a considerable economic force, outstripping the kulaks in the production of grain. The collective and state farms became a new, socialist material base for the Soviet government in the countryside. That being the case, the Party and government called on the working peasants to launch a decisive struggle against the last remaining capitalist class, the kulaks.

As more and more poor and middle peasants began to join the collective farms in the second half of 1929, it became clear that the bulk of the working peasants were breaking completely with their individual small-scale economy and were giving their fullest support to the Party's policy of carrying out the socialist transformation of the countryside. Under the leadership of the Soviet government and working class they were going into the final, decisive battle for the complete abolition of the kulak class, their age-old enemy.

This all goes to show that the transition of the peasantry to a new, socialist way of life, was not an evolutionary process, but was accomplished through the mass revolutionary struggle of the working

peasantry against their class enemies, and that in the conditions that prevailed collectivisation would have been impossible had the kulaks and other hostile forces inside the country not been decisively routed.

The Right-wing opportunists, bent on misleading the Party organisations over the new Party policy, tried to pass off the abolition of the kulak class as simply the continuation of the old policy of restricting capitalist elements. This, for instance, was the claim made in the paper *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star) by Ryutin, a follower of Bukharin. The Party Central Committee rejected such allegations and clarified their new class policy in the countryside, stating emphatically that the policy of abolishing the kulak class was a new policy, differing radically from the old one which just sought to oust and restrict the kulaks.

Until the autumn of 1929 the Party had pursued a policy of restricting the kulaks' exploitation and was unable to do more than oust individual, weaker, kulak sections. But the kulak class continued to exist for some time, while the collective and state farms were gathering strength. Though efforts were being made to restrict and oust the kulaks, the means of production remained in their hands, and the Soviet law on the use of hired labour in the villages and on renting land remained in force, allowing the kulaks to survive. This earlier policy had not been designed to abolish the kulak class, as the economic foundation on which it existed had not been fully destroyed.

The situation changed entirely when the Party embarked on its new policy, aimed at breaking the resistance of the kulaks and abolishing this class of exploiters. The new policy was based on new legislation which lifted the ban on expropriating kulak farms, and deprived them of their production sources—the unrestricted use of the land and means of production, renting land, the right to hire labour, etc. All this shows that the new policy was not merely a continuation of the old one, but a sharp turn from restricting and ousting the kulaks to abolishing them as a class on the basis of total collectivisation.

In order to deflect the main blow from the kulaks and weaken the struggle against them, the opportunists resorted to other manoeuvres which they passed off as "Left" revolutionary, but which were actually designed to save the kulak class. For instance, in some places, attempts were made to add a slogan on abolishing the urban petty bourgeoisie to that concerning the abolition of the kulak class. This was hardly surprising, stemming from an erroneous idea of the economic conditions of development of the

two class groups. The point was that the urban petty bourgeoisie had long been deprived of its production sources and accounted for only an insignificant part of small industry and retail trade. As for the kulaks, their economic strength had not yet been undermined and they continued to play an important role in agricultural production, a mistake which was corrected by the Central Committee.

Thus the Party's move to adopt the policy of abolishing the kulak class on the basis of total collectivisation signified a radical change in the entire course of socialist construction. The Party was now able to launch an all-out offensive against capitalist elements, aiming to completely abolish them in all spheres of the national economy. The offensive against capitalist elements had begun immediately after the October Socialist Revolution, and it gradually gained momentum in the subsequent years. But until the Party launched its policy of abolishing the kulak class, this offensive had been rather one-sided. It had been waged chiefly in the towns and in industry, where the abolition of capitalist elements was the prime task of socialist construction.

When the Party adopted its policy of abolishing the kulak class, the offensive against the capitalist elements extended right down the line. All this signified that the working peasants, under the leadership of the socialist towns, were firmly set on the road to socialism. Agriculture, once the most backward branch of the national economy, now able to rely on the developing foundation of socialist industry, was embarking on large-scale socialist production run on collective lines. The new Party policy was solving the problem of abolishing all the exploiter classes in the Soviet Union, thereby ensuring the building of the foundations of a socialist society.

CHAPTER IX

OVERCOMING THE COMPLEX CONTRADICTIONS AND OBSTACLES FACING THE PROGRESSIVE MOVEMENT OF THE SOCIAL FORCES

1. THE DIFFICULTIES OF COLLECTIVISATION

By March, 1930 the scope of the collective-farm movement had become very great. *It was indeed the greatest historic movement of the bulk of the peasant masses working for the socialist transformation of agriculture.* But the process of collectivisation should not be viewed as one of easy victories and triumph after triumph. The establishment and development of the new system in the countryside was complicated by complex contradictions, immense difficulties and a bitter class struggle.

Along with the undeniable achievements of collectivisation, certain drawbacks and mistakes soon began to surface. In some districts and regions, top officials, spurred on by the initial success, began to deviate from the Party line. In a drive to collectivise a high percentage of the peasants, they tried to force them into collective farms under administrative pressure. This ran counter to Lenin's teachings and the Party requirement that the voluntary principle be strictly observed, that there should be no collectivisation "by decree", and that local conditions should be taken into consideration—including how ready the peasants were for collectivisation. Class enemies and their agents were quick to take advantage of the mistakes made by the Party organisations. They sought to deflect the collectivisation movement from the right road by means of provocation and disorganisation, as well as by fostering discontent among the peasants.

What type of mistakes were made?

Firstly, Lenin's basic principle of collectivisation—that it must be strictly voluntary—was violated in a number of places. Certain Party and Soviet officials disregarded this most important Leninist principle and began to exert administrative pressure on the wavering peasants, forcing them to join the collective farms. They

thereby deviated from the Party stand and from the Central Committee instructions stating that "the collective farms could be viable and stable only if they were formed on the voluntary principle."¹

The gross distortions of Party policy and the attempts to form collective farms by administrative measures only played into the hands of the class enemies. They were quick to pounce on these mistakes and turn them to their own advantage so as to disorganise and torpedo the collective-farm movement. The action of the ultra-"Left" weakened the unity of the poor and middle peasant, and this strengthened the position of the kulaks and slowed down collectivisation.

Lenin had in his time pointed out that the transition of small peasant land-holders to collective farms could only be "delayed and complicated by hasty and incautious administrative and legislative measures. It can be accelerated only by affording such assistance to the peasant as will enable him to effect an immense improvement in his whole farming technique, to reform it radically".² Lenin insisted on the strictest punishment and immediate removal from work of those Soviet officials "who permit themselves to employ not only direct but even indirect compulsion to bring peasants into communes...".³

The further development of collectivisation could only genuinely succeed if the principle of voluntariness was strictly observed and the peasants persuaded of all the benefits and advantages the system of big collective farms held over the system of small and fragmented private holdings. *It was shown in practice that as long as the principle of voluntariness was observed and the only method used to draw the peasants into the collective farms was that of persuasion, the collective-farm movement developed with a rising momentum. But as soon as administrative measures were taken in a number of places to influence the peasants who were still wavering, things began to go wrong.*

Secondly, the Leftist deviations were particularly dangerous because they *affected mainly the middle peasants—of central importance in the Soviet countryside.* The Leftist deviationists chose to forget the main requirements of the Party programme, with regard to strengthening the alliance between the working class

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions..., Vol. 4, p. 395.

² V. I. Lenin, "Economics and Politics in the Era of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 113.

³ V. I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 218.

and the middle peasant, and were in effect destroying this alliance. This was the root of their mistakes, which in essence reflected the Trotskyist idea of administrative methods and diktat as regards the peasants. This was noted by Stalin, who reported to the 16th Party Congress that the Leftist distortions in collectivisation were an attempt, though an unconscious one, to revive the traditions of Trotskyism in practice, and to revive the Trotskyist attitude to the middle peasant.

Lenin had repeatedly pointed out that the middle peasant was a special social stratum of the peasantry, a stratum to which wavering was second nature. Indeed, the middle peasant remained hesitant for some time—even after joining a collective farm he would continue to keep a close watch on the new and unfamiliar way of life. So the duty of the Party organisations was to increase as far as was possible the political and organisational work among the middle peasants, to convince them through practical deeds. This was the only way to extend the process of collectivisation.

Quite naturally the class enemy was not asleep, he was closely watching the mood of the middle peasants. When he noticed signs of discontent among them, he quickly tried to use this discontent with the collective farms to win the middle peasants over to his side. *The practical implementation of mass collectivisation showed that as long as the offensive against the kulaks was waged by a united front of poor and middle peasants, collectivisation advanced successfully. But the minute this front was broken and individual Party workers, consciously or unconsciously, began to slip into a war against the middle peasant, the offensive against the kulaks was naturally weakened and became distorted.*

This was a violation of the strategic Leninist rule that the working class could successfully attack capitalism and advance to socialism only in a close alliance with the main mass of the peasantry. A vanguard that had begun to lose ties with the main mass of the peasantry and advance without any regard for the balance of class forces was inevitably in danger of defeat and of jeopardising the offensive. The process of collectivisation taught a highly important political lesson: whenever the interests of the middle peasants were infringed and the unity of the labouring peasantry's action against the kulaks weakened, additional difficulties for collectivisation were created. Lenin had in his time warned that "to confuse the middle peasants with the kulaks and to extend to them in one or another degree measures directed against the kulaks is to violate most flagrantly not only all the decrees

of the Soviet government and its entire policy, but also all the basic principles of communism...”¹

Thirdly, a mistake lay in the way that *many local workers, by stepping up the pace of collectivisation, were violating the decision of the Party Central Committee of 5 January 1930 as regards the deadlines for the various regions*. It has already been mentioned that in this decisions the Central Committee divided all the regions of the USSR into three groups and, depending on the local conditions, set for each a realistic deadline for completing the collectivisation process. Many Party organisations themselves took the right decision about when to complete collectivisation. For instance, the Party Committee of the Lower Volga Territory suggested the beginning of 1931 as its deadline, the Party committees in the Middle Volga and North Caucasus chose the spring of 1931, with different dates for the different districts inside their territories. But after a certain amount of time, some of the Party and Soviet officials in these territories not only forgot the Central Committee instructions, but also their own decisions and began to advance deadlines, trying to complete total collectivisation within the space of 2-3 months. This was what happened, for instance, in a number of districts of the Middle Volga Territory, specifically in the Penza and Syzran areas. Their leaders decided to outdo the districts on the Left Bank which were far ahead in their results, forgetting that in these districts conditions were ripe for a more rapid development of collectivisation: there existed a fairly wide network of state farms, old, firmly entrenched, collective farms, co-operative associations, more farm machines and a strong bloc of poor and middle peasants resulting from the differentiation into classes.

These conditions did not exist on the Right Bank of the Middle Volga. There it was necessary to concentrate on preparing the conditions that would pave the way to total collectivisation at a later date. Although the percentage of collectivisation was low, the leaders of these districts instructed the districts to get down to the elimination of the kulaks as a class. Many village Party organisations understood this to mean that first they had to eliminate the kulaks and then on that basis start collectivisation. In other words, they tried to use the new class policy of the Party as an administrative lever to complete collectivisation quickly. In the final analysis, this type of distortion caused very great complications in the villages.

¹ V. I. Lenin. “Eighth Congress of the RCP(B)”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 29 p. 217.

Similar mistakes were made in a number of other regions. Despite the instructions of the Central Committee of the Party, a number of leaders in the non-grain growing districts and even in the national non-Russian republics, carried away by the vast scale of the collective-farm movement, ignored local conditions and the extent to which the local peasantry were ready for total collectivisation. They decided to catch up with the grain growing districts that were already well ahead.

Fourthly, mistakes were also made in deciding on the form of collectivisation. The Party Central Committee, on the basis of its existing experience in collectivisation, determined in its decision of 5 January 1930 that the main form at that stage should be the agricultural artel, and warned Party organisations against leapfrogging the artel and setting their sights on communes. But in this case too, the Left zealots ignored the logical transition from lower to higher forms of collectivisation and, disregarding the experience accumulated by the peasants themselves, began to turn artels into communes.

Although there were quite a few strong and prospering communes, they nevertheless failed to stand the test of time and subsequently reverted to artels. This provided a striking illustration of the wisdom of Lenin's instructions: "In no case to endeavour to outrun the people's development, but to wait until a movement forward occurred as a result of their own experience and their own struggle."¹

The figures that follow give an idea of how different the forms of collectivisation were in two major grain growing regions of the country (1 March 1930):

Type of unit	West Siberian Territory		Middle Volga Territory	
	Number of coll. units	%%	Number of coll. units	%%
Communes	125,852	49	9,371	1.9
Artels	114,929	45	478,530	97.8
Assoc. for joint tilling of the land	15,577	6	1,272	0.3

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Extraordinary Sixth All-Russia Congress of Soviets of Workers', Peasants', Cossacks' and Red Army Deputies", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 141.

Finally, the last mistake made by the Party organisations was manifested in their mania to set up giant farms, which was also a distortion of Party policy. This applied most of all to the grain areas along the Volga and in the North Caucasus. It is true that the steps initially taken by the Party Central Committee and the government to make the collective farms bigger were of great significance and played an important role. The big collective farms fully justified their existence and provided excellent examples of the advantages of big collective farms over small ones. But here, too, some people went too far. The collective-farm officials in particular began to plan "giants" and all kinds of processing factories, and were least of all concerned with the internal organisation of already existing collective farms. As a result of this planning on sand, the practical side of the projects suffered. It need hardly be said that the "giants" and processing factories planned without any regard for the realities did not get further than the drawing-board.

The giant mania in collectivisation largely resulted from a lack of understanding of what collective farms were supposed to be. Some Party and Soviet officials equated the collective farms—a socialist type of farm, with the state farms, also socialist but owned by the state and a more advanced type of farm. Consequently attempts were made in some places to expropriate the property of the collective farms and merge it with the property of the state—public property—thereby turning the collective farmers into the hired workers of state-owned agricultural enterprises.

In the Atkar region of the Lower Volga Territory, each collective farm, so it was planned, would have no less than 60,000 hectares of arable land. In the Balakovo and Samoylovo districts, the district organisations had even more grandiose plans. They decided that there should be only one collective farm in each district. This meant that the Samoylovo farm would have 259,434 hectares of arable land and the Balakovo—354,369.

This brief analysis of the mistakes made in collectivisation clearly reveals that the action of the Left zealots played into the hands of the enemies and was detrimental to the collective-farm movement and the interests of the labouring peasantry.

As a result of these mistakes and the distortions of Leninist principles of collectivisation, by the spring of 1930 the situation in the villages had become extremely complex.

To begin with, from March 1930 some of the peasants began to leave the collective farms and entire farms fell apart. The

outflow of peasants from the collective farms also occurred in the main grain growing regions, but to a lesser extent, since the farms there were stronger.

But there can be no doubt about the achievements of collectivisation in the first group of regions, where the percentage stood at a steady 40-60%. This also applies to some of the national areas of Kazakhstan and the Crimean autonomous republic. In Kirghizia collectivisation was built on a healthy foundation. But things were different in the Central Black Earth Area and in the Moscow Region, where the distortions of the ultra-Left led to serious complications.

Although the immense creative forces of the collective-farm movement remain indisputable, it must be said that the Leftist adventurist mistakes caused a considerable number of peasants to leave the collective farms and disorganised the economic life of the villages. The Party mobilised all its forces to correcting the mistakes and consolidating what had already been achieved in collectivisation before moving further ahead. Meanwhile the kulaks and their agents tried to utilise the discontent felt by part of the peasants to step up their counterattacks on the collective farms. Their hostile propaganda designed to get the peasants to leave the collective farms disorganised the masses and won over part of the wavering middle peasants.

The Central Committee of the Party made a frank scientific analysis of the situation that had developed in the village and bluntly criticised the mistakes made.

It should, however, be said that the outflow of part of the peasants from the collective farms cannot just be explained by the mistakes made by local officials. Apart from this chief reason, there were other objective factors at play. Before examining them, it is essential to recall that the collective farms also fell apart, the peasants leaving them, in the early period of collectivisation. Suffice it to say that in the three years from 1922 to 1924, more than 5,000 collective farms disintegrated in the Russian Federation. Similar cases occurred later, too. According to figures put out by the Countryside Department of the Party Central Committee, on average one-third of the entire membership of the collective farms changed within one year. The collective farms fell apart and the peasants left them even when there was no question of mistakes or excesses in collectivisation. Consequently, what happened in the spring of 1930 cannot be attributed solely to these mistakes and excesses. Incidentally, peasants withdrew from the collective farms not only throughout 1930, but also in

1931, 1932 and subsequent years. That was not surprising if one considers the social nature of the small peasant producer, who, as Lenin pointed out, was typically hesitant, vacillating and disenchanted. When such a peasant decided to start a new life he was naturally unable to immediately shed all his former traditions, ways and habits. What, however, were the other reasons that led to the collective farms falling apart and part of the peasants leaving them?

The first and most important reason stems from the complexity of the problem and the intricacies of the class struggle in the villages. The hesitation of the small private owners, and especially the dual nature of the middle peasant, began to be felt increasingly. These waverings reached their climax at the decisive stage of collectivisation—at the time of the spring sowing. This was particularly true of the collective farms that proved insufficiently prepared. Fearing that the newly-founded collective farms would be unable to cope with the spring sowing, part of the middle peasants reverted to their old way of life and demanded that the farm return them their land and means of production. The mistakes made during the collectivisation campaign only tended to aggravate the vacillations of the middle peasants.

The second reason was that in the decisive stage of establishing the collective farms, the middle peasant found no application for his very great experience. As a result many of the middle peasants even those with advanced views, were relegated to secondary jobs. There were two circumstances that led to such a state of affairs: on the one hand, a lack of experience in production matters with a resulting inability to deploy the forces properly, and on the other, the fact that many local officials failed to understand the new social status of the middle peasant; that by joining the collective farm he was no longer merely an ally of the Soviet government, but a pillar to be relied on. Therefore the middle peasant relegated to secondary jobs naturally began to express his discontent.

The third reason was that the kulaks and other hostile elements that had been forced to the wall fought bitterly to persuade the peasants to leave the collective farms. They resorted to threats, terrorist acts, made the most of family and other ties, and played on religious prejudices. And in many cases they were successful. Of course the mistakes that were made in collectivisation strengthened the hand of these class enemies, and they were quick to take advantage of them in the battle for the middle peasants.

The fourth reason was that not infrequently the local Party organisations took a one-sided approach to matters connected with collectivisation. They concentrated all their attention on the number of new collective farms set up and overlooked the significance of their proper economic organisation and consolidation. They neglected the fact that the main task during mass collectivisation was to consolidate the positions that had been won and to make proper use of the forces in farm production.

But in listing all these reasons, it is essential to underline once again that this greatest of historic tasks was exceedingly difficult and complex. *It would therefore be wrong to think that such a gigantic task as the radical nation-wide transformation of the small and fragmented peasant economy and the abolition of an entire class of exploiters could have been carried out peacefully, quietly and smoothly, without any complications.*

2. THE OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE CAUSES OF THE MISTAKES IN THE COLLECTIVISATION OF AGRICULTURE AND THE PARTY'S MEASURES TO REMOVE THEM

Why such serious mistakes were made in the course of collectivisation cannot be answered in a few words. However, when seeking the roots of the mistakes and examining their causes, it is essential to keep constantly in mind the great complexity of the task of collectivising agriculture and the immense difficulties, both internal and external, that faced the Party and the country when tackling this task. As for the causes of the mistakes, they were both *objective* and *subjective*.

So what were the objective causes?

The first was rooted in the specific features of the country's economy. These were the difficulties that stemmed from the comparatively low level of Russia's economic development before the revolution and were aggravated by the devastation and exhaustion resulting from the imperialist war, the battle against intervention and counter-revolution, and by the subsequent economic blockade.

Lenin on many occasions stressed the need to take this factor into account when analysing different aspects of social and political life. He repeatedly warned that either we must quickly overcome our technical and economic backwardness or we would be crushed by the forces of imperialism. The Communists kept Lenin's

words constantly in mind. The historic necessity and passionate desire to surmount this backwardness—at any cost—dictated the need to put up with suffering and make sacrifices. All this and much else required a high degree of organisation, purposefulness and discipline, because only with this would it be possible to ensure a fast pace in the building of socialism—the most progressive social system. There existed no other way of coping with these tasks or of standing up to the joint forces of world imperialism.

The second cause was the capitalist encirclement of the country. Things were difficult, very difficult for the Soviet Union. Not only was it deprived of any outside aid, but it constantly came up against opposition from internal and international reactionary forces. For a quarter of a century the Soviet Union was like a besieged fortress, in effect, constantly beset by economic, political and military blockades. This compelled us to step up the pace of economic construction, to build up the country's economic and defence might, and to be ready at every moment to repulse imperialist aggression.

The third cause was rooted in the very nature of the first five-year plan. The majestic programme for the industrialisation of the country could only be successfully accomplished in close combination with the socialist transformation of agriculture. The immense investments in the tractor and farm machine industries could only be justified if there existed big commonly-owned farms in the countryside, since the small fragmented peasant holdings could not use the new machines—tractors, combines, lorries and other sophisticated means of production. What is more, the large-scale industrial construction required considerable manpower which was difficult, if not well-nigh impossible to extract from the small individual peasant holdings.

At the 17th Party Conference in 1932, G. K. Ordzhonikidze cited disturbing figures on the way industrial growth was experiencing sharp fluctuations according to the season. In the autumn and winter production soared, while in the spring and summer it dropped sharply as many workers connected with the countryside left the factories. To this one should add the food shortages. The small peasant holdings could not meet the growing requirements of the industrial centres. This factor also spurred the country on to accomplish the socialist transformation of the countryside more quickly.

The fourth cause stemmed from the newness of the task of setting up big farms. The Soviet Union had to blaze a new trail,

the first country in the world to begin changing the age-old system of small cash-crop holdings. Naturally, as when tackling anything new, things did not go smoothly, there were zig-zags, mistakes were made and some things were overlooked. Given the technical and economic backwardness and the low rate of literacy among the population, as well as the acute shortage of skilled personnel, the job of switching the peasantry to large-scale socialist farming was a tortuous one. But history offered us no other alternative.

Speaking of the objective causes of our weaknesses, Lenin said at the 4th Congress of the Comintern: "Undoubtedly, we have done and will still do a host of foolish things.... Why do we do these foolish things? The reason is clear: firstly, because we are a backward country; secondly, because education in our country is at a low level; and thirdly, because we are getting no outside assistance. Not a single civilised country is helping us. On the contrary, they are all working against us. Fourthly, our machinery of state is to blame. We took over the old machinery of state and that was our misfortune."¹

Objectively speaking, a revolutionary party can and will inevitably make mistakes not only in the major transformation processes, but also in general day-to-day activities. No revolutionary party can be immune from mistakes and shortcomings, since its activities are directed at changing the old world. Consequently, mistakes and shortcomings are the result of surmounting complex contradictions and obstacles hindering the progressive advancement of social forces. This is all the more true when a new path is being taken. What really matters, however, is the nature of the mistakes, how serious they are and also their consequences, how soon they are realised and the steps taken to set things right, as well as the efforts made to prevent mistakes.

In this case, the mistakes made were very dangerous ones. This is stated quite bluntly and frankly in the Party documents of the time. Stalin himself said as much. Returning at a later date to this period and assessing the nature of the mistakes made in the winter of 1930, he said: "*It was one of the most dangerous periods in the life of our Party.*"²

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Fourth Congress of Communist International," *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 428.

² J. V. Stalin, "O nedostatkakh partiinoi raboty i merakh likvidatsii trotskistskikh i inykh dvurushnikov" (Some Shortcomings in Party Work and Steps to Eliminate the Trotskyists and Other Double-dealers), Moscow, 1954, p. 32 (in Russian), (italics mine. — S. T.).

It should be remembered that in most cases the mistakes were made during the period of collectivisation following the proclamation of the policy to eliminate the kulaks as a class, on the basis of total collectivisation.

Some leading officials, lacking sufficient grounding in revolutionary Marxist-Leninist theory, misunderstood the new class policy of the Party and took it to mean that administrative measures should be used to step up the pace of collectivisation. Hence the distortions of the new policy in some localities. In many cases it was understood not as the elimination of the kulaks as a class, on the basis of total collectivisation, but as total collectivisation on the basis of the elimination of the kulaks as a class.

The 16th Party Congress corrected this mistake. It pointed out that the elimination of the kulaks stems directly from collectivisation and is an integral part of the process. Consequently, it is applicable only in areas of total collectivisation, while for other areas the main slogan remained the restriction and ousting of capitalist elements.

On the basis of a study of Party documents and personal experience of work in the countryside, it can be said that the mistakes in collectivisation occurred chiefly during the initial period of implementing the new class policy of the Party, i. e. in January and February 1930. It is indisputable that up to this time collectivisation was developing on a healthy basis. As for the further development of the process, after the mistakes had been put right, collectivisation proceeded normally. If there were deviations in one place or another, they were purely local.

We are convinced that if mistakes—albeit short-lived ones—had not been made, the level of collectivisation would have been much higher and the material and moral damage insignificant. Consequently the ultra-revolutionary whirlwind that swept the country for two short months only tended to complicate the situation in the countryside and did a certain amount of damage. But it should be remembered that in the situation that developed, with large masses being drawn into events, rectifying mistakes was a very difficult and complex job.

Nevertheless it should be stressed that in these difficult circumstances, the Central Committee of the Party made truly gigantic efforts to put things right and to channel the mass movement of collectivisation along the right road. Members of the Central Committee Politburo immediately left to check how things were going on the spot. On 30 January 1930 the Central Com-

mittee sent a telegram to area and regional Party committees in the grain growing districts warning them not to be too hasty in eliminating the kulaks. "Information from the regions," the telegram read, "indicates that organisations in a number of districts have dropped efforts to set up collective farms and are concentrating on the dispossessions of the kulaks. The CC is letting you know that this policy is basically wrong. The Party policy is not simply to dispossess the kulaks, but to develop the collective-farm movement. The dispossession of the kulaks is the result and an integral part of this policy. The CC insists that the dispossession of the kulaks should not be pursued separately from the growth of the collective-farm movement, and that the focus of attention should be shifted to building up the collective farms, relying on the genuine movement of the poor and middle peasants. The CC repeats that only such an attitude will ensure the correct implementation of the Party's policy."¹

Noting that the pace of collectivisation in non-grain and national areas of the country was gaining momentum, the Central Committee of the Party decided, on 4 February 1930, to hold a conference of Party organisation leaders from these areas. The first was held on 12 February, and the second on 21 February 1930. After an exhaustive exchange of views, appropriate recommendations were drawn up. These formed the basis for Central Committee decisions defining the tasks of Party organisations in national and non-grain growing areas, as regards the socialist transformation of agriculture. The decision of 20 February 1930 dealt with collectivisation and the struggle against the kulaks in the economically backward national areas. It outlined a programme for preparing the condition in which the socialist changes in these national areas could be implemented. It was decided that the main form of collectivisation at this stage should be associations for the joint tilling of the land. While in the grain growing areas the kulaks were to be eliminated as a class, in the national areas the policy was to restrict and oust the kulak.

This all testified to the fact that the Central Committee of the Party was pursuing a firm and consistently Leninist policy. Of course there were people, at this time too, who pointed to the mistakes made to urge that collectivisation should be dropped as a non-starter. The Central Committee could not agree to

¹ C.P.A. I.M.L., f. 62, op. 1, ed. khr. 3257, l. 6.

such capitulation. The Party found the strength and courage to set right the policy distortions on collectivisation, and did just that.

On instructions from the Central Committee *Pravda* published Stalin's article "Dizzy with Success" in its issue of 2 March 1930. It was a serious and thoughtful article, both from the point of view of theory and practice. Its chief significance lay in the fact that it put a stop to the adventurist leftist policies of collectivisation. It demonstrated the principled approach taken by the Party to assessing the situation. In his time Lenin had written: "A political party's attitude towards its own mistakes is one of the most important and surest ways of judging how earnest the party is and how it fulfills *in practice* its obligations towards its *class* and the *working people*. Frankly acknowledging a mistake, ascertaining the reasons for it, analysing the conditions that have led up to it, and thrashing out the means of its rectification—that is the hallmark of a serious party; that is how it should perform its duties, and how it should educate and train its *class*, and then the *masses*."¹

The decision of the Central Committee of the Party of 14 March 1930 was imbued with all these Leninist principles. In the Leninist fashion the decision acknowledged the mistakes and analysed them—mistakes that had been made not only by local officials but also by people in the higher ranks, in the regions and central bodies. The Central Committee described the distortions in collectivisation as a departure from the Leninist principles of co-operation, and the result of "a *direct violation* of Party policy, a *direct violation* of the decisions of the leading Party bodies".²

The collective-farm movement showed that any attempt to find an immediate solution to the problem of collectivisation, without due regard for the different conditions in the various districts or for the voluntary principle, was an adventurist scheme and one that inevitably discredited the collective-farm idea and strengthened the enemies of the proletariat. Equally, any attempt to rush ahead and leapfrog the agricultural *artel* in favour of the commune undermined the peasants' trust in the collective-farm movement. The co-operative movement of the masses had shown that the associations for the joint tilling of the land were, for most agricultural regions, a thing of the past, while conditions were not

¹ V. I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—An Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 57.

² *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 4, p. 396.

yet ripe for setting up communes. At that stage it was agricultural *artel* that was the most viable form of collectivisation.

Party organisations approved of the Central Committee instructions to rectify mistakes and improve the guidance of the collective-farm movement. They realised the dangers of any distortion of the Party line and got down to rectifying the situation. But the attitude of the Left zealots was different: they saw no need to rectify mistakes quickly and decisively. In the complex situation many of them were confused and viewed the CC instructions as a departure from the policy of collectivisation.

The Right-wing opportunists also took advantage of the difficulties that had cropped up in collectivisation, and they, backing up the Leftists, dragged out their old arguments—arguments that had already been shown up by the Party—that it was necessary to slow down collectivisation and abandon the policy of eliminating the kulaks as a class. Thus the Left deviationists took grist to the mill of the Right-wing opportunists. In these circumstances it was necessary to mobilise all the Party forces, strengthen the united front of the poor and middle peasants, step up the offensive against the kulaks, and consolidate the achievements in collectivisation.

The Central Committee of the Party once again stressed the danger of treating collectivisation lightly and explained that this great process of transformation could not be conducted by bureaucratic methods, by decrees from above, but required persistent and patient political and organisational work among the peasants. In this situation the main task of the Party organisations was to rectify the mistakes quickly and take steps to consolidate the positive results of collectivisation. "The Central Committee," the decision stated, "believes that all these distortions are at present the *main cause of delay* in the further development of the collective-farm movement, that they give *direct assistance* to our class enemies ... and that the further *rapid advancement* of the collective-farm movement and the *elimination of the kulaks as a class* is *impossible* without the *immediate* abolition of these distortions."¹

The Central Committee decision condemning the distortions in collectivisation quietened the peasant masses and convinced them that the Party policy had nothing in common with the action of the Left zealots. At the same time it gave Party organisations clear-cut instructions on how to implement the Le-

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions..., Vol. 4, p. 396.

minist policy of collectivisation in practice; it helped them to rectify their mistakes rapidly and to deal a crushing blow to attempts made to smash the alliance between the working class and the peasantry, and torpedo the collectivisation process.

The Central Committee realised the seriousness of the situation, the dangers to collectivisation and to the alliance of the working class and the peasantry, and it deemed it necessary to send a special circular to all the Party organisations. In its message of 2 April 1930, the Central Committee of the Party explained once more to all Party and Soviet officials the essence of the mistakes in collectivisation, drew attention to the harmfulness of their consequences and insisted that the Party line be implicitly followed in the collective-farm movement.

Thanks to the Central Committee's bold and self-critical actions, the Party correctly assessed the dangers of the situation in the countryside and was able to avert the threat to the collective-farm movement. It took steps to help Party officials to take the right line and ensure the successful implementation of Party policy. What was required from Party and state officials was that they should frankly criticise themselves for the mistakes made and get down to rectifying them. "All the revolutionary parties that have perished so far, perished because they became conceited, because they failed to see the source of their strength and feared to discuss their weaknesses. But we shall not perish because we do not fear to discuss our weaknesses and will learn to overcome them."¹

In keeping with Central Committee instructions, the collective farms put together formally were disbanded and the lists of peasants dispossessed as kulaks reviewed. The Central Committee explained that the departure of some of the peasants from the collective farms was not an integral fault of the collective-farm system. On the contrary, the collective-farm movement, embracing the broad masses of poor and middle peasants, had proved its viability.

The immediate practical task facing the Party was the spring sowing, with the need to expand the area under crops in the socialist sector of agriculture. It was self-evident that the future of the collective-farm movement would depend on how well the first spring sowing was carried out. Consequently local officials had

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Eleventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 311.

to concentrate on organising things within the farms themselves, consolidating them, arranging their internal life, collective production and payment for work. This was a basis on which the collective-farm movement could gain strength and further develop. The Party's task was to patiently explain to the wavering peasants the Leninist principles of collectivisation and thus persuade them to return to the collective farms.

The Party Central Committee decision of 2 April 1930, concerning certain exemptions for collective farms, played an important role in consolidating and advancing collectivisation. Under this decision a number of major steps were taken to strengthen the economic position of both the farms and the collective farmers. Their draught animals, cattle, pigs, sheep and poultry were exempted from taxation; taxes on members' personal plots used to grow vegetables were cut by 50%, and no taxes at all were to be levied on vegetable gardens belonging to the collective farms proper. Furthermore credit repayments of peasants who had joined the collective farms were cancelled, as were the debts incurred in improving the land, etc. These privileges had a very big effect on the peasants. They not only helped to stop the outflow from the collective farms, but led to more peasants joining them.

The spring sowing of 1930 was a serious test of the viability of the collective-farm movement, as it was of the production capability of the farms and their moral and political potential. The spring sowing was designed to become, and indeed became, the starting point for the further advancement of mass collectivisation and its full victory in the countryside. The territorial and regional Party conferences held in May and June 1930 summed up what had been achieved in collectivisation, and disclosed and criticised mistakes and shortcomings in the socialist transformation of agriculture.

The Party conferences also drew up a list of practical measures needed to fulfil the CC decision of 5 January 1930. Top Party and government leaders took part in these conferences, which appealed to collective farmers, and to the individual poor and middle peasants working their own parcels, to strengthen the collective-farm movement; win new economic victories in socialist construction, and carry out all the agricultural work in an organised manner.

3. THE FIRST COLLECTIVE-FARM SPRING— A SERIOUS TEST OF THE VIABILITY OF THE COLLECTIVE-FARM MOVEMENT

The spring of 1930 went down in the history of the socialist transformation of the countryside as the first collective-farm spring. It was a serious test of the viability of our young collective farms. Thanks to the immense organisational work carried out by the Party among the masses, and the immense enthusiasm of the collective farmers for their work, the difficulties in the villages were overcome, and the spring sowing was successfully carried out not only on the collective farms, but also in the private sector. Most collective farms carried out their spring sowing in an organised manner and at a suitable agrotechnical level. The work went best of all in the collective farms where there had been no outflow of peasants and where all attention had been focused on the preparations for sowing. Credit for this goes to those village Party organisations that had kept strictly to Leninist principles.

The experience of two villages, Mryasevo and Olshanka in the Pokrov District in the Orenburg Area, serves as an illustration of how advanced collectivisation was. The representative of the Party area committee who went to the villages firmly implemented the Party line. A Party candidate group of 15 people was formed, and a Komsomol organisation of 20, along with a group of activists drawn from the poor peasants, hired labourers and more progressive middle peasants. With their help two associations for the joint sowing of grain were formed on a voluntary basis. The Party and Komsomol nucleus then initiated the transformation of the association into an artel and drew more peasants into it. As a result of the explanatory campaign conducted among the peasants, three collective farms were formed on a fully voluntary basis, with a membership of 306 peasant holdings. All three prepared themselves well for the spring sowing and carried it out in an organised manner.

The Party organisations in the collective farms, relying on the help of the activists, quickly consolidated the farms. They considered the specific conditions in which they functioned, determined work priorities, deployed the labour force and achieved the best results at the minimum cost. The Natalyev Party organisation of the Volsk Area in the Lower Volga Territory is an example of such work. Up to the 16th Party Conference the organisation consisted of 5 Party members and two candidates. By

the beginning of 1930, there were already 45 members. The Party organisation had achieved the total collectivisation of this big village in time for the spring sowing. 644 private holdings were amalgamated into a collective farm. What is important is that none of those who joined left the farm.

The strength of the Natalyevo Party organisation lay in its close ties with the poor and middle peasants of the village and the way it guided them. It was able to ensure that the collective farmers themselves took over the reins of management on the farm. When the village Soviet was elected, alongside with poor peasants, its membership included 47% middle peasants. 33% of the collective-farm board were middle peasants, as were 36% of the board of the consumers' co-operative. The middle peasants were also widely involved in the work carried by different sections of the village Soviet. The former middle peasants took an active part in the production conference on the farm. Thus, a firm bloc of poor and middle peasants was forged. And when the first collective-farm spring came, the Natalyevo collective farm displayed a high degree of organisation and unity, and a high level of collective labour productivity.

In each region, territory and district of the country there were quite a number of collective farms that set wonderful examples of how collectively run farms should operate. Hand in hand with the development of the collective farms, new socialist forms of labour began to develop in the villages. The one-time individual peasants who had joined together to form big collective farms felt the need to work differently, to pool their efforts and work as one collective. These joint efforts provided impetus for higher labour productivity.

Using the results of the collective farmers who worked well as an example, the Party was able to give a striking demonstration of the advantages of collective farming. The success of the spring sowing on the collective farms provided the peasants with the best proof of the advantages of collectivisation. This explains the very big increase in area under crops on the collective farms in that first spring. In the Russian Federation alone, the area under spring crops in the collective-farm sector increased 8.5 times over. The figures show (see the table on p. 247) how the area in the socialist sector of agriculture increased in 1929-1930.

By 1 June 1930, 21.8 per cent of the peasant holdings in the Russian Federation, united in collective farms, accounted for 34.8 per cent of the entire area under spring crops. In the main grain growing regions this figure was much higher: in the North

Year	Total spring sowing (1000 hec.)	Collective farms		Including state farms		Individual farmsteads	
		1000 hec.	%%	1000 hec.	%%	1000 hec.	%%
1929	61,437.5	2,584.9	4.2	847.5	1.4	58,005.1	94.4
1930	63,305.9	22,061.2	34.8	2,372.9	3.7	38,871.8	61.9
1930 % of 1929	103.0	853.5	—	280.0	—	67.0	—

Caucasus—36.8 per cent of the winter crops and 69.1 per cent of the spring crops, and in the Lower Volga Territory—21.6 per cent of the winter crops and 60 per cent of the spring crops. Since the area under crops of the collective farms had increased so sharply, the area under crops per collective farmer was also much greater than the area per private landholder. Here are the figures for the Russian Federation (in hectares):

Year	Per collective farmer		Individual farmsteads	
	Total	Incl. spring crops	Total	Incl. spring crops
1929	5.4	3.7	4.8	3.4
1930	7.4	5.1	4.2	2.7

All this goes to show that the new social system was *taking firm root in the economy and life of the Soviet villages and becoming a mighty and indomitable force. The success of the spring sowing on the collective farms consolidated the victory of collectivisation, making concrete prospects for the development of the socialist sector in agriculture more definite. All this refuted the opportunist stories about a retreat, once and for all. Concrete reality clearly showed that the fate of agriculture was being determined not by individual peasant holdings, but by the collective and state farms.*

Summing up the results of the collective-farm movement for the period between the second half of 1929 and the spring of 1930, it could be said that it was one of the decisive stages in the advancement of collectivisation.

Firstly, this period marked the beginning and the further

development of the process of total collectivisation of entire districts, and the transition from the policy of restricting and ousting capitalist elements to the new policy of eliminating the kulaks as a class on the basis of total collectivisation.

Secondly, basic qualitative changes took place in the process of collectivisation during this period. This was marked by the emergence of the bulk of the middle peasants on the scene, lending the collectivisation movement fresh strength and new scope. In the course of the movement, the transition was accomplished from the simplest semi-socialist forms of agricultural production to the higher forms—the agricultural artel, which became the dominant form of collectivisation.

Despite the complexity of this process, the Central Committee of the Party boldly and decisively rectified the mistakes and distortions of the Party line made in the process of collectivisation. At this historic turning point, the entire Party displayed the greatest Leninist flexibility and decisiveness, it made tremendous efforts to correct the Party line as mass collectivisation proceeded to ensure the further success of the movement.

CHAPTER X

THE NEW UPSURGE IN THE COLLECTIVE-FARM MOVEMENT AND THE COMPLETION OF TOTAL COLLECTIVISATION IN THE MOST IMPORTANT GRAIN GROWING REGIONS OF THE COUNTRY

1. THE HISTORIC ROLE OF THE 16TH PARTY CONGRESS AND THE FURTHER ELABORATION OF THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF COLLECTIVISATION

The 16th Congress, that took place from 26 June to 13 July 1930, played an outstanding role in evolving the theory of collectivisation and making a scientific assessments of how it worked in practice. The Congress summed up the Party's efforts, made over the previous three years, to industrialise the country and collectivise agriculture and noted with satisfaction that in these three years "the country had entered the period in which there was to be a *gigantic unfurling of socialist construction*".¹

The 16th Congress went down in the history of the Communist Party as the one that launched *an all-out socialist offensive along the entire front*. The Party's transition to the policy of eliminating the kulaks as a class on the basis of total collectivisation marked a sharp turning point in the course of socialist construction. It made it possible for the Party to launch a general offensive against capitalist elements, moving towards their total elimination in all spheres of the national economy.

The leading and transforming force in these profound and all-embracing processes was large-scale socialist industry, with the working class led by the Communist Party in the vanguard of the movement. The influence of these mighty material and moral factors on the development of the new social and economic processes was crucially decisive in the victory of the socialist system in this country.

The progress of socialist industrialisation was marked not only by rapid growth, but by the consolidation of the socialist element in industry. It now accounted for 99.3 per cent, while

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions..., Vol. 4, p. 409.

the private sector was reduced to a mere 0.7 per cent. *This signified that socialism had won a total and final victory in industry.* The rapid growth of socialist industry ensured that in the total national output, industrial output accounted for a much larger share than agricultural production.

In 1927/1928, industry's share in the national output was 45.2 per cent and agriculture's—54.8 per cent, whereas in 1929/1930 their positions were reversed, with industry accounting for 53 per cent and agriculture for 47 per cent. Industrial output was 180 per cent of the pre-war (1913) figure, with heavy industry and its main component—the engineering industry—in the lead. The Congress noted with satisfaction that the USSR was rapidly turning from a backward agrarian country into an advanced country with a large-scale industry.¹

The Congress, however, made it clear that the pace of industrial progress was one thing and the level of industrial development quite another. If in its rate of industrialisation the Soviet Union had long surpassed the more developed capitalist countries, it still lagged far behind in the level of industrial development. This made it necessary to eliminate the lag, to accelerate the pace of development, mobilise all internal forces for the quickest fulfilment of the five-year plan, and fight all these who had little faith in success and sought to slow down the pace of socialist industrialisation. "Any reduction in pace made to please the capitalist and kulak elements and weaken the offensive against them would aggravate the difficulties, not lessen them, and would strengthen the position of the class enemies of the proletarian dictatorship."²

The Soviet working class had a good grip of the main task set by the Communist Party. Following the successful fulfilment and overfulfilment of the targets set for the first year of the five-year plan, the masses put forward the slogan "Fulfil the 5-year plan in four years!" Regarding this slogan as quite realistic, the 16th Congress instructed the Party Central Committee "to continue to ensure *good bolshevist rates* of socialist construction and the *fulfilment of the five-year plan in four years*".³

The Party Congress devoted a great deal of attention to agriculture. As in industry, fundamental changes had taken place in agriculture in the three years under review, and the socialist

¹ *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 4, p. 446.

² *ibid.*, p. 410.

³ *ibid.*, p. 418.

sector, in particular, had grown tremendously. The Congress held a special debate on the collective-farm movement and the advancement of agriculture. In the decision it made at the close of the debate, it gave a profound economic analysis of agricultural development, set new tasks, and determined how to further transform the countryside along socialist lines.

With the growth in new socialist economic units in the countryside (collective and state farms, machine-and-tractor stations), the ratio between the socialist and the private sector in farming changed radically. The socialist sector, i. e. the state and collective farms, took the dominant position, pushing the private sector into the background. The very process of economic agricultural development undermined the existence of the small peasant holdings. The production achievements of the collective farms, as well as the obvious advantages of the new system, were the main reasons for the withering away of the small peasant holdings and the establishment of a new social system in the villages.

This, in turn, had a decisive influence on the radical changes that took place in the ratio of economic systems in the national economy as a whole, "since in addition to the socialist sector in industry", as the Congress pointed out in its decision, "a socialist sector has emerged in agriculture and is rapidly ousting the capitalist element".¹ *If in the past, the socialist relationships in the Soviet Union rested almost solely on socialist industry, now they acquired a similar hold in the rapidly growing socialist sector of agriculture—in the collective and state farms, and in the machine-and-tractor stations.*

Profound changes in the balance of class forces in the country also took place on this social and economic basis. They took the form of rapid growth in the working class, the strengthening of its guiding role with regard to the working peasantry, and the strengthening of the alliance between them. In the years preceding mass collectivisation, the working class and its vanguard—the Communist Party—relied in their policy on the poor peasants, while strengthening the alliance with the middle peasants and fighting the kulaks to restrict their opportunities for exploitation. With the transition to the policy of eliminating the kulaks as a class on the basis of total collectivisation, the deployment of class forces in the countryside changed fundamentally: the alliance between the working class and the working peasantry underwent a radical change—the collective farmers became the

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions.... Vol. 4, p. 449.

genuine and most important bulwark of the working class in the villages transformed on socialist lines.

Analysing the economic and social changes that had taken place in the country, the 16th Party Congress asserted that in view of these changes, a new approach was needed to the question of who was the bastion of Soviet power in the villages. "*As of now,*" the Congress proclaimed, "in the most important grain growing areas of the Soviet Union, the rural population is divided into two groups: *the collective farmers, who are the solid and genuine bastion of Soviet power,* and the poor and middle peasants who are not yet members of the collective farms, but who undoubtedly will join them as the experience of the farms convinces them of the need to do so in the shortest space of time."¹

Thus the 16th Party Congress formulated the class policy of the Party in the villages in an entirely new way. Lenin's well-known formula on the essence of class policy—reliance on the poor peasant, an alliance with the middle peasant, and a struggle against the kulaks—in effect incorporated the idea of the inevitability of victory of large-scale collective farming and the demise of the old capitalist relations. This three-pronged policy of the Party had now accomplished its historical role in the more advanced grain growing areas of the country, and it was re-worded in keeping with the new economic and social conditions.

For areas of total collectivisation, the Party's class policy was formulated as follows: *to rely heavily on all the collective farmers, to strengthen the alliance with the poor and middle peasants who had not joined the collective farms and get them to join the farms, making them firm pillars of Soviet power in the villages, and to suppress decisively the bitter resistance of the kulaks, eliminating them as a class on the basis of total collectivisation.*

The new class policy of the Party and Soviet government with regard to the peasants was reaffirmed by the 6th Congress of Soviets. "The middle peasant who has joined the collective farm becomes, alongside the collective farmer—the former hired labourer and poor peasant—a genuine and firm bastion of Soviet power in the countryside.... The poor or middle peasant who retains his private holding, who helps the kulaks to fight the collective farms and undermine collectivisation, cannot

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions..., Vol. 4, p. 449.

be regarded as an ally, far less the bastion of the working class, for he is in effect the ally of the kulak. The only poor or middle peasant to remain an ally of the working class, while retaining his individual holding is the one who together with the working class helps build up the collective farms, who supports the collective-farm movement, and who helps to wage a decisive struggle against the kulak."¹

However, there was no contradiction between the new class policy of eliminating the kulaks as a class on the basis of total collectivisation and the earlier Party policy of restricting and ousting the kulaks. They expressed their dialectic unity at the new stage of the class struggle and were organically linked, each of them corresponding to the specific conditions in which the class struggle was developing in the countryside. In effect both these class political lines were expressive of the third strategic slogan of the Party on the peasant question and cast the triple task of the Party in the countryside in a new light. Indeed, the policy of eliminating the kulaks as a class stemmed directly from total collectivisation, and consequently its success depended wholly on the forces that were working actively to build up the collective farms. Those who tried to eliminate the kulaks as a class, without simultaneously seeking to strengthen the process of collectivisation, inevitably came to an impasse and deviated from the correct class position, because the elimination of the kulaks was not an administrative measure—it was part and parcel of the process of total collectivisation. Equally mistaken were those who sought to eliminate the class of kulaks relying only on the poor peasant and on an alliance with the individual middle peasants—without trying to turn them into collective farmers—because total collectivisation is possible only if one relies on the entire collective-farm peasantry.

Consequently, repression was a necessary but not the most important measure to be directed against the kulaks. The main thing, apart from revolutionary measures against the kulaks, was to step up the process of total collectivisation, to speed up the process of getting the individual peasants to join the collective farms, and to replace the old social and economic basis in the villages—the small individual cash-crop producers—by big collective farms. This meant not only eliminating the kulaks as a class but also abolishing the conditions that bred this

¹ *Sjezdy Sovjetov v postanovlenijakh i resolutsijakh* (Congresses of Soviets in Decisions and Resolutions), Moscow, 1935, pp. 447-48 (in Russian).

class. "It was not a problem that can be solved by overthrowing a class," Lenin wrote. "It can be solved only by the organisational reconstruction of the whole social economy, by a transition from individual, disunited, petty-commodity production to large-scale social production."¹

The implementation of the new class policy resolved the question of drawing the middle peasant into socialist construction. At the same time the question of the attitude to the poor peasant and hired labourer in the districts of total collectivisation needed reviewing. Since the poor peasant and the hired labourer after joining the collective farm received the same rights as the middle peasant with regard to the means of production, his economic position was brought up to the level of the latter and there was no longer any difference between them. There could be no division into social groups among the members of a collective farm. So in the districts of total collectivisation there was no longer any need for setting up special groups of poor peasants. The new social system not only eliminated the social and economic basis for the stratification of the peasantry, but it also did away with such concepts and social categories as hired labourer, poor and middle peasant, or kulak.

In these new conditions the Party's task was to activate all the collective farmers, to develop their creative initiative and socialist consciousness, to encourage them to do creative work and mobilise all forces to strengthening the collective farms economically and organisationally. The 16th Party Congress stated in a resolution, that "the new social discipline necessary for achieving the highest labour productivity on the collective farms can be created only on the basis of the genuine creative and active participation of the collective farmers in managing their farms"².

The profound social and economic changes resulting from the process of collectivisation allowed the Party to resolve another task of great historic significance. *With the emergence of the collective farms the communal form of land tillage—the oldest form of Russian agriculture—lost its meaning.* On 30 July 1930, the Central Executive Committee and the Council of Peoples Commissars of the Russian Federation issued a decree abolishing the land societies in the regions of total collectivisation, where the

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Economics and Politics", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 112.

² *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 4, p. 450.

collective farms had incorporated no less than 75 per cent of the peasant holdings. This signified that the collective farms had become the dominant form both in working the land and in its use. Following this measure the village committees of peasant mutual aid were transformed into collective-farm mutual aid units and their property was turned over to the indivisible funds of the collective farms.

The 16th Party Congress gave a clear-cut reply to the question of what policy should be followed in areas where total collectivisation had not yet taken place. The Party insisted that the Party's organisations keep strictly to the policy of restricting and ousting the kulaks, relying on the poor peasants in an alliance with the middle peasants. Only by consistently sticking to this class policy could they prepare the conditions for subsequently going over to total collectivisation, and only on this basis could this implement the policy of eliminating the kulaks as a class. The Party Congress warned against the dangerous mistake that had been made in a number of places when some officials had engaged in dispossessing the kulaks, not as part of the overall process of collectivisation, but independently and without collectivisation.

The 16th Party Congress warned all the Party organisations that the individual peasant should not be ignored, and insisted on a resolute struggle against the new enemy tactics of trying to sow discord between the collective farmers and the individual land-holders, aimed at making it harder for the latter to join the collective farms. It pointed to the need to step up the process of collectivisation, and actively overcome the waverings of the middle peasant through encouraging close ties between the collective farmers and the other working peasants. As the Congress noted, it was important that the right kind of relationship be established between the collective farmers and independent peasants: "*That these last should not be hounded, but they should be given assistance and encouraged to join the collective farm.*"¹

The Party Congress also played a very important role in the complete ideological routing of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois agrarian theories, as well as in evolving the theory and practice of collectivisation. It noted that the anti-Marxist agrarian theories had received circulation because the ideological front workers had lagged behind the momentum of the collective-farm

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions..., Vol. 4, p. 456.

movement and the new processes taking place in agriculture.

As a result there was a gap between the practical achievements of collectivisation and the evolution of a corresponding theory, which enabled anti-Marxist, anti-scientific theories to jump in. The danger was that these alien class theories had not only won currency among officials connected with collectivisation, but were also being applied in practice. In view of this the ideological workers had to quickly make good this shortcoming and get down to scientifically evolving the theory of socialist construction, and especially the Marxist-Leninist theory of extended reproduction.

As collectivisation was put into practice, the collective farms took on a definite shape, confirming the viability of the great Marxist-Leninist doctrine that big collective farms in agriculture were far superior to small fragmented peasant private holdings. Suffice it to say that just through pooling the peasant implements the collective farms were able to considerably increase the area under crops. The individual peasants had not been able to do this. But the Party firmly believed that the advantages of the collective farms over personal holdings would be even greater and more indisputable when the machine-and-tractor stations began to help the collective farms, providing them with tractors, combines and other farm machinery.

The documents of the 16th Party Congress provide the theoretical framework for regarding the collective farms as a socialist economic unit, thereby refuting Right-wing opportunist concepts. These claimed that there was nothing socialist about the collective farms, an anti-scientific view that was blown sky-high by the Congress. Since the main means of production were publicly owned, in other words were socialist property, the farms were a socialist type of economy. The land, the tractors, combines and other sophisticated machines were in the hands of a workers' and peasants' state. All other means of production on the collective farms, as well as the greater part of the cattle, buildings, simple machines and tools, were collective property, i. e. not privately owned. They were owned by all the members of the farm and thus were socialist property. They belonged to the farm and were its main means of livelihood. Only a small part of the means of production (cows, goats, sheep and poultry as well as small implements), and the houses in which the farmers lived, remained their personal property, along with the plot of land around the house that the collective farmers could use for their own needs.

There were certain contradictions in the collective farms, resulting from the fact that they had emerged on such a mass scale. There were even elements of class struggle since the mentality of the petty owner persisted and there was some material inequality. But the great significance of the collective farms lay in the fact that they were developing along socialist lines, on a planned basis, and were applying the newest achievements of science and technology to agriculture. It was in the artel that the Party found the most feasible form of collectivised farming, on the basis of which it was gradually able to re-shape the petty ownership mentality of the peasants.

Speaking of the theory and practice of collectivisation, mention should be made of the important role played in these historic affairs by the Marxist agrarian Ya. A. Yakovlev. He was connected with the drafting of all the most important documents on collectivisation, heading the commission of the Politburo of the Party Central Committee on matters of total collectivisation. It was under his guidance that two versions of the Rules of Agricultural Artels were drawn up. He was the main speaker at both Congresses of collective-farm shock-workers. He was also the author of many major works on Marxist-Leninist agrarian theory.

On the example of the immense growth of socialist forms of agriculture—the collective and state farms and machine-and-tractor stations, the Communist Party provided a theoretical proof and a practical test of the possibility of moving from backward under-productive small peasant holdings to large-scale highly productive collective farms.

“It was on this basis,” the Congress noted, “that *the Party could start to implement its slogan of catching up with and overtaking the capitalist countries of the world not only in industry, where the advantages of large enterprises had long been clear, but also in agriculture, where the pace of development had until then been determined by the predominance of small and tiny holdings with an extremely low productivity. This would now be determined by the accelerated development of collective and state farms, a new form, unheard of in the history of mankind, and introduced for the first time through the experience of economic construction in the USSR.*”¹

The 16th Party Congress instructed the Central Committee to radically revise the five-year plan for agricultural develop-

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions..., Vol. 4, p. 453.

ment, paying special attention to resolving the grain problem, to further advancing industrial crops, developing stock breeding through the establishment of special state stock farms, setting up high-productive stock-farms within the collective farms, and expanding the fodder base. To this end the 1930-1931 credits to collective farms were doubled, amounting to 1,000 million rubles. Thus the grain problem remained at the centre of the Party's attention. It was the main feature in many of the tasks connected with the further development of agriculture. Only by solving the problem of grain production could the country do away with the backwardness of agriculture and raise the level of its other sectors—stock breeding and the production of industrial crops.

All these highly important problems of advancing agriculture could, quite naturally, only be successfully solved on the basis of large-scale socialist economic units—namely the collective and state farms, which could be supplied with modern machinery and had the use of up-to-date scientific methods. The Congress documents draw attention to the need for scientific research institutions (the Lenin Agricultural Academy and the Kolkhoz Institute) to devote attention to the problems involved in developing socialist agriculture.

It was essential first of all to deal with such problems as the rational deployment of agricultural production forces on the territory of the USSR according to the various sectors of farming and different crops; the growing of more profitable food and industrial crops to replace less profitable ones; and the possibilities for making the best use of local energy sources in agriculture. The theoretical workers were called upon to provide a scientific framework and a theoretical summing up of the forms and methods of collectivisation on the basis of rich experience accumulated from working in the collective farms.

Far from reducing the Party's concern for agriculture, the new collective-farm system in the countryside made it all the greater, since "*the artel was not the end, but the starting point* for the shaping of a new social discipline, for teaching the peasants how to build socialism".¹ The Communist Party foresaw that many years of hard work would be required to turn the collective farms into big mechanised enterprises, to train personnel from among the collective farmers themselves, and to raise the overall cultural and political standards of the collective farmers. Only

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions..., Vol. 4, p. 459.

on this basis would the peasants finally shed their petty-owner mentality. "It will take many years, decades, to create a new labour discipline, new forms of social ties between people, and new forms and methods of drawing people into labour. It is a most gratifying and noble work."¹

The 16th Party Congress criticised the Leftist mistakes made in collectivisation and approved the decisions passed by the Party Central Committee of 20 February, 10 March, 15 March and 2 April 1930. "If the mistakes had not been put right," the Congress noted, "it could have *jeopardised* the entire business of collectivising agriculture and *undermined* the very *foundation* of the Soviet state—the alliance of the working class and the peasantry."²

The very great achievements in socialist industrialisation and the collectivisation of agriculture indicated that the country had already emerged from the transition period and entered a new period—that of direct and all-out socialist construction, the period of socialism. This was borne out by the fact the socialist sector predominated in all spheres of the national economy. The tremendous efforts of the Party had been accompanied by immense difficulties and the bitterest class struggle, but these were difficulties brought about by the growth, progress and advancement of socialist construction. Consequently they were difficulties that could be overcome.

The Party's task was to see that they were indeed overcome. But since our class enemies sought to take advantage of these difficulties to upset socialist construction, the struggle against the difficulties became simultaneously a struggle against the class enemies and their agents. It was essential to fight the remnants of Trotskyism and all anti-middle peasant excesses with determination and to finally overcome Right-wing opportunism, at that time the main danger to the Party.

The decisions taken by the 16th Communist Party Congress were of great historic significance. They mobilised the Party and the entire Soviet people to make further efforts in building socialism. Armed with these wise decisions, the Party stepped up the socialist offensive launched on capitalist elements along the whole front, both in the towns and in the villages. Implementing

¹ V. I. Lenin, "From Old Social System to the New", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 518.

² CPSU in *Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 4, p. 452.

the Congress decisions, the Soviet people, under the leadership of the Party, achieved tremendous success at subsequent stages of their struggle for socialism.

2. THE ECONOMIC ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE COLLECTIVE FARMS AS THE BASIS FOR THE NEW UPSURGE IN THE COLLECTIVISATION MOVEMENT

The spring sowing campaign and the subsequent farm work done by collective farmers jointly with their socialised means of production consolidated the achievements of collectivisation and created the conditions for its new and greater upsurge. The most important achievement was that the wavering of the middle peasant section of the collective farmers had been halted, and nothing was left of the uncertainty and doubts shown by some collective farmers on the eve of the spring sowing campaign.

While collectivisation slowed down somewhat during the summer, because both the collective farms and individual farmers were busy harvesting, in the autumn it began to gain momentum again. The slowing down of collectivisation following the withdrawal of some peasants from collective farms before the spring sowing campaign was followed by a new influx of individual farmers into collective farms. This applied chiefly to the wavering middle peasants who had left collective farms in the spring.

This new upsurge of the collectivisation was mainly caused by: *first*, the greater material, technical, financial and organisational assistance given to the collective farms by the state; *secondly*, the economic achievements of the collective farms in 1930; and *thirdly*, the improvement in the organisational work in the countryside and the mounting political activity of the working peasants.

Due to the successful fulfilment of the plan for the country's industrialisation and the overfulfilment of the targets for the first two years of the five-year plan period, the Party and government were able to offer considerably more assistance to the collective farms. In 1930, Russian Federation agriculture had 622,000 tractors, whereas this number in the previous year had been 311,500. The increase in the number of agricultural machinery is illustrated particularly vividly by the figures for the main grain growing areas:

In addition, agriculture was provided with complex agricultural machines and more sophisticated implements in considerable quantities. The following table illustrates the development of the mechanisation of agriculture in the Russian Federation in the first two years of the first five-year plan period:

Territory	1929		1930 (by October)		Percentage increase 1929-1930	
	No. of tractors	Thousand h. p.	No. of tractors	Thousand h. p.	No. of tractors	Thousand h. p.
North Caucasian Territory	7,097	83.3	8,090	115	14.0	38.0
Lower Volga Territory	3,734	40.9	6,060	94	99.7	129.8
Middle Volga Territory	2,953	39.2	6,070	103	105.5	162.7

Year	Agricultural machinery		Proportion of agricultural machinery (percentage of total agricultural equipment)
	Total cost (mln. rubles)	Per 1 hect. of sown areas (rubles)	
1929	1,030.0	12.3	13.6
1930	1,261.6	14.3	19.7

These figures show that in the first two years of the first five-year plan period, the provision of agriculture, especially in the main grain growing areas, with new machinery had increased considerably. The increased use of tractors and other machines on the vast tracts of collective-farm land in efficient combination with draught animals enabled the collective farms to make considerable economic progress, which was the main cause of the new upsurge in the collectivisation.

Collectivisation proceeded at a pace not shown by any branch of socialist industry. This is perhaps best illustrated by the growth of areas under grain crops on collective farms:

	1927	1928	1929	1930
Area under grain crops, mln. hectares	0.8	2.0	6.5	43.0

Thus in just four years the sown area on collective farm had increased more than 50 times over to equal the sown area in France and Italy taken together. This increase was due not only to the constant growing number of peasants joining collective farms, but also to the reclamation of new tracts of land. The sown area per each of the collective farms was much greater than per each individual farm: 5.2 hectares and 2.7 hectares respectively in the spring of 1930.

The gigantic growth of the socialist sector in agriculture created a real possibility of solving the grain problem and ensuring the progress of all other branches of agriculture. The development of large collective farms also had a favourable impact on all spheres of life in the Soviet countryside. The increase in collective farm sown areas showed that as large enterprises these farms could use tractors and other agricultural machinery, which small individual peasant farms could not do. Moreover, experience showed that even draught animals and the simpler agricultural implements were used more efficiently on collective farms than on individual farms. For example, in 1930 collective farms tilled one and a half to two times more land with horses than individual farmers.

The considerable increase in sown area on the collective farms was also due to the fact that the larger collective farms had greater opportunities for making extensive use of advanced agricultural methods.

As a result of all these advantages offered by large-scale collective farming, the grain yields on the collective farms in 1930 alone were 15 per cent higher than those on individual farms and in many of the areas of advanced grain growing even as much as 25 per cent higher. That meant, that the collective farms had taken over the lead in grain production. Their results for marketable grain were particularly good. The figures below are the best illustration of the role of collective and state farms in grain production in the North Caucasus over a four-year period:¹

¹ See: *Kolkhozy Severo-Kavkazskogo kraja* (Collective Farms of the North Caucasian Territory), p. 5 (in Russian); *Severny Kavkaz*, No. 2-3, p. 39.

Year	Grain production (million metric centners*)		Year	Grain production (million metric centners)	
	Total	Marketable		Total	Marketable
Collective farms			State farms		
1927	4.9	2.0	1927	9.5	6.4
1928	8.4	3.6	1928	12.9	7.9
1929	29.1	12.7	1929	28.2	18.0
1930	256.0	82.0	1930	71.7	61.0

* 1 metric centner = 100 kilograms

The overall trend was much the same in other parts of the country. Here, for example, are the figures for the growth of marketable grain production in the socialised sector of agriculture in the Middle Volga Territory in percentage:

	1928/29	1929/30	1930/31
Collective and state farms	7.6	34.5	74.9
Individual farmers	92.4	65.5	25.1

The proportion of marketable grain produced by the Territory in 1930 was as follows: for state farms 37.9 per cent, for collective farms 40.6 per cent, and 22.6 per cent for individual farms. The picture in the Lower Volga Territory was much the same. Whereas in 1929 grain received by the state from the socialist sector of agriculture was 15 per cent of total grain supplies, and that from the individual farmers amounted to 85 per cent, in 1930 the socialist sector was giving 66.7 per cent and the individual farmers only 33.3 per cent.

The socialised sector in agriculture was very rapidly gaining the upper hand: in 1930 it gave the country 600 million poods of marketable grain, i. e. almost as much as the total amount in 1928. The collective farms held the major position within the socialist sector: over four years their gross production increased 50 times, and their marketable production 41 times. By selling the state 492 million poods of grain in 1930, the collec-

tive farms increased by almost a factor of four the quantity of marketable grain sold in 1926-27 by the kulaks, and by more than a factor of two the amount of grain provided by landlord estates in 1913.

The advantages of collective work over individual work were apparent in the economic results, and consequently in the material situation of the collective farmers as well. As a result of the growth of socialised farming and its economic achievements, the incomes of the collective farmers in all the social groups to which they had formerly belonged were now one and a half to two times as high as those of the individual farmers. Here are relevant figures for the North Caucasus:

Average Incomes of Collective and Individual Farmers¹ (rubles)

Social groups	Collective farmers' earnings, 1930				Total incomes of individual farmers
	Earnings from work	Incomes from socialised property	Incomes from private plots	Total	

Per capita

Agricultural labourers	73.00	2.30	9.70	85	27
Poor peasants	64.00	3.00	18.00	85	62
Middle peasants (below average)	72.70	6.70	17.60	97	59
Middle peasants	81.10	10.30	27.60	119	68

Per farm

Agricultural labourers	241	7.36	30	271	82
Poor peasants	328	14.70	86	414	231
Middle peasants (below average)	431	37.52	113	544	296
Middle peasants	576	64.89	173	749	402

These figures showing the increase in the incomes of the collective farmers in the North Caucasian Territory are equally

¹ CSAOR, f. 5451, op. 15, d. 320, l. 104.

typical for other parts of the country. Here, for instance, are figures for the Middle Volga Territory for 1930¹:

Type of produce	Collective farms	Individual farms	Percentage difference
Gross grain output per farm (metric tons)	5.4	2.8	92.8
Marketable produce per farm (metric tons)	2.2	0.6	266.7
Gross agricultural output per farm in state prices (rubles)	682.7	423.6	61.2
Total marketable produce in state prices (rubles)	187.7	74.4	152.3

Consequently all social groups of working peasants had benefited from large-scale collective farming: their incomes had increased considerably and become much higher than those of individual farmers. Of course, collective farming could not bring, nor did it have to, equal incomes to all collective farmers. The difference stemmed first of all from the system of income distribution according to the work done. The amount of property brought to the collective farm by each peasant when joining was also taken into account.

Because of this the former middle peasant received, in addition to what he had earned by his work, extra money for the property he had contributed. Therefore, his income was higher than that of the poor peasant or agricultural labourer, who had contributed less property. The private plots retained by the collective farmers also brought the former middle peasant a higher income than this did the poor peasant or agricultural labourer because the middle peasant's plot was better equipped and better run. Nevertheless, it was the poor peasants and labourers whom the collective farms benefited most: not only had their incomes increased, but they had also thrown off once and for all the chains that had bound them to the kulaks, and had become their own masters. The incomes of collective farmers, who had previously been labourers, had increased almost three-fold per capita, and were more than double the incomes of labourers who had not yet joined collective farms.

¹ See: *Sredneye Povolzhye* (Middle Volga Territory), 1931, Nos. 1-2, p. 39.

All these facts shattered the kulaks' demagogic allegations to the effect that the middle peasant would be worse off in the collective farms than the poor peasant, that his income would fall and the poor peasant's income would increase accordingly. Facts proved that only the collective farm could guarantee economic stability for the middle peasants, and that their incomes increased, as did those of the poor peasants. *Consequently, the collective farms started the historical process of obliterating the difference in the material situation of the poor and middle peasants and abolishing the social stratification of the peasantry. This process did not lead to egalitarianism and lowering of the working peasant's material standards, but meant an increase in both the profitability of the socialised farm as a whole and the income of each of its members.*

Summing up the first results of collectivisation, we are bound to draw the following conclusions: *first*, the collective farm is the best type of collective agricultural enterprise, one which makes it possible to raise the material standards of the working peasantry and put an end to their bondage by the kulaks; *secondly*, the collective farm breaks down social boundaries and provides fairly high standards of living for the poorer strata of the peasants (the agricultural labourers and poor peasants) who in the past owned no property; *thirdly*, the collective farm guarantees economic stability for the middle peasants, whose incomes become much higher than when they farmed on their own; and *fourthly*, all members of a collective farm are paid according to the work done, which provides incentive among the collective farmers to increase their labour productivity as a sure guarantee for constant improvement in their material situation and cultural level.

3. THE GIGANTIC UPSURGE IN THE COLLECTIVISATION MOVEMENT

In summing up the economic results for 1930, and highly appraising the work of the collective farms in its decision of 6 October 1930 on "The Collectivisation and Harvest Day" the Party Central Committee emphasised that the 1930 harvest had surpassed all previous harvests. That had been made possible by the immense increase in the number of collective and state farms, the use of tractors and other machines, and efficient advanced agricultural methods. The decision pointed out that the achievements of collectivisation and the tasks facing

it must be published among the broad masses of the poor and middle peasants who had not yet joined collective farms so that they should see clearly all the advantages of collective farming. Party organisations were advised to arrange meetings of collective and individual farmers, both in their own and in neighbouring villages, in order to discuss the reports of the collective-farm boards on the operation of their farms.

The purpose of the Collectivisation and Harvest Day (15-25 October) was to draw new millions of poor and middle peasants into collective farms and mobilise all forces for the quickest completion of grain supplies to the state and of all agricultural work for the season. The task of the Party organisations was to ensure that this highly important work was accomplished on a truly mass scale, to encourage in every way the initiative of the peasant masses and their efforts in fighting all distortions and shortcomings in collectivisation.

Experience showed that the Collectivisation and Harvest Day developed into a mass political campaign in the villages and marked an important stage in the new upsurge of the collectivisation movement. This is borne out, for example, by the following figures showing the increase in the number of collective farms in many parts of the country. In the Sorochinsk District of the Middle Volga Territory, for instance, 2,075 individual farmers joined collective farms in the ten days from 15 to 25 October, and the percentage of collectivised farms rose from 44 to 54. In the Orenburg District, the percentage of collectivised farms rose during the same period from 59 to 70.

It is noteworthy that the increase in collectivised farms was chiefly due to the return of the poor and middle peasants who had earlier left collective farms. An analysis of these figures reveals that 49.6 per cent of the poor peasants and 42.5 per cent of the middle peasants returned to the collective farms that they had earlier left.

The influx of peasants to collective farms and the increase in the socialised sown area, herds of draught animals, stocks of implements and the indivisible funds of collective farms was taking place throughout the country. *All this indicated that collectivisation was gaining new momentum and that the main role in it was now played by the collective farmers themselves. It was from among them that the great creative initiative took its beginning and gathered scope.*

However, the increase in the number of collective farms was not the only significant feature of the movement. In the autumn

of 1930 some qualitative changes took place. Whereas previously peasants had often united into collective farms by a simple majority vote at a meeting, now a written application was required from all those wishing to join. This application was first to be considered by the board of the collective farm and then submitted for approval to a general meeting of the collective farmers in the obligating presence of the applicant. This showed that the prestige of the collective farms had risen and that the sense of responsibility for them had grown stronger not only among the membership but also among the individual farmers who had decided to join the collective farms.

Having withstood all the hardships and tests, the collective farms had shown their immense viability. That is the sole explanation for the fact that, after the results of the collective farms' work had been summed up, large numbers of peasants applied to join collective farms to break with individual farming for good.

These applications showed that under the influence of the collective farms' economic achievements, the mood of the poor and middle peasants with individual farms had changed radically. The concrete examples of the advantages of collective farming had convinced many of them to join collective farms. Mention should, however, be made of a dangerous trend that appeared in the collectivisation movement at the time, namely, many collective farmers showed a harmful tendency to set themselves apart from the individual farmers.

Moreover, in some places applications to join collective farms from individual farmers who had previously wavered were turned down. Sometimes there were long delays in considering applications. Frequently peasants returning to collective farms were set a probation period of three to four months, individual farmers were not admitted to collective farmers' meetings, and peasants who had left collective farms were refused permission to enter.

The spring setback to collectivisation had taught the collective farmers a lot and they had drawn the correct conclusions from it. They had come to understand even better that the collective farm was a large well-organised enterprise and therefore anyone joining it had to display discipline, and a sense of responsibility to the rest of the membership. Yet the attempts, made even by more progressive collective farmers, to separate from individual farmers, weakened the collective farms and did them great harm.

At the very dawn of collectivisation, Lenin had warned against the dangers of isolation from the surrounding peasants. "...We,"

he wrote, "consider it the absolute duty of all co-operative, artel agricultural enterprises not to isolate and sever themselves from the surrounding peasant population, but to afford them assistance."¹ He went on to note that collective farms should be organised in such a way as to attract neighbouring peasants so that each artel "might become a nucleus capable of strengthening the peasants' conviction that collective farming, as a form of transition to socialism, is something of benefit to them..."²

In correcting the mistakes of the collective farms which had refused to admit poor and middle individual farmers, the Party Central Committee explained that such trends, far from strengthening the collective farms, only weakened them. The great transforming role of the collective farms lies precisely in their ability to use their economic achievements to accelerate the process of collectivisation and set the wavering part of the working peasants on the road to new life.

Another obstacle to development of collectivisation was the revival in some places of the old practice of taking administrative measures with regard to individual farmers. This was in effect a vestige of the Leftist distortions condemned by the Party.

The Party Central Committee condemned these mistakes in collectivisation and demanded that all Party organisations act strictly in accordance with the decisions of the 16th Party Congress, which had corrected the past mistakes. The Party organisations should be given their due: they did enormous political work in the countryside to consolidate what had already been achieved in collectivisation and to promote the new, powerful upsurge of the movement. Thanks to the extensive promotional work and popularisation of the economic achievements of the collective farms, the collectivisation was gaining new momentum. Here are figures for the last four months of 1930 (Russian Federation):

	September	October	November	December
No. of peasant farms that joined collective farms	68,200	182,900	417,400	414,100

¹ V. I. Lenin, "First Congress of Agricultural Communes", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 196.

² *ibid.*, p. 200.

The figures on collectivisation during the autumn of 1930 in the major grain growing areas—the North Caucasus and the Lower and Middle Volga territories are of particular interest. These areas still held the lead in collectivisation. As many as 1,900 new collective farms were set up there in the autumn and winter of 1930 and 278,700 peasant farms joined existing collective farms. This meant that an average of twenty odd collective farms were set up in these areas and more than 3,000 individual farms joined existing collective farms each day. In the country as a whole, 11,800 new collective farms were set up and about 673,000 new members enrolled in these three months.

The December 1930 Joint Plenum of the Central Committee and Central Control Committee of the Party summed up the results of the fulfilment of the plan for the second year of the five-year plan period. It stated that the achievements of socialised industrialisation had given a tremendous impetus to the development of agricultural production. The sown area had increased from 118 million hectares in 1928-29 to 127.8 million hectares in 1929-30, exceeding the targets set by the five-year plan both for grain and especially for industrial crops. The gross grain harvest in 1930 amounted to 87.4 million metric tons against 71.7 million in 1929, the gross cotton output to 13.5 million metric centners against 8.6 million, and the sugarbeet output to 151.7 million metric centners against 62.5 million.

The five-year plan collectivisation targets had also been considerably exceeded. In the spring and autumn of 1930 the collective farms sowed an area of 43.4 million hectares against the 20.6 million hectares envisaged for the last year of the five-year plan period and the total sown area of the collective and state farms was 48.2 million hectares. The proportion of the marketable grain produced by the socialised sector in agriculture reached about 50 per cent against the 43 per cent set for the last year of the five-year plan period. This meant that the entire five-year agricultural programme had been exceeded in just the first two years of the five-year plan period.

The Party Plenum pointed out that 1931 must become the year of the absolute predominance of the socialist sector in agriculture. This would make it possible to complete laying the foundation for a socialist economy in the Soviet Union. The Plenum decided that no less than 80 per cent of peasant farms in the main grain growing areas—the North Caucasus, the Lower Volga Territory, the Middle Volga Territory (the Left Bank), and the Ukraine (the steppe zone)—should be collectiv-

ised in 1931, i. e. solid collectivisation should in the main be completed.

The new feature in this decision was that the Ukraine (the steppe zone) was included in Group I in terms of the rate of collectivisation. Other areas were also placed in different groups in terms of the rate of collectivisation. In the other grain growing areas—the Central Black Earth Area, Siberia, the Urals, the Ukraine (the forest-steppe zone) and Kazakhstan (the grain growing areas), as well as the cotton and sugarbeet growing areas—50 per cent of the peasant farms were to be collectivised in 1931. In the consumer parts of the country, 20-25 per cent of the grain growing peasant farms were to be collectivised in the same year. The goal set for 1931 was to ensure collectivisation in no less than half of all peasant farms in all branches of agriculture.

The areas under winter and spring crops were to be expanded to 143 million hectares in 1931, including 66 million hectares (50 million under spring crops) on the collective farms and 9.5 million on the state farms. It was also planned to increase the number of machine-and-tractor stations in 1931 to 1,400 with a total tractor capacity of 980,000 h. p. The total investment in the socialised sector of agriculture was set at 3,800 million rubles, which included 2,055 million rubles for the state sector and 1,745 million rubles for the collective farms and machine-and-tractor stations.

The decisions of the December Joint Plenum provided the Party with a programme to mobilise the Soviet people for further efforts to fulfil and exceed the five-year plan, and ensure the victory of socialism in the Soviet Union.

4. THE COLLECTIVE FARMERS AS THE MOTIVE FORCE OF COLLECTIVISATION

The new upsurge in the collectivisation movement that began in the autumn of 1930 grew throughout the winter of 1930-31. The motive force of this movement were the collective farmers themselves and the numerous peasant activists trained by the Party, who had passed the rigorous test of class struggle and had become consistent champions of the Party policy among the peasant masses.

An important part in activating the peasantry was played by the meetings on the collective farms at which the board reported on the work it had done and a new board was elected. These

meetings, held in the autumn of 1930 and the winter of 1930-31, turned into a striking demonstration of the collective farms' economic achievements and always attracted the attention of the working peasantry. Now the task of the Party organisations was to popularise the economic achievements of the collective farms among the individual farmers, and show them by concrete facts and figures all the benefits and advantages of large-scale collective farming. It was therefore necessary to draw the best collective farmers into this work, those who could best tell peasants the truth about the achievements of the collective farms in a simple, comprehensible way.

The rural Party organisations, guided by the Party Central Committee, coped with this task well. Usually after discussing the board's report the general meeting of the collective farmers would select the most advanced people to speak at meetings of individual farmers in their own and neighbouring villages. These speakers usually attracted big audiences. In the Middle Volga Territory, for instance, during the report campaign, rank-and-file collective farmers spoke at 1,055 meetings of individual farmers, at 239 meetings of poor peasants, and at 1,238 joint meetings of collective and individual farmers.

Here is a typical example. Matvei Loginovich Martynov, a member of the Krasnaya Luka Artel in the Kinel District, formerly a poor peasant, told individual farmers in his village that the artel's gross income for the spring and summer had amounted to 42,168 rubles including 32,593 rubles from field crops. Out of this sum 19,258 rubles had been set aside to pay the members for their work, the rest was channelled to the indivisible fund, maintenance of the old and the invalids, the bonus fund, maintenance of the socialised livestock, etc.

He also said that he had earned twice as much on the collective farm as during the previous year when he had worked in his individual farm. With his family of four (two of them disabled) he had received 370 rubles for 370 work days excluding his agricultural tax, insurance payment, etc. In addition, he had received 80 poods of wheat, rye, and millet or 19.5 poods on average for each member of his family. Such simple and convincing examples exerted immense influence on the peasantry.

Another important achievement of the report campaign was that it did a great deal to draw the *middle peasant members of collective farms* into active political and economic work and involve them in the most important work in their farms. Thereby the mistake made by some Party organisations in the spring of 1930, when

in some places they had continued to divide the collective farmers into social categories was corrected. As a result, collective farmers from the middle peasant stratum had often been mistrusted and their role in the work of their collective farms was underestimated.

During the report campaign many cases were revealed of kulaks and other hostile elements having wormed their way into collective farms. In the North Caucasus, for instance, about 1.5 per cent of the collectivised farmsteads were found to be kulak-owned and between October 1930 and April 1931 were expelled of the holdings. About 2 per cent of the peasant farms were expelled for constant violation of work discipline on the collective farms. In the Middle Volga Territory about 2.5 per cent of the farms were expelled for the same reasons. These measures helped to strengthen the collective farms both organisationally and economically.

Elections to rural Soviets were held in the same period. The purpose of the elections was to strengthen the guiding role of the Soviets as the bodies of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the countryside. that were to lead the collectivisation movement and rally the working peasants around the working class and its vanguard, the Communist Party. This was all the more important, since, as total collectivisation expanded, some "theoreticians" began to propagate the erroneous, obviously anti-Leninist theory that the state was withering away, that Soviets were no longer needed and so their functions should pass to collective-farm agencies.

The danger of this theory lay in the fact that attempts were made in some places to put it into practice. Some rural Soviets, for example, were disbanded and their powers transferred to the boards of collective farms. In the Kheper Area, attempts were made to set up so-called economic councils and transfer the functions of rural Soviets to them. Things went so far that in some places about half of the rural Soviets were disbanded.

The supporters of this theory sought under various pretexts to disband the Soviets in areas of solid collectivisation. They did their utmost to weaken the guiding role of the rural Soviets and tried to prevent them from leading collectivisation, and doing any kind of political work in the countryside in general. In pursuing their erroneous policy, they resorted to a variety of methods to undermine the authority of local Soviets: they removed the best workers from them, housed rural Soviets in unsuitable premises, set collective farms against them, and, occasionally, even helped hostile elements to penetrate local Soviets.

The Party Central Committee was quick to expose these hostile activities and demanded that Party organisations do everything to strengthen rural Soviets. As early as January 1930 the Central Executive Committee of the USSR passed a decision, "On the New Tasks of the Soviets Set by Intensive Collectivisation in the Countryside", which firmly rejected the theory of disbanding the Soviets and transferring their powers to collective farms. "All attempts to disband the rural Soviets," the decision stressed, "to weaken or restrict their guiding role in connection with mass collectivisation, both overtly or covertly through the transfer of the powers of the rural Soviets to collective-farm boards are in effect anti-Soviet actions and reflect the sentiments of our class enemies seeking to undermine the dictatorship of the proletariat and weaken its agencies. These liquidationist aspirations must be decisively and mercilessly repulsed."

The role of the Soviets in the new situation was increasing immensely, and they had many more tasks. By holding elections to the Soviets, the Party sought to strengthen them with new, more advanced members, purge them of class enemies and opportunists, and improve their efficiency. Naturally, this goal could be achieved only through activating the peasant masses, first and foremost the collective farmers, and drawing them into the work of the Soviets. The report-and-election campaign of the rural Soviets was marked by the high political activity of the collective and individual farmers.

Thus in many villages of solid collectivisation in the Lower Volga Territory 92 per cent of the electorate took part in the elections, and in the Middle Volga Territory the figure was even higher—99 per cent. The proportion of collective farmers on the rural electoral committees in the Russian Federation amounted to 37.2 per cent, while the general proportion of the collective farmers and the poor and middle peasant individual farmers was 75.7 per cent. The elections to the Soviets and the simultaneous collective-farm meetings at which the boards' reports were heard and new boards elected showed the close unity between the collective and the individual farmers, and strengthened it even further in their work for the victory of collectivisation.

By putting the creative initiative and increasing political activity of the working peasants to proper use, the rural Party organisations showed a remarkable ability to apply in practice all the diverse forms and methods of promotional and organisational work among the peasants. *What was significant was that all political work in the countryside at that time was exception-*

ally effective, it exerted vast political influence on the peasants, and helped to draw them into actively building a new way of life. All this enabled the Party to find among the peasants themselves thousands of good leaders, promoters and organisers of collectivisation.

Collectivisation in that period involved the broad masses of the working peasants, engendered creative initiative and enthusiasm, and produced facilities for finding and applying a variety of new forms and methods of political work in the villages. Typically, every new initiative in any district or region was immediately picked up and adopted in other places to become part of the movement as a whole.

To get a better picture of the movement we should examine in greater detail some of the more important new forms of political work among the masses that were later accepted and used everywhere. During the report campaign in the Central Black Earth Area, for instance, special recruiting teams from collective-farm activists and initiative groups of instructors from among individual farmers were formed. This new form of promotional work proved extremely efficient, was very interesting and deserves detailed examination.

In September 1930 the Bureau of the Party Committee of the Central Black Earth Area instructed the Area Collective-Farm Union to send 100 of the best collective farmers from ten districts of the former Rossosh Area with the highest percentage of collectivised farms to the districts lagging behind with collectivisation. At the beginning of October, the Area Collective-Farm Union formed 26 teams of collective-farm activists and set them the task of propagating the experience of the best collective farms in these districts and launching a mass campaign of drawing individual farmers into collective farms. In a month and a half the teams organised more than 300 mass meetings and 140 group discussions. Their efforts were crowned with remarkable success: 37 new collective farms were set up, and 673 individual farms joined existing collective farms. It was then decided to organise recruiting teams of local collective farmers to persuade individual farmers to join collective farms.

It was there that another new organisational form emerged, the so-called initiative groups. The newly-formed recruiting teams of local collective-farm activists had made considerable progress. In the Terbuny District, for instance, 18 new collective farms were formed in just ten days and 591 peasant farms joined collective farms. Apart from this, 1,325 initiative groups were

set up which became the nuclei of future collective farms.

In its decision of 20 January 1931, "On Production Promotion and Mass Political Work in Connection with the Preparations for the Spring Sowing Campaign and on Strengthening the Land and Collective-Farm Agencies", the Party Central Committee stated that the primary task of Party organisations was to set up initiative groups in all grain growing areas and in areas growing industrial crops, and develop these groups into collective farms. It was also proposed that the experience of organising recruiting teams of collective farmers should be widely published. The Party Central Committee gave full support to the creative initiative emerging among the masses, and instructed Party organisations to improve the efficiency of their political and organisational leadership of collectivisation, and to fight all signs of complacency and opportunist anarchy in collectivisation.

The new mass organisational forms brought into being by the collectivisation movement were soon used all over the country. According to the statistics of the Collective-Farm Centre, in December 1930 there were 5,625 recruiting teams in the Russian Federation and by March 1931 their number had increased to 17,079.

During the autumn of 1930 and winter of 1930-31, Party organisations sent 80,000 collective farmers from regions with higher collectivisation levels to those lagging behind to promote on a large scale the economic experience of the collective farms among individual farmers. A total of about a quarter of a million collective farmers worked hand in hand with communists as promoters, giving all their energy to advancing collectivisation.

This powerful army of Bolshevik promoters created by the Party could not be daunted by any hardships, nor did they fear any threats from class enemies. They worked selflessly among the masses and under the leadership of the Communist Party paved the way to solid collectivisation. Many of them fell victims to kulak terror. But they displayed remarkable persistence in their efforts to free the poor and middle peasants from the influence of kulaks and other anti-Soviet elements.

No hostile forces could any longer halt the victorious advance of collectivisation, because it had become a movement of the peasant masses, the true creators of the new way of life. This movement was mounting and growing more powerful, as it moved towards victory. The Party fully appreciated the work done by the collective farmers who had tirelessly advocated and promoted

collectivisation, and who were justly the heroes of collectivisation.

The vast army of collective-farm organisers and promoters working among the masses under Party leadership soon formed a second equally vast army from among poor and middle peasants organised into many initiative groups. According to incomplete statistics, there were 6,542 such groups in the Russian Federation in December 1930 and this number had increased to 15,505 by February 1931. The more advanced grain growing areas had the largest number of such groups: 1,098 in the Middle Volga Territory, 807 in the North Caucasus, 7,413 in the Central Black Earth Area, and 1,600 in the Urals.

At this stage of collectivisation the simple types of collective farms were hardly ever set up in the grain growing areas; the initiative groups now became the transitional type preceding to artels. These groups usually developed into collective farms.

In some places individual canvassing was widely practised. This was done by small but numerous groups of experienced promoters from among the more progressive collective farmers.

The Lower Volga Territory had large numbers of so-called mobile shock teams, consisting of collective and individual farmers, who worked together to complete agricultural work for the season on their respective farms.

Demobilised servicemen, and former peasants working in towns who returned to their native villages also took an active part in individual canvassing. This efficient form of promotional work was adopted in other parts of the country as well.

Other forms of propaganda were also widely used, such as collective-farm exhibitions and socialist emulation between villages and collective farms. These and many other forms of political and organisational work were used by Party organisations to further increase the activity of the peasants—the true builders of the new way of life in the villages. By using the creative power of the masses, the Communist Party stepped up the socialist offensive to an even greater extent.

5. THE COMPLETION OF SOLID COLLECTIVISATION IN THE MAJOR GRAIN GROWING AREAS

The collective farms' economic achievements, the wide popularisation of these achievements among the individual farmers, and the Party's organisational work to unite the collective farmers, were

advancing collectivisation towards complete victory. In the first months of 1931 the pace of collectivisation rapidly increased. The following table will illustrate this:

	January			February			March		
	1-10	11-20	21-31	1-10	11-20	21-28	1-10	11-20	21-31
Number of peasant farms joining collective farms	200,200	208,600	328,700	397,300	483,900	639,000	507,400	507,000	664,500

These figures show that it was the results achieved by the collective farms that had the greatest influence on the vacillating part of the peasantry and tipped the balance in favour of collectivisation. The Sixth All-Union Congress of Soviets held in March 1931 discussed the progress of collectivisation and noted that the economic achievements of the collective farms in 1930 had been the decisive factor in the victory of collectivisation. It stressed that all collective farmers were the Soviet government's stronghold in the villages, and called on all poor and middle individual farmers to join collective farms and become active builders of a new way of life. "Each day of delay in joining the collective farms," the appeal pointed out, "slows down improvement in your well-being, and deprives you of the possibility of immediate advantage of all the benefits of large-scale artel farming."¹

The Congress decided on a considerable increase in financial, material and technical assistance to the collective farms. In 1931 Soviet agriculture was to receive 120,000 tractors, 1,040 new machine-and-tractor stations, 768 million rubles' worth of agricultural machinery against the 400 million rubles worth in 1930. For the first time it was to receive 7,000 lorries and cars, 145 million poods of fertilisers and 40 million rubles' worth of pesticides. The government was to give the collective farms and machine-and-tractor stations a subsidy of 1,000 million rubles from its budget and as long-term loans. This immense assistance by the government promoted

¹ *Congresses of Soviets in Decisions and Resolutions*, p. 453.

collectivisation, increased the economic and political activity of the working people in the villages and mobilised them for the spring sowing campaign.

In 1931 collectivisation made new headway and its achievements were consolidated. The socialist offensive was maintained along the entire front. The collectivisation movement, a major part of this offensive, reached an unprecedented peak. As a result, the main grain growing areas had come close to solid collectivisation by the spring of 1931, and the second spring sowing campaign was carried out in the context of victorious collectivisation. By 1 April the percentage of collectivised peasant farms in the North Caucasus was 85.1, in the Lower Volga Territory 74.6, in the Middle Volga Territory 77.5 and in the Ukraine (steppe zone) - 76.

These figures show that the Communist Party and Soviet government had consolidated their positions on the collectivisation front. During the spring sowing campaign of 1931 the domination of the socialist sector in agriculture was fully established. According to preliminary figures 97,144,400 hectares of land had been sown, and of this total more than two-thirds belonged to collective and state farms. The sown area of the socialist sector accounted for 88 per cent of the total area under wheat, 78 per cent of the area under maize, 57 per cent of the area under flax, 72 per cent of the area under cotton, 74 per cent of the area under sugarbeet and 86 per cent of the area under sunflower crop. Moreover, the collective and state farms had radically increased the area under the more profitable and marketable crops. For instance, 73 per cent more land was sown with wheat in 1931 than in 1930, 35 per cent more with flax, 50 per cent more with cotton, 30.7 per cent more with sugarbeet.

Thus, the spring sowing campaign was marked by the decisive victory of the socialist sector in agriculture. More than 200,000 collective farms, uniting 13 million peasant farms, together with the state farms sowed more than two-thirds of the total area under spring crops, while 12 million individual farms were able to sow only one-third. The sown area per collectivised peasant farm was two or three times greater than that in the individual farm. A lot of work was done by the machine-and-tractor stations - they tilled more than 20 million hectares, i.e. more than one third of the collective-farm land under spring crops.

In summing up the results of the spring sowing campaign the June 1931 Plenum of the Party Central Committee stated that the rate of collectivisation set by the 16th Party Congress had been exceeded. "In the spring of 1931 the collectivisation movement won

a *decisive* victory in the main branches of agriculture in most districts and regions of the USSR.... Collectivisation *has been completed* in the major grain growing areas (the Ukrainian steppes, the North Caucasus, the Lower Volga Territory, the Left bank of the Middle Volga Territory and the Crimean steppes), where more than 80 per cent of all peasant farms have been collectivised and more than 90 per cent of the all peasant sowing area and means of production have been socialised."¹

The profound social and economic changes made the collective farmer the central figure in Soviet agriculture, and the collective farms the main producers not only of grain, but also of industrial crops. "As a result of setting up state farms and collectivising *the majority* of the working peasants," the Plenum stressed in one of its decisions, "*our agriculture has become the largest in the world...*"² Tens of thousands of new collective farms uniting millions of peasant farms sprang up all over the country. By August 1931 the average level of collectivisation for the country as a whole had reached 54.2 per cent. Here are figures showing how the collectivisation movement developed between September 1930 (when the new upsurge started) and August 1931.³

	By 1 September 1930	By 1 January 1931	By 1 April 1931	By 1 June 1931	By 1 August 1931
Number of collective farms	94,600	114,400	177,500	204,900	218,000
Number of peasant farms in collective farms (mln)	5.5	6.6	10.5	12.2	13.5
Percentage of collectivised peasant farms	21.4	26.4	42.0	48.9	54.2

In citing these figures, we have divided the entire period of the new upsurge of collectivisation deliberately into four stages in order

¹ CPSU in *Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 4, p. 525.

² *ibid.*, p. 526.

³ Compiled by the author on the basis of the USSR Collective-Farm Centre statistics.

to give an idea of the scale of the movement. However, these divisions are not arbitrary, since they to a certain extent correspond to the way the movement developed.

The first stage lasted from September 1930 to January 1931. It was marked by a new influx of individual farmers to collective farms, which was the result of the resolute and consistent correction of the mistakes made in collectivisation, the stepping up of political work among the peasantry and the extensive popularisation of the economic achievements of collective farms. The mass campaigns launched by the party—Collectivisation Day, the reports and elections of collective farm boards and rural Soviets—increased the number of individual farmers joining collective farms. In the course of these campaigns, new forms of promotional work emerged in the advanced grain growing areas, such as recruiting teams of collective farmers, initiative groups of individual farmers and various other forms of mass, group and individual promotion of collectivisation. As a result, in these four months (September, October, November and December) 1,100,000 peasant farms joined collective farms, i.e. 5 per cent of all peasant farms.

The second stage lasted from January to April 1931. This period was marked by mass political work in the villages, with a vast army of promoters involved (the recruiting teams) and a further increase in the number of initiative groups of poor and middle peasants, and their development into collective farms. All this produced striking results: in three months (January, February and March) 3,900,000 peasant farms joined collective farms.

During the third stage—from April to June 1931—the advanced grain growing areas in the main approached solid collectivisation and concentrated on the spring sowing campaign, and consolidating the economic achievements of the collective farms. During this period 1,700,000 peasant farms joined collective farms.

The fourth stage—from June to August 1931—was a period of preparing for harvest and grain supplies. It saw in the main solid collectivisation completed in the major grain growing areas. The collective-farm sector was increased by 1,300,000 peasant farms, which meant an increase of 5.3 per cent.

The table given below will show how collectivisation advanced in the first half of 1931.¹

¹ Table compiled by the author on the basis of reports from the collective and state farms and the USSR Collective-Farm Centre.

**Dynamics of Collectivisation in the USSR from 1 January to 1 August 1931
(thousands)**

Territories and regions	Total number of peasant farms to be collectivised	By 1 January		
		Number of collective farms	Number of farmsteads in collective farms	Percentage of collectivised farms
<i>Group I</i>				
North Caucasus (without national districts)	1,093.4	4.0	765.1	70.0
Lower Volga Territory (without national districts)	802.8	3.7	471.0	58.7
Middle Volga Territory (Left Bank)	485.0	2.8	227.1	46.8
Ukrainian SSR (steppe zone)	1,379.9	10.0	689.8	50.0
Crimea	80.4	1.3	47.0	58.5
Moldavian ASSR				
Urals (grain growing areas)				
Total for Group I	3,841.5	21.8	2,200.0	57.3
<i>Group II</i>				
Western Siberia	1,245.7	6.0	282.0	22.7
Eastern Siberia	355.5	1.9	63.1	17.8
Urals	1,097.7	8.4	389.6	35.5
Kazakhstan	1,238.7	7.2	432.5	34.9
Bashkiria	531.3	3.0	124.5	23.4
Far Eastern Territory	153.7	0.9	41.1	26.8
Middle Volga Territory (Right Bank)	480.0	1.9	109.0	22.8
Tatar ASSR	509.7	2.2	64.4	12.7
Central Black Earth Area	1,968.0	8.7	451.6	23.0
Ukraine (Left Bank)	1,007.6			
Ukraine (Right Bank)	1,798.7	10.0	885.0	31.6
Uzbekistan	836.8	5.1	307.4	36.7
Turkmenistan	161.7	0.7	45.8	28.3
Azerbaijan	330.9	1.8	54.9	16.6
Total for Group II	11,716.0	57.8	3,250.9	27.7

By 1 April			By 1 June			By 1 August		
No. of collective farms	No. of holdings in farms	% of coll.	No. of coll. farms	No. of hold.	% of coll.	No. of coll. farms	No. of hold.	% of coll.
<i>Group I</i>								
4.3	945.1	86.4	4.1	956.9	87.5	3.9	962.8	88.1
3.1	598.6	74.6	2.9	657.7	81.9	2.8	659.1	82.1
2.7	375.8	77.5	2.6	417.7	86.1	2.6	456.2	94.1
14.6	1,070.3	77.6	16.0	1,145.5	83.0	13.5	1,078.1	78.1
1.4	65.6	81.8	1.4	67.3	83.7	1.4	66.0	82.2 68.2 77.6
26.1	3,055.4	79.5	27.0	3,245.1	84.5	24.2	3,222.2	83.9
<i>Group II</i>								
5.2	438.0	35.2	12.1	546.8	43.9	14.1	692.1	55.6
2.7	97.5	27.4	3.2	132.7	37.3	3.7	147.7	41.6
10.3	524.6	47.8	11.1	664.9	60.6	11.8	723.6	65.9
7.7	541.0	43.7	7.8	683.2	55.2	7.7	695.0	56.1
4.1	205.9	38.8	4.7	285.8	53.8	4.4	326.7	61.5
1.0	50.0	32.5	1.3	85.1	54.4	1.8	87.5	56.9
2.3	232.8	48.5	2.4	276.7	57.6	2.2	312.9	65.2
8.2	122.8	24.1	3.8	240.6	47.2	4.0	286.7	56.2
15.6	922.3	46.9	16.7	1,083.6	55.1	17.9	1,337.7	68.0
14.4	1,435.1	51.1	7.6	1,074.2	38.9	7.5	1,115.7	39.8
8.4	468.0	56.0	8.9	537.1	64.2	8.9	547.4	65.4
1.3	76.6	47.4	1.5	85.9	53.1	1.5	96.6	59.7
2.6	108.8	32.9	3.1	132.2	40.0	3.2	137.1	41.4
83.8	5,223.4	44.6	84.2	5,828.8	49.8	88.7	6,506.7	55.5

Territories and regions	Total number of peasant farms to be collectivised	By 1 January		
		Number of collective farms	Number of farmsteads in collective farms	Percentage of collectivised farms
<i>Group III</i>				
Northern Territory	460.0	1.8	54.3	11.8
Karelia	41.3	0.2	5.3	12.8
Leningrad Region	656.9	2.3	46.8	7.1
Western Region	1,122.4	3.7	97.7	8.7
Moscow Region	1,413.3	4.2	119.4	8.4
Ivanovo Region	715.5	2.1	56.7	7.4
Nizhni Novgorod Region	1,336.9	6.3	165.6	12.4
Including: Chuvash ASSR	97.0	0.6	11.3	12.0
Mari ASSR	177.9	0.9	23.7	13.3
Daghestan ASSR	179.0	0.5	16.0	9.0
Kalmyk ASSR	30.5	—	—	—
Karakalpak ASSR	53.0	—	—	—
Kirghiz ASSR	221.0	0.8	56.3	25.5
Yakutian ASSR	55.7	0.4	8.0	14.4
Buryat-Mongolian ASSR	100.6	0.7	20.3	20.2
Byelorussia	777.5	4.1	113.9	14.7
Mordovian ASSR	235.0	0.6	24.7	10.5
Armenia	166.7	0.4	17.3	10.4
Georgia	422.4	2.0	89.0	21.1
Tajikistan	211.9	0.7	31.2	14.7
Ukraine (Polesye)	606.6	1.5	88.2	14.6
North Caucasus (national districts)	236.7	1.0	76.3	32.2
Total for Group III	9,042.9	33.3	1,087.0	12.0
Total for USSR	24,600.4	112.9	6,537.9	26.4

By 1 April			By 1 June			By 1 August		
No. of collective farms	No. of holdings in farms	% of coll.	No. of coll. farms	No. of hold.	% of coll.	No. of coll. farms	No. of hold.	% of coll.

Group III

2.4	82.6	18.0	4.6	—	36.9	6.6	241.3	52.5
0.3	8.9	21.5	0.5	—	40.7	0.5	18.5	44.8
7.0	154.4	23.5	9.1	224.0	34.1	10.4	249.8	39.5
10.6	288.0	25.7	15.0	451.0	40.2	16.2	498.7	44.4
9.8	291.6	20.6	14.6	514.5	36.4	16.0	577.0	40.8
6.7	168.2	23.5	9.2	244.3	34.1	10.9	287.3	40.2
10.4	279.5	20.9	14.1	421.5	31.5	15.1	481.0	36.0
0.9	17.5	18.0	1.3	31.5	32.5	1.4	34.0	35.1
1.2	37.3	21.0	1.4	47.5	26.7	1.5	50.6	28.4
0.7	24.4	13.6	0.9	30.0	16.8	0.9	33.9	18.9
0.1	7.9	25.9	0.1	12.6	41.3	0.2	18.6	61.0
0.4	17.3	32.5	0.4	18.7	35.3	0.4	18.8	35.5
1.3	81.4	36.8	1.5	97.0	43.9	1.5	103.8	46.9
0.1	9.2	16.5	0.5	10.5	18.9	0.7	13.3	23.9
1.1	36.1	35.9	1.5	51.0	50.7	1.7	60.4	60.0
5.6	164.0	21.1	7.4	248.5	32.0	9.2	331.5	42.6
1.0	33.7	14.3	1.0	80.6	34.3	1.2	111.7	47.5
0.6	32.4	19.4	0.7	39.7	23.8	0.8	43.4	26.0
2.5	118.8	28.1	3.3	162.4	38.4	3.3	163.8	38.8
0.8	52.0	24.5	1.4	58.4	27.6	1.4	60.0	28.3
2.8	141.2	23.3	3.6	207.7	34.2	3.7	216.6	35.7
1.3	115.4	48.8	1.6	134.1	56.7	1.5	136.0	57.5
65.5	2,107.0	23.2	91.0	3,006.5	33.1	102.2	3,665.4	40.4
175.4	10,385.8	42.0	202.2	12,080.4	48.9	215.1	13,394.3	54.2

The Central Committee of the Communist Party examined the results of collectivisation and passed a decision on 2 August 1931 in which explained to the Party organisations that "it is not 100 per cent collectivisation of poor and middle peasant farms that should be the criterion for completing collectivisation of a district or region but the collectivisation of no less than 68-70 per cent of all peasant farms with no less than 75-80 per cent of the sowing area".¹ Using this criterion, the Central Committee decided that collectivisation had in the main been completed in seven areas of the country: the North Caucasus, the Lower Volga Territory, the Middle Volga Territory (the Left Bank of the Volga), the Ukraine (the steppe zone and Left Bank of the Dnieper), the Urals (the grain growing areas), the Crimea and Moldavia. In these areas from 68 to 90 per cent of peasant farms with 75-95 per cent of the sowing area had been collectivised by 1 August 1931.

The Party Central Committee set the Party organisations of the territories, regions and republics that had completed solid collectivisation the new main goal of strengthening the collective farms economically and organisationally. First and foremost, they were to concentrate on such important matters as the proper organisation of work and calculation of the work done, the introduction of piece-rate payment, improving quality, the organisation of stock yards and the training of personnel.

The other grain growing areas and the rest of the country in general were to complete collectivisation in the main in 1932-33. The Central Committee also repeated its warning to the Party organisations of these areas that serious work to draw the peasants into collective farms should not be replaced with a drive for high results, and instructed them to concentrate on consolidating and stepping up their efforts to strengthen the collective farms organisationally and economically.

Thus, the period of reorganisation in agriculture in the major grain growing areas had been completed by 1 August 1931 while in the remaining areas the socialist reorganisation of agriculture was completed by the end of 1932, i. e. by the end of the first five-year plan period.

With the victory of the socialist system in agriculture a new situation emerged in the countryside. The range of economic and organisational problems facing the Party organisations had become

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions..., Vol. 4. p. 559.

much wider. All aspects of work on the collective farms (organisation of sowing campaigns, harvesting and grain supplies, efforts to increase crop yields and develop socialised state farming, the organisation of work and training of personnel for collective farms) assumed immense political significance and required that the Party organisations be highly efficient and flexible guiding bodies.

The year 1931 was decisive in the work to fulfil the five-year plan ahead of time. It was an historic year, a determining one both for the development of Soviet industry and for the socialist reorganisation of Soviet agriculture. The Soviet people's three years of work to carry out the tremendous programme of socialist construction had ensured a gigantic advance in the economic development of the Soviet Union.

The industrial output of 1931 exceeded that of 1930 by 21 per cent with the biggest gains made by the leading industries. Thus, the increase in output of the engineering industry in 1931 exceeded that of 1930 by 40 per cent (including a 73 per cent increase in the machine-tool industry), the electric power industry showed an increase of 61.5 per cent, the oil and coal industries—22.6 per cent, the basic chemical industry—17.4 per cent and the non-ferrous metal industry—9 per cent. The output of high quality steel had increased threefold.

Such important industries as the oil, electrical engineering, tractor construction and general engineering industries had reached their targets set by the five-year plan in two and a half to three years.

So the first three years of the five-year plan period showed that the industrialisation of the country was going very well. The industrial targets of the first year, for instance, exceeded the target by 6 per cent, the second year target was exceeded by 7 per cent and the third year target by 13 per cent, i. e. each year the overfulfilment was greater. In this way the overfulfilment of targets was growing annually and for these three years amounted to 26 per cent.

The 17th All-Union Party Conference, held from 30 January to 4 February 1932 gave a preliminary summing up of the political and economic results of the first five-year plan period. It noted with satisfaction that "the policy laid down by the 14th Party Congress and charted further by the 15th and 16th Congresses, a policy of decisive socialist industrialisation, the laying of the foundations

for a socialist economy and achievement of economic independence for the USSR was being followed with tremendous success".¹ In its decisions the conference proposed drafting a second five-year plan of the economic development of the Soviet Union and formulated the principal political and economic tasks.

¹ *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 5, 1971, p. 24.

Part Three

SCIENTIFIC
SOLUTION
OF THE AGRARIAN
AND PEASANT
QUESTION
IN THE USSR

CHAPTER XI

THE CREATION OF THE ECONOMIC FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIALISM AS THE MAIN RESULT OF THE FULFILMENT OF THE FIRST FIVE-YEAR PLAN

1. THE USSR—A MIGHTY INDUSTRIAL WORLD POWER

Thanks to the heroic efforts of all the Soviet peoples, the first five-year plan of national economic development was fulfilled ahead of time, in four years and three months. As a result, the Soviet Union turned from an agrarian country into a highly industrialised country, moving into the front ranks of the more technologically and economically advanced countries of the world. The January (1933) joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks) summed up the results of the first five-year plan and pointed out its imposing achievements.

During the period of the first five-year plan, the volume of capital investment in industry amounted to 24,800 million rubles, instead of the planned 19,100 million rubles. A total of 21,300 million rubles was invested in heavy industry instead of the stipulated 14,700 million. The gross output of large-scale industry increased from 15,800 million rubles in 1928 to 36,800 million rubles in 1932 (at 1926/27 prices), amounting to 232.7 per cent of the 1928 level. The volume of industrial output at the end of the five-year period surpassed the pre-war (1913) level almost 3.5 times over.

During the industrialisation process, production of the means of production advanced to the forefront. In 1928 producer goods production accounted for 44.4 per cent of the output of large-scale industry, whereas at the end of the five-year period the proportion rose to 56 per cent. This meant that even during the first five-year period heavy industry developed fairly well in the Soviet Union. In carrying out its full-scale industrialisation programme, the Communist Party focussed on two cardinal elements of technological reconstruction, machine building and electrification.

In doing so, the Party worked according to Lenin's instruction

that a "large-scale machine industry capable of reorganising agriculture is the only material basis that is possible for socialism. But we cannot confine ourselves to this general thesis. It must be made concrete. Large-scale industry based on the latest achievements of technology and capable of reorganising agriculture implies the electrification of the whole country".¹

During the first five-year period there was remarkable growth in machine-building, this main element of industrialisation. In the last of the five years the plan for machine-building was exceeded by 64.8 per cent while the general engineering output was 93.7 per cent more than the planned target. The machine-building output increased ten-fold in comparison with the pre-war (1913) level. The other major element of industrialisation, the electrification of the country, also developed at a fast rate. Electric power generation was seven times that of 1913. In place of the small outdated power plants, large power-generating complexes, like the Volkhov and Dnieper hydroelectric power stations, were built.

The quantitative and qualitative changes that took place in the overall pattern of production during the first five-year period were such that in some industries comparison with the pre-war level became simply impossible. Thus, many important industries—e.g., the tractor, automobile, chemical and aircraft industries, which never existed in tsarist Russia—were set up during the first five-year period.

Huge enterprises were built for ferrous and non-ferrous metallurgy, chemical and power industries, including the Magnitogorsk and Kuznetsk iron and steel works, the Urals Copper Works, the Volkhov Aluminium Plant, the Chernorechensky and Berezniki nitrogen plants, the Dnieper Hydroelectric Power Station, and the Zuevka, Cheliabinsk and Shterovka electric power stations.

Large new collieries were built in the Donbas, Kuzbas and other areas. Almost all the major enterprises in the industries referred to were modernised. A new coal-and-metallurgical centre, the Ural-Kuzbas, was set up in the East in the shortest possible time.

The giant Stalingrad and Kharkov tractor works were built and put into operation while the construction of the Cheliabinsk Caterpillar Tractor Works was nearing completion. First-rate automobile plants were built at Moscow, Gorky and Yaroslavl. Dozens of aircraft and engine-building factories came into operation. The production of farm machines got off the ground with the building

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Third Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 459.

of harvest-combine factories at Saratov and Zaporozhye, the *Serp i molot* (Sickle and Hammer) Works at Kharkov, the Lyubertsy Factory and the *Rostselmash* (Rostov Farm Machinery Plant).

Large steam-engine and railway car factories and shipyards were built. Big factories making turbines and generators for electric power stations and equipment for the iron and steel and the fuel-producing industries were put into operation and new blast and open-hearth furnaces were blown in. Lastly, work was begun on producing sophisticated machines, instruments and tools.

One should now examine the qualitative side of this process. Having achieved stupendous success in building heavy industry, the Soviet Union, in economic terms, came very close to the level of the more industrially developed countries. Thus, industry accounted for 70.7 per cent of the gross national output of the USSR at the end of 1932, while in Germany it accounted for 80.3 per cent in 1931, and in the United States it accounted for 82.6 per cent in 1929. As for the structure of industry, it was at this time even better than that of Britain and Germany. Thus, producer goods production accounted for 56 per cent of the gross industrial output in the Soviet Union, for 45.2 per cent in Germany (in 1931) and for 54 per cent in Britain (1924).

Noting the rapid rate of socialist industrialisation, we must emphasise that here, too, a decisive role was played by its major elements, machine building and electrification. Their successful development helped to build the material and technical basis of socialism and to make the Soviet Union economically independent of the capitalist countries. At the end of the first five-year period, the Soviet Union was *the second largest* producer of machines in the world. The Soviet engineering output, which at the start of the five-year period amounted to 4.2 per cent of the capitalist countries' engineering output, reached 26.6 per cent in 1931 and 34 per cent in 1932. In the beginning of the five-year period, the Soviet engineering output was 7 per cent of that of the United States, 29.2 per cent of that of Germany and 37 per cent of that of Britain, while in 1931 it rose to 56.9, 140 and 151.1 per cent of the engineering output of the United States, Britain and Germany respectively.

The Soviet Union was ahead of the industrially advanced countries of Western Europe both in its rate of industrial growth and in the level of development of its basic industries. *As far as industrial output was concerned, before the first five-year period the Soviet Union was fifth in the world, while before the second five-year period it was third in the world and the second in Europe. At the*

end of the second five-year period the Soviet Union was to become – and did become – the second in the world and the first in Europe.

All these indicators of the growth of socialist industry show that the Soviet Union underwent a real technological revolution. In addition to this, whereas the capitalist countries created their heavy industry over some decades, the Soviet Union did it in five years. Admittedly, these enormous successes in the industrialisation of the country were not achieved easily. The Soviet Union had to cope with enormous obstacles, both inside and outside the country. The Soviet people were compelled to make tremendous sacrifices and endure great hardships in throwing off their age-old economic and cultural backwardness. We lagged some 50-100 years behind the advanced capitalist countries, and that distance had to be covered within the space of 5 or 10 years. Thus were we instructed by Lenin.

Building heavy industry required immense funds which had to be found in the country itself, by saving and economising, because the Soviet Union could not count on aid from abroad. The Soviet Union had to industrialise while surrounded on all sides by hostile capitalist countries, and continually threatened with military intervention by imperialist states. Nevertheless, the Soviet Union was not alone. *The Soviet people won not only as a result of the efforts of the working class and all the working people of the USSR, but also thanks to the internationalist support of the international working class. In turn, the successes in industrialising the country were of immense international significance. They united and revolutionised the international working class, making it confident of its own strength and rallying it to the struggle against capitalism, and to the support of the world's only socialist state.*

The international significance of this growth in Soviet industry lies in the fact that the Soviet people opened up new paths in industrialising the country, demonstrating to the workers of the whole world how to build socialism, how to build a socialist economy and manage a large-scale public economy. An important role in this respect was played by the special resources and methods of industrialisation which made it possible to turn the Soviet Union into a mighty industrial world power in the shortest possible time.

The historic success achieved in industrialising the country – success on a world scale – drastically changed the material position of the Soviet working people. One of the principal achievements in this respect was that *unemployment was eliminated once and for all and the enormous problem of "surplus population" was resolved.* It must be borne in mind that even in 1929 there were 1.5 million

unemployed in the country. But the success in carrying out the industrialisation programme reduced this figure to nought as early as 1931. The number of industrial and office workers in large-scale industry almost doubled during the first five-year period, numbering 22.9 million as against 11.6 million in 1928. The national income increased by 85 per cent, reaching 45,100 million rubles; average annual wages and salaries in large-scale industry increased by 67 per cent; and the social insurance fund increased by 292 per cent, amounting to 4,120 million rubles in 1932 as against 1,050 million rubles in 1928.

With this one must bear in mind that the Soviet working class underwent not only quantitative, but also extensive qualitative changes in the course of its growth. The main thing was that *Soviet rule established the working class as the leading, advanced force in every sphere of the social, economic and state life of the Soviet Union, increasing its sense of responsibility for the future of the socialist country.* This particularly was one of the sources of the workers' Soviet patriotism. The profound qualitative changes undergone by the working class of the Soviet Union are demonstrated, among other things, by the fact that three-fourths of all workers took part in the shock-workers and socialist emulation movement while about one-third were organised in teams operating on a profit-and-loss basis.

As industrialisation proceeded, the socialist emulation movement expanded more and more, embracing the entire working class. The most significant thing about socialist emulation is that it fundamentally changes people's attitude to work. The high level of consciousness of Soviet workers at this time is demonstrated by such widespread forms of their mass participation in improving production as the mass movement for mastering technology and for introducing the profit-and-loss accounting system, and their initiative in drawing up production counterplans and actively running production.

From its own ranks the working class advanced executive personnel—foremen, shop superintendents, shock-work team leaders, plant managers and project directors. An immense role in shaping the workers' socialist awareness, in consolidating and organising the working class, was played by the trade unions. They were a real school of economic management, direction and education. Suffice it to say that at the end of the five-year period the trade unions had a membership of 17.9 million, or 78 per cent of all Soviet workers. Under the guidance of the Communist Party and with the trade unions' assistance, the working class reached a high stage of organisational and proletarian solidarity.

Confident of the strength of the working class and peasantry, the Communist Party awakened great energy, enthusiasm and creative initiative in them and directed this by now overwhelming force towards implementing the imposing programme of building socialism. This invincible force showed that it was not only capable of carrying out the strenuous programme of the first five-year period, but also of introducing the deepest changes into it, aimed at extending economic development.

Let us turn to the facts. When the first five-year plan was being drawn up, it was not suggested that towards the end of the period it would be possible to stamp out unemployment. The target of this plan was, however, corrected as early as 1931. The tremendous scope of economic development allowed unemployment to be completely eliminated as early as in the third year of the period. Furthermore, the five-year plan said nothing about creating a second metallurgical centre, the Ural-Kuzbas, in the East. Here too, the heroic efforts of the working class and working peasants introduced essential changes to the plan, making an early solution of this task possible. Lastly, the rate of collectivisation was made more exact. Under the plan, 20-22 per cent of the farms were to be collectivised towards the end of the five-year period. In practice, however, in 1932 collectivisation was on the whole completed in all the principal agricultural areas of the country.

As a result of the great changes carried out during the historic first five-year period, the socialist mode of production was firmly established in all branches of the Soviet national economy. At the end of 1932, the socialist sector accounted for 93 per cent of the national income, 99.5 per cent of the gross industrial output, 76.1 per cent of the gross agricultural output, and 100 per cent of the retail trade.

The facts themselves demonstrated the brilliance of the Marxist-Leninist tenet that the present and future belong to the working class, that this rising class alone, freeing mankind from its capitalist fetters, can organise production in a new way, develop labour productivity, raise people's living standards, and rid mankind forever of exploitation, poverty and slavery.

2. THE USSR—A COUNTRY OF LARGE-SCALE SOCIALIST AGRICULTURE

The year of 1932 was the year in which socialist reorganisation of agriculture was completed coinciding with the end of the first

five-year economic development plan. Collectivisation, as a major part of the grand programme of building socialism, was more or less completed in all the agricultural areas of the country. As a result, "the kulaks were routed, and the capitalist roots in agriculture sapped; the triumph of socialism in the countryside was thus assured, while the collective-farm economy became a solid basis on which socialism could be built..."¹

The collective-farm path, unexplored and previously untrodden, was opened up through the experience of building socialism in the USSR. The country had won a sweeping victory in its struggle to channel the development of the countryside along collective-farm lines, as a result, above all, of the steady guidance of the Communist Party, with its creative knowledge of the all-conquering Marxist-Leninist theory and its ability to apply it skilfully in effecting the historical changes necessary for social development, when dealing with new and difficult problems. This is illustrated particularly clearly by the socialist reorganisation of the countryside, which was one of the more difficult tasks involved in building socialism.

The period of reorganisation in agriculture was marked by the especially rapid rate at which large collective farms were formed, areas under crops expanded and marketable produce increased. The following table demonstrates how this historical process developed²:

Item	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932
Number of collective farms (thousands)	33.3	57	85.9	224.5	211.1
Farmsteads in collective farms (%)	1.7	3.9	23.6	52.7	61.5
Area under crops on collective farms as a % of the total area sown by peasants	1.2	3.6	30.9	63	75.5
Marketable grain delivered by the collective farms to the state as a % of the total grain harvested by peasants	3.3	10.2	34.3	70.2	77.3

¹ *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 5, p. 68.

² While new collective farms were organised in 1932, small collective farms were integrated, hence they were less in number than in 1931.

These figures show that during the reorganisation period the rural social and economic patterns underwent fundamental changes. These changes are characterised by the complete destruction of kulak holdings, the thorough disintegration of small-peasant farms, and the firm establishment of the socialist structure as the dominant force in agricultural production. In 1932, the socialist sector accounted for almost 80 per cent of the total area under grain crops.

This meant that socialist economic forms, i.e., the state and collective farms, had won a complete victory.

Another significant fact was that with the establishment of the collective farms cultivation increased steeply. In 1932, the area under crops was almost 30 million hectares larger than it was in 1913, and 21.4 million hectares larger than it was in 1928. Thus, the 14.9 million farmsteads combined in collective farms sowed 91.5 million hectares in 1932 instead of the 63 million hectares they had sown previously, before joining collective farms. As a result of the development of collective and state farms, the most progressive economic system was established in the countryside, with immense potentialities for advancing farm production.

The collective-farm movement overcame the numerous obstacles and difficulties in its path. One of these difficulties, as we have already seen, was an exodus of wavering peasants from the collective farms in the spring of 1930. All kinds of enemies of the Party prophesied an imminent collapse of collectivisation and suggested that it should be given up. Rejecting these erroneous proposals, the Party firmly and steadily pursued its course for the socialist reorganisation of agriculture. It was perfectly aware that as momentous a change as the socialist reorganisation of agriculture could hardly proceed without a hitch. Initially some vacillation on the collective farms was possible, and obstacles and shortcomings were unavoidable, but this was not to disconcert their organisers.

Enemies of the Soviet Union are still trying, even to this day, to represent this, the greatest of revolutionary changes, solely from a negative angle, seeking out and overemphasising the weak and faulty aspects of the collectivisation of agriculture. They of course have a similar approach to the Great October Socialist Revolution. But history knows that the bourgeoisie made—and still makes—incomparably more blunders than the proletariat could ever have done. "...If we get down to brass tacks, however, has it ever happened in history that a new mode of production has taken root

immediately, without a long succession of setbacks, blunders and relapses?"¹

The collective-farm system established in the Soviet Union put an end to impoverishment and pauperism in the countryside, and thereby to the stratification of the peasantry. The Soviet poor and middle peasants, united in large collective farms, found a new life, with new social rules and standards. The collective farms developed and grew with the all-round material, technical, financial and organisational assistance provided by the Soviet state. The productive forces of the collective farms developed as the Soviet country grew stronger and the state exerted an ever greater influence on the collective farms. Suffice it to say that in four years and three months of the first five-year period the state allocated 4,700 million rubles to agriculture, 3,200 million rubles went to the collective farms and 1,500 million rubles to the machine-and-tractor stations. The state funds aimed at bringing about an upsurge in socialist agriculture accounted for 65 per cent of all the financial expenditure.²

The development of the collective farms could only start and acquire wide scope in a state of the victorious dictatorship of the proletariat. Such development, and on such a scale, is impossible, either in the form it took or in its content, in any country where private ownership of the implements and means of production predominates, even though, with the employment of the latest advances of science and technology, co-operation in agriculture has long become a vital problem in the capitalist countries too. Yet, under the capitalist mode of production, no attempt to set up farmer co-operatives run by property owners can meet the interests of the working peasants, as such co-operatives will inevitably be of a private capitalist nature and will rest on the exploitation of the work of others, and the appropriation by some of the labour of others for private profit.

Only in a state system in which political power and economic management are in the hands of the workers' and peasants' state, is it possible to establish and develop new production relations through the collective farms in farm production, the largest and yet once the most backward area of the national economy. The October Socialist Revolution was thus the main condition for creating the new socio-economic system in the countryside, turning over

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Great Beginning", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 425.

² See: *Itogi vypolnenija pervogo pjatiletnego plana razvitija narodnogo khozjstva SSSR* (Results of the First Five-Year Plan for Developing the Soviet National Economy), p. 149 (in Russian).

political power and entire wealth of the country to the people.

The greatest result of the first five-year period is that in these historic years the peasants of the Union and Autonomous republics and areas confidently embarked on the path of collectivisation. Enhancing the Soviet state system, creating industrial centres, and developing culture in the ethnic areas, culture which was national in form and socialist in content, the Communist Party, in the shortest possible time, established such material facilities and cultural standards as made it possible to involve these once backward peoples in building socialism. The task set by the 10th Party Congress to the Communist Party and the Russian working class—"to help the non-Russian peoples to catch up with advanced Central Russia"¹—was being successfully carried out.

This was achieved through the effective and systematic assistance rendered by the Russian workers to the culturally and economically backward peoples and through ensuring a higher rate of economic and cultural development for the non-Russian regions. As a result, during the first five-year period, the industrial output in these areas overtook that in the old industrial areas by more than 50 per cent. The rapid industrial development of the once backward non-Russian outlying areas of the country provided a solid basis on which to reorganise their agriculture on socialist lines, to advance it and replace the barbarously backward and antiquated methods of farming by up-to-date machinery, and to rally the working peasants round the Communist Party and Soviet government.

Consistently pursuing the Leninist nationalities policy and resolutely fighting the hangovers of great-power chauvinism and local bourgeois nationalism, the Communist Party and Soviet government laid the unshakable foundations for great friendship between peoples, their fraternal co-operation and mutual assistance in economic, political and cultural development. The lessons of building socialism in the USSR graphically demonstrated the truth of the well-known Marxist-Leninist postulate that, with the aid of the victorious Russian proletariat, the backward ethnic regions could pass directly from feudalism to socialism, by-passing the capitalist stage: "...with the aid of the proletariat of the advanced countries, backward countries can go over to the Soviet system and, through certain stages of development, to communism, without having to pass through the capitalist stage."²

¹ *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 2, 1970, p. 252.

² V. I. Lenin, "The Second Congress of the Communist International", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 245.

The collective-farm system brought final and complete liberation to the peasant women. This, too, bears out its great historic significance. August Bebel, a prominent leader of the international working-class movement, wrote in his classic work, *Woman and Socialism*, that in socialist society "women will rise to a height of perfection of which we as yet have no right conception, as so far there has been no such condition in the history of mankind's development".¹ And to this he added: "Women in the new society are fully independent socially and economically, they are neither dominated nor exploited, they are free and equal to men, they are mistresses of their own destiny."²

The collective-farm movement, which provided for actual equality between men and women, promoted many wonderful and capable women to executive posts on collective farms and in the Soviets, awakening them to social and political activity. In 1933 in the Soviet Union about 400,000 women were members of village Soviets, 400,000 were members of different sections attached to village Soviets, 15,805 were members of district executive committees, and 485 were members of the Central Executive Committees of Union Republics. Lenin invariably stressed that the full emancipation of women could only be achieved through socialist revolution. He wrote that "...the most important step is the abolition of the private ownership of land and the factories. This and this alone opens up the way towards a complete and actual emancipation of woman, her liberation from 'household bondage' through transition from petty individual house-keeping to large-scale socialised domestic services."³

The October Socialist Revolution was the first in human history to stop the towns exploiting the villages and to provide all the necessary conditions and prerequisites for town and country to draw together, both politically and culturally. As a result, the erstwhile distrust felt by the peasants for the towns gradually gave way to confidence in the socialist towns. This confidence increased all the more when the working class proclaimed, through its vanguard, the Communist Party, the slogan "Look to the countryside!"

The abolition of the differences between town and country is of course a complex process which can take many turns. It in no

¹ August Bebel, *Die Frau und der Sozialismus*. Verlag JHW Dietz Nachf., Berlin 1946, S. 324.

² *ibid.*, S. 585.

³ V. I. Lenin, "International Working Women's Day", *Collected Works*. Vol. 32, p. 162.

sense implies any diminution of the leading role of the towns and socialist industry; on the contrary, it presupposes the greatest possible development of the industrial centres. Industry will still play a leading role, and the leading position of the working class will increase. The towns, with the working class, their advanced culture and powerful industry, are the solid base on which the socialist development of the countryside can take place, on which agriculture can be equipped with up-to-date machines and tools. As more and more farm jobs are done by machines, the differences between town and country, between work in industry and on the farm, are gradually obliterated.

State farms and machine-and-tractor stations are a type of industrial enterprise at which labour is organised just as it is in large-scale machine industry. They bring not just tractors and combine harvesters to the countryside but sophisticated harvesting machines and implements—a whole system of machines—along with factory-type shops equipped with machine-tools, motors, engines, and intricate appliances. These socialist enterprises give rise to jobs entirely new to the countryside—those of tractor driver, machine operator, combine operator, fitter, mechanic, team-leader, technician and engineer.

On the basis of the socialist system, the alliance between the working class and peasantry qualitatively changed and became immeasurably stronger throughout the national economy—it rose to an unprecedented height, embodying the lasting moral and political unity of Soviet society. *The peasants firmly embraced the proletarian standpoint on the most fundamental question—the question of building socialism in the USSR.* This meant that the individual peasants, formerly the exponents of a small-commodity economy, were no longer placed between capitalism and socialism. Quite the contrary, they had become a force hostile to capitalism, a mighty bulwark of socialist construction. Lenin repeatedly pointed out that there were no essential differences between the interests of the workers and the working peasants, that socialism “is fully able to meet the interests of both. Only socialism can meet their interests”.¹

The truth of this brilliant prediction of Lenin's has been born out by experience, by the practice of socialist construction in our country. From this time on, the Soviet government began to rely not only on the socialist system in industry, but also on the socialist system in agriculture. It should, however, be borne in mind that

¹ V. I. Lenin, “Alliance Between Workers and Peasants”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 333.

the difference between the two kinds of socialist property causes the differences between the working class and the peasants to continue for a certain historical period, the leading role invariably belonging to the working class which is connected with the more advanced form of production and with the higher form of social property—the state, national property.

During the first five-year period the Party finished laying the economic foundations for socialism and began erecting the edifice itself of socialist society. Capitalism had the ground knocked from under its feet in the countryside, and this sealed the fate of the exploiter classes in the USSR. The question “Who will beat whom?” that was posed by Lenin on transferring to the New Economic Policy, was answered in favour of socialism—fully and irrevocably—in the countryside as well as in the towns.

Thus, the collective-farm system which had triumphed in the countryside laid firm socialist foundations for the development of new social ties and production relations. The immense changes in the social and economic life of the countryside which took place during the first five-year period demonstrate the great strength of the Communist Party and the wisdom of its Leninist policy.

3. THE USSR—A COUNTRY OF 100 PER CENT LITERACY AND A HIGH LEVEL OF CULTURE

In the course of great socio-economic reforms, the Communist Party successfully dealt with the problems of the cultural revolution, which was a component part of Lenin’s plan for building socialism. In his last works, Lenin paid particular attention to the development of public education and to raising the cultural level of the people. He pointed out that it was necessary to bring about a real cultural revolution, one which would put the country in the front ranks of the civilised peoples of the world.

As Lenin saw it, the concept of cultural revolution involved three basic principles. *Firstly*, it had to ensure hundred-per-cent literacy of the population and the broad development of public education in the country; *secondly*, it was essential to train a force of graduate experts from among the workers and peasants for all branches of the national economy; and *thirdly*, it had to bring about a drastic change in people’s minds, to make it possible for them to understand the essence of the new socio-economic system and the need to build socialism and communism under the banner of Marxism.

These points were at the centre of attention of the 16th Party

Congress, as the tasks of the reconstruction period were ultimately to be solved on the cultural front. To build socialism successfully—even where there were sufficient material and technical facilities—the masses had to have enough culture and knowledge. The success of socialist construction largely depended on such measures of fundamental importance as switching over to compulsory universal primary education, completing the elimination of illiteracy and semi-literacy, training enough graduate personnel for the socialist economy, spreading technical and agronomic information, and extending the network of cultural and educational centres.

The Party and government organisations spared no efforts to raise the people's cultural level to suit the increased requirements. As a result, major successes were scored in cultural development over a comparatively short period of history. During the first five-year period, the introduction of universal primary compulsory education was completed. The number of primary school pupils in the USSR was almost doubled, increasing from 10 million in 1928 to 19 million in 1932. The literacy rate increased from 67 per cent in 1930 to 90 per cent in 1932. A vast expansion in the network of general education schools, higher schools, research centres, libraries, clubs and theatres showed that the cultural revolution of which Lenin had dreamed was being successfully brought about, in the fullest sense, in the Soviet Union.

Training a force of engineers and technicians from the midst of the working class is a major condition for successful industrialisation. It was therefore natural to launch it on a large scale from the very start. In 1932, the technical colleges and technical secondary schools had 370,000 students, factory schools had 626,000 trainees, while different training programmes were attended by 700,000 to 800,000 people. Hundreds of thousands of workers were gaining a thorough knowledge of technology in the factories.

The training of engineers and technicians was organised right in the heart of the areas where industry was being developed.

In turn, it enabled the Party to set an all-important task for the workers and managers of Soviet industry, that of mastering new technology. In response to an appeal by the Party, a socialist emulation movement for mastering technology and raising labour productivity was launched at plants, factories and building projects.

This decisive turn, launched by the Party and economic personnel, towards mastering technology and scientific knowledge, made it possible to start up new giants of industry and to steeply raise labour productivity in the factories. Relying on socialist industrialisation and applying the industrial might of new, up-to-date, large-

scale engineering, the Communist Party and the Soviet state sped up the technological reconstruction of all branches of the national economy.

In this respect no less significant facts could also be observed in the countryside. The extensive mechanisation of collective-farm production, which generally raised the collective farms' economic activities to a higher level, required a higher level of management and greater general cultural, production and agrotechnical knowledge from the collective-farm peasantry as a whole. This made the problem of training skilled personnel for the collective farms particularly urgent. During the first five-year period alone, the network of agricultural colleges increased almost four-fold, and the number of technical secondary and agricultural secondary schools, almost six times over. The number of college departments for agricultural workers ("workers' faculties") was six times greater than before. In 1932, these educational centres trained 581,500 students, giving high-and medium-level qualifications to 44,560 specialists. Also in 1932, more than four million skilled workers were trained on short-term courses.

All this was of decisive significance in consolidating the successes of collectivisation in the new conditions. As the collective farms became better organised and more prosperous, socialist culture in the countryside increased and the conditions of the collective farmers' everyday life improved. Consequently, the collective farms alone could provide for a genuine upsurge of culture among the mass of collective farmers and make it possible to still further increase their political awareness and labour activity. The involvement of the broad mass of collective farmers in cultural development, and in the drive for mastering agrotechnical knowledge and machinery, consolidated the successes of socialist construction in the countryside.

The Central Committee always insisted that Communists should master ever greater economic knowledge, should grasp every detail of production and ensure the concrete, effective and skilled management of every sector of production. Yet, important as they undoubtedly were, these qualities alone were insufficient. *The grand programme of economic development could only be fulfilled by people who, besides a good knowledge of technology and economics, were well equipped with the advanced revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism.* This was precisely why the Central Committee gave prominence to the task of raising the level of ideological education among the workers, of arming them with the knowledge of the laws of social development and of the heroic history of the Communist

Party. Without this guide, it would have been impossible to move forward successfully to achieve the goal.

Thus, it can rightly be said that the *first five-year period was one of enormous change in every sphere of life in the country—economic, political, cultural and intellectual*. To accomplish such a swift renewal of the life of society, however, the Party had to work out a new political line and put it into practice. On the way, the Party of course encountered resistance from doubting Thomases, from sceptics of all sorts, who tried to deflect it from the Leninist path. Yet, many instances are known of such politicians finding themselves overboard because, intending to swim with the tide, they could not decide which shore to aim for.

CHAPTER XII

THE ORGANISATIONAL AND ECONOMIC CONSOLIDATION OF THE COLLECTIVE FARMS— AN INALIENABLE PART OF THE PROCESS OF COLLECTIVISING AGRICULTURE

1. THE HISTORICAL ROLE OF THE MACHINE-AND-TRACTOR STATIONS IN THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE COLLECTIVE-FARM SYSTEM

One of the complex problems the Party had to deal with during the socialist reconstruction of agriculture was that of the different types of public economy prevailing in agriculture, the principles lying behind the relations between them, and the methods of their guidance by the proletarian state. The difficulty lay not only in uniting the small and middle peasants in large collective farms, but also in ensuring that these farms should contribute to the development of socialist awareness among the peasants, helping to turn them into the genuine builders of the new social system.

The socialist reorganisation of agriculture in the USSR proceeded in three main directions: *first*, in setting up state farms, socialist state-run enterprises of a consistently socialist type, equipped with up-to-date machinery and constituting the backbone of the reorganisation of the old mode of production in the countryside; *second*, in setting up large collective farms based on socialised, collective ownership and collective work, which are holdings of a socialist type; and *third*, in setting up an extensive network of state-run enterprises of a consistently socialist type—the machine-and-tractor stations—which were the basis for re-equipping farming on mechanised lines and for helping to transform the individual peasant farms so as to gear them to the large-scale collective economy.

Consequently, the socialist transformation of agriculture, according to Lenin's instructions, was to—and indeed did—follow the course of establishing two types of common economy, i. e. the state farms, resting on the state property of the whole people, and the collective farms—socialist-type holdings, resting on co-operative collective-farm property. The interaction of these two types of socialist farm provided conditions for 100-per cent collectivisation in all areas of the country.

On the basis of socialist industrialisation, a material foundation was laid for the socialist reorganisation of the countryside and for proletarian guidance of the reconstruction of farm production. Yet the matter was not only one of providing new mechanical facilities; it was also important to find the right way to bring state industry together with co-operative farming, while keeping the basic means of production in the hands of the state, as the necessary prerequisite for the working class to guide the collective-farm peasantry. Another important thing was that the collective farms, as a form of collective association of peasants, should be really socialist and should be developed along the right path.

The founders of scientific communism mentioned the need for the workers' guidance of co-operative farm production and for the ownership of the basic implements and means of production to be concentrated for a certain period in the hands of the state. They saw it as the main condition for subordinating the co-operative form of economy to the interests of the socialist state and for re-educating the peasants organised in co-operatives as the workers of socialist society. Engels wrote that society, and consequently the state, should at first reserve for itself the ownership of the means of production, so that the particular interests of the co-operative association could not eclipse the interests of society as a whole.¹

This alone enables the proletarian state, as the body managing the affairs of society as a whole, to exert sufficient influence on the co-operative associations so as "to transform the peasant co-operative to a higher form, and to equalise the rights and duties of the co-operative as a whole as well as of its individual members with those of the other departments of the entire community".² Lenin, too, repeatedly underscored this important thesis. Regarding the problem of collectivisation of agriculture as the "most difficult and at the same time most important socialist reform",³ he invariably pointed out the need for finding such forms of economic organisation for the common economy as would harmoniously combine the interests of the state as a whole and the individual interests of the working peasants, and would ensure that the working

¹ See: K. Marx, F. Engels, *Werke*, Band 36, Dietz Verlag, Berlin, 1967, S. 426.

² Frederick Engels, "Peasant Question in France and Germany", in: K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1976, p. 470.

³ V. I. Lenin, "First Congress of Land Departments", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 344.

class and its Communist Party would lead the entire process of reorganising agriculture on socialist lines.

It must be borne in mind that peasants, even after joining producer co-operatives, do not immediately become experienced in conducting a large-scale socialist economy or shed their habits and traditions of private owners. Moreover, without the leadership by the working class, they are incapable of swiftly mastering large-scale socialist production and its material and technical basis. "The assumption that all 'working people' are equally capable of doing this work would be an empty phrase, or the illusion of an antediluvian, pre-Marxist socialist; for this ability does not come of itself, but grows historically, and grows *only* out of the material conditions of large-scale capitalist production. This ability, at the beginning of the road from capitalism to socialism, is possessed by the proletariat *alone*."¹

The working class, with its factory experience, good organisation, and discipline, is alone capable of organising large-scale socialist production and establishing new, socialist labour discipline. Guiding the development of the collective farms, it shares its knowledge, production experience and organising ability with the collective-farm peasantry. The machine-and-tractor stations were precisely the form of economic organisation which enabled the Soviet state to keep, for a certain period, the principal means of production in its own hands, as well as to employ new machinery in agriculture to the best effect. Through them the state was to exercise immediate control over the entire development of agriculture and to direct the collective farms along the socialist path.

The machine-and-tractor stations appeared much later than the collective and state farms and came slowly into being in the long process of establishing and developing the collective farms. Their predecessors were tractor stations and stations that hired out machinery, which played a great role in freeing the village poor from kulak exploitation and bondage. Arising out of the Soviet experience in developing the economy, the machine-and-tractor stations were powerful centres that helped the Communist Party and Soviet government to carry out their economic policy in the countryside, to re-equip agriculture and re-educate the peasants in a socialist spirit.

The large-scale development of machine-and-tractor stations was launched after the November 1929 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party, which approved of the government's proposal to set

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Great Beginning", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 421.

up the first 100 machine-and-tractor stations in the major grain-producing areas of the country. This was made possible by the immense economic growth of the Soviet Union and above all by the great successes achieved in industrialising the country and collectivising agriculture. Simultaneously, the extensive development of the machine-and-tractor stations resulted from the general growth of political, cultural and production activity among the workers and the mass of the peasants.

In discussing the history of the machine-and-tractor stations, one cannot fail to recall the many difficulties and obstacles the Party had to overcome in the course of their development. There were "theorisers" at that time who opposed the Party policy with their own erroneous conceptions of the role and significance of the machine-and-tractor stations. By and large, these conceptions ignored Lenin's instructions on the need to combine co-operative and state enterprises in agriculture—the indispensable condition for working-class leadership of the peasants organised in co-operatives and for consolidating the alliance between the two friendly classes of workers and peasants.

Some of them maintained that the machine-and-tractor stations should become centres to "nationalise" the peasants and transform them into industrial workers. The supporters of this trend sought to prove the need, even at this stage, to fuse co-operative collective farm property with state, public property, and to include collective farms in the category of thoroughly socialist enterprises. This objectively led to the collective farms being expropriated and thereby to the collective-farm system being wrecked. In practice, this wrong theory was manifested in attempts to set up, here and there, agrarian-industrial and industrial-agrarian associations. Such giant associations, uniting collective farms, state farms and machine-and-tractor stations, not only ran counter to the scientific principles of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine on the socialist reorganisation of agriculture, but also failed to accord with reality. They would prevent the working peasantry from developing along the co-operative path—the best way of drawing them into the building of socialism.

Others believed that the machine-and-tractor stations should play the role of isolated hiring-out stations, merely providing technical assistance under contract with the collective farms, without intervening in their economic and production activities. They regarded producer co-operatives as independent peasant associations, not led by the proletarian state. This was an attempt to isolate the collective farms from guidance by the working class, by the Commu-

nist Party. In practice, this mistaken theory manifested itself in the fact that in a number of places the machine-and-tractor stations would give no guidance to the collective farms, would have nothing to do with the planning and organisation of collective-farm production, and would not pay due attention to the needs and requirements of the young collective farms.

The Central Committee of the Party firmly rejected these erroneous proposals. It pointed out that the machine-and-tractor stations, being the material basis for a technical re-equipment of agriculture, must serve, for a whole period of history, as powerful centres of state and organisational-economic guidance for the collective farms. The machine-and-tractor stations were not set up to counter the collective farms, but neither were they to merge with them. They were an industrial type of socialist enterprise in agriculture and, carrying out specific functions in the organisational-economic and political guidance of the collective-farm movement, were to lead the collective farms along the socialist path.

The immense significance of the machine-and-tractor stations consisted in the fact that the state's control over the collective farms, and the technical assistance they were rendered by the machine-and-tractor stations, were combined with the initiative of the collective farmers themselves. Generalising from the experience of the first machine-and-tractor stations, the Central Committee of the Party noted in its decision of 29 December 1930, that the machine-and-tractor stations had done broad tests on a form of organisation by the Soviet state of large-scale collective agriculture on a modern technological base, in which the initiative of the mass of collective farmers in building their collective economies was most fully combined with the organisational and technical assistance and guidance provided by the proletarian state.

The experience of building socialism in the countryside has shown that the Party was right to attach exceptional significance to extending and improving the activities of the machine-and-tractor stations and enhancing their role in collective-farm development. Usually collectivisation proceeded at a faster pace in the districts serviced by machine-and-tractor stations than in those in which they were absent. Thus, in the winter of 1930/31, at the height of the socialist reorganisation of agriculture, the level of collectivisation in the districts with machine-and-tractor stations reached 61 per cent as against 35 per cent in those without them. The faster the machine-and-tractor stations grew, the more successfully the collective farms developed and their common economy gained a firmer foothold. The machine-and-tractor stations actively helped

not only the poor, but also the mass of the middle peasants, to switch to the socialist path, which figured very much in the success of collective-farm development. This is clearly demonstrated by the following collectivisation figures (in per cent):

	Poor peasant holdings			Middle peasant holdings		
	1929 (spring)	1930 (spring)	1931 (Feb.)	1929 (spring)	1930 (spring)	1931 (Feb.)
In MTS districts	17	58	59	13	55	63
Outside MTS districts	14	52	55	6	42	54

In districts serviced by machine-and-tractor stations, the middle peasants not only did not lag behind the poor peasants in collectivisation, but often outstripped them. This fully confirmed Lenin's brilliant prediction that the middle peasants would inevitably go over the common economy given the mass introduction of tractors and other machines into farm production.

The machine-and-tractor stations exercised a tremendous influence in all areas of collective-farm development. Under the impact of their technical and organisational work, the socialist reconstruction of agriculture was accomplished, progress was achieved in developing the productive forces, and solid foundations were laid for growth in the working peasants' living standards and cultural level. Indissolubly bound up with the growth of the machine-and-tractor stations was the accomplishment of many important economic measures, including the extension of crop areas, the raising of crop yields, the development of animal husbandry, and growth in the indivisible funds and incomes of collective farms and farmers. Lastly, under the influence of the machine-and-tractor stations, the agricultural co-operative took root and strengthened as the basic form of the collective-farm system. The year of 1932 was a turning-point in the development of the machine-and-tractor stations. Having surmounted many difficulties as regards economic organisation, the machine-and-tractor stations asserted their position of industrial centres in farm production. One should note here two crucial factors determining a further expansion in the leading role of the machine-and-tractor stations.

First, whereas in the early years of the first five-year period agriculture was supplied to a large extent with tractors imported from

abroad, from 1932 such imports were stopped, being made unnecessary by the fast rate at which industry was developing in the Soviet Union. The machine-and-tractor stations were henceforth supplied exclusively with tractors produced by Soviet socialist industry. The average tractor capacity rose considerably after this, and the amount and quota of mechanical draught steeply increased. This drastically altered the composition of the machines and implements serving farm production. Whereas in 1927-28 machines with mechanical draught accounted for a mere 4.6 per cent, in 1932 they accounted for 84 per cent. The average tractor capacity rose from 10.4 to 15hp. Furthermore, while in the early years of the five-year period tractor-driven machines were designed mostly for grain farming, from 1932 onwards Soviet industry began to supply machine-and-tractor stations with numerous machines for industrial crop farming. As a result, the machine-and-tractor stations gradually went over to serving all branches of collective-farm production, thus becoming organisers of the collective farms' entire production process.

Secondly, early in the five-year period, while the bulk of the tractors and farm machines were concentrated at the machine-and-tractor stations, quite a few tractors were owned by collective farms which used their own funds to buy them. In 1929, 85 per cent of such collective farms had one tractor apiece; 14.6 per cent had from two to five tractors; and 0.4 per cent had over five tractors. It was demonstrated by experience, however, that in these specific historical conditions, with the collective farms only just finding their feet, such a scattering of tractors in the collective-farm sector did not justify itself, failing to yield proper effect in production. The young collective farms were not able to maintain tractor and machine fleets at their own expense, for to do so created additional difficulties for them and deflected their efforts from the vital tasks involved in organising collective-farm production. It was therefore decided in 1932 to concentrate the tractor fleet and complex farm machines in state enterprises—machine-and-tractor stations and state farms. The former accounted for 50.4 per cent, and the latter for 43.1 per cent of the tractors available in agriculture. The other 6.5 per cent were being used by other economic bodies, and only in some individual cases by collective farms.

The concentration of the tractor fleet at the machine-and-tractor stations was of great production significance both to the collective farms and to the machine-and-tractor stations themselves. The tractor and machine fleet was now used most efficiently, the material and technical facilities of the machine-and-tractor stations were great-

ly expanded and their leading role as regards the collective farms was increased. At the same time the machine-and-tractor stations became one of the most important channels through which commodity grain was supplied to the state. As they developed further, taking in an ever greater number of collective farms, crop areas and all farm jobs, their role in channelling the grain supply for the state increased enormously.

The imposing growth of collective-farm mechanisation, right from the very start, is evidenced by the following figures. By the spring of 1930 the country had 158 machine-and-tractor stations while towards the end of 1931 it had 1,400. At the end of 1932 there were 2,502 machine-and-tractor stations in the Soviet Union, i.e. almost 16 times more than in 1930. The number of tractors at the machine-and-tractor stations almost trebled during this time, their capacity increasing 3.5 times. Thus in 1930 the machine-and-tractor stations had 31,100 tractors of an aggregate capacity of 400,900 hp. In 1932 their number increased to 82,700, and their aggregate capacity to 1,443,500 hp. In 1932 the machine-and-tractor stations took in 34 per cent of the collective farms, 45.5 per cent of the total number of peasant farmsteads united in collective farms, and nearly half of the total collective-farm area under crops.

In establishing the machine-and-tractor stations, the Communist Party and the Soviet state were to draw the broad mass of collective farmers into mastering up-to-date machinery and to accustom them to the socialist organisation of labour in large-scale social production. The Communist Party worked tirelessly to introduce machinery into the collective farms. It demanded that workers in industry should provide more and more tractors and other modern farm machines for agriculture. The Party foresaw that with the advent of tractors in the countryside the peasants would abandon their individual plots and would join the large collective farms. This prediction was entirely correct. Farm production was revolutionised by the introduction of machinery and at the end of 1932 the collective farms triumphed finally and irrevocably.

2. THE CO-OPERATIVE AS THE PRINCIPAL FORM TAKEN BY THE COLLECTIVE FARM

The most outstanding achievement of the collective-farm movement was that in the course of its historical development the best form of collective association of small peasant producers, the agricultural co-operative, was established. Its advantages are that not

only are the interests of social production and the individual interests of the peasants combined in it in the most correct way, but opportunities are also provided for the successful upsurge of all branches of farm production.

It has already been pointed out that the general fundamental ideas behind the socialist transformation of agriculture were given a thorough basis in works by the founders of Marxism-Leninism. But how these ideas were to be realised, what stages the process of the socialist reorganisation of the countryside would pass through, and in what organisational and economic forms the new type of socialist agricultural enterprise would finally be established – all these problems were tackled in the course of historical development, through the creative experience of the movement of the masses. Lenin ruthlessly castigated all hare-brained schemes and the irresponsible building of castles in the air in the choice of the organisational forms of the socialist farm. He insisted on the practical experience of the masses being thoroughly studied and intelligently applied.

Guided by Lenin's instructions, the Party made a close study of the historical processes, drawing general conclusions from the practice and experience of the masses. This helped it to find and define the best form of collective farm, the agricultural co-operative. But before this economic form became established as the basic, prevailing one, it underwent a long process of historical development, in which it was subjected to all-round checking and testing. One typical feature of collective-farm development was that at its every stage, right up to that of mass collectivisation, different forms of association emerged.

This diversity of economic forms made it necessary for the Party to study each one thoroughly so as to correctly determine which form of collective farm would be the most expedient. Pointing out this circumstance as the main difficulty presented by the development of the collective farms, M. I. Kalinin said in 1928: "The chief snag in the collective-farm movement is not the material problem. That we are poor, and that the government gives little to the collective farms in comparison with what they need – that is not the main trouble. The trouble is that we have so far failed to find the optimum form of collective farm, a form that would make it possible to amalgamate production, organise it on co-operative lines, and at the same time would not impose a barrack-style mode of living on the individual"¹

¹ M. I. Kalinin, "Mezhdunarodnoje i vnutrennee polozenie Sovetskogo Sojuza" (The International and Home Situation of the Soviet Union), *Pravda*, 7 June 1928.

Different stages were marked by the predominance of different forms of collective farm. At the earliest stage, the predominant form of collective farming was the agricultural commune. It marked the beginning of the new, socialist direction in which the countryside was developing. This was due to two circumstances. *First, to purely economic ones*: the first communes were set up mostly on land that used to belong to landlords, private owners, churches and monasteries, i. e., where the material and technical facilities were already in existence. Thus in 1918-1919, 86 per cent of the communes were set up on this "ready-made" basis. *Secondly, it was due to the social, class composition of the first collective farms*. The initiators and organisers of the first communes were industrial workers who had come to the countryside to help the rural proletariat and the poor peasants join communes and avail themselves of their material and technical facilities.

But experience proved that the consumer communes were not a suitable form of collective farm. These first shoots of collectivisation were more in the nature of communities than economic enterprises. For this reason, fewer communes were formed as time went on. Nevertheless, for all their shortcomings, the communes made an immense contribution to the formation and development of the collective-farm system in the countryside. Simultaneously, the communes were a wonderful example of the struggle of the working peasants for a new, socialist life.

In the new conditions of economic development that arose after the introduction of the New Economic Policy, lower forms of association began to predominate in the collective movement. Associations for the common cultivation of land (or agricultural associations) were particularly widespread. But they too were a temporary, transitional form. Agricultural associations could hardly provide for the radical reorganisation of the small peasant farms, because the principal means of production remained privately owned by the individual association members. Those were primitive collective farms which were inevitably to develop into a more perfect form of the collective farm as more machinery was supplied to the countryside. Nevertheless, the agricultural associations were progressive for their time, spreading socialist ideas of collectivism among the peasants.

At the end of 1929, the development of the collective farms underwent a qualitative change. Agricultural co-operatives gained prominence, taking first place among the three forms. This is explained by the fact that the collective-farm movement was joined by the bulk of the middle peasants who established the co-operative as the basic form of collective farm. The Central Committee of the

Party, in a resolution of 5 January 1930, "Concerning the Rate of Collectivisation and Measures to Be Taken by the State to Assist the Development of the Collective Farms", stated: "As the experience of mass collectivisation, at the present stage of collective-farm development, has put forward the agricultural co-operative as the most widespread form of collective farm, a form in which the *principal* means of production (implements and livestock, farm buildings, and producing animals) are collectivised, rather than the agricultural association in which labour was socialised but the means of production remained in private ownership, the Central Committee of the CPSU(B) instructs the USSR People's Commissariat of Agriculture to work out model Rules for the Agricultural Co-operative as quickly as possible, enlisting the participation of the collective-farm organisations...."¹

These Rules came into effect in March 1930. The lessons learnt by the mass collective-farm movement made it sufficiently clear that the farm co-operative was the best form of peasants' association. In the co-operative, only the principal means of production are socialised. All the rest, i.e., household plots, simple implements, some of dairy cattle, sheep, goats, and poultry, remain in the hands of the collective farmers. Thus, the co-operative type of farm harmoniously combines social, state and personal interests. The agricultural co-operative, which is the basis of the collective-farm system, marked the beginning of socialist relations of production in the countryside and soon demonstrated its great superiority over other forms of co-operative peasant association.

To form a clearer idea of how certain forms of collective farm evolved, one must bear in mind the following two crucial aspects of the process of reorganising the countryside on socialist lines: firstly, the unification of the peasants in socialist collective farms, and secondly, the socialisation of their individual means of production. While they are organically linked, these two aspects of the one process developed far from evenly. In practice the socialisation of the means of production during the entire collectivisation period was markedly slower than the peasants' association into the collectives. This discrepancy between the two parts of the single process of collectivisation was due to the very nature of the collective-farm movement. Let us take the agricultural associations as an example. Their main distinctive feature was the association of peasants and the co-operation of labour. As for the other aspect, i.e.,

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions..., Vol. 4, p. 385.

the socialisation of the means of production, it was extended to merely crops. Collectivisation at this stage was one-sided.

Even at the next stage of collective-farm development, when the step was made from associations to co-operatives, the level of socialisation of the peasants' means of production also lagged considerably behind the level of their association in collectives. There were two reasons for this: on the one hand, the peasant remained attached to his small farm, and, on the other, the Party organisations concerned paid attention mainly to the number of peasant farms joining the collectives and did not attach sufficient importance to socialisation, which is the main lever of consolidating collectivisation and the most important element of making the peasants economically interested in working on collective farms.

A decisive turn towards increasing socialisation on the collective farms was brought about by the 16th Party Congress. The latter proposed one of the main tasks to be that of extending the process of collectivisation both by getting more peasants to join the collective farms and by turning their individual means of production into collective ones. The fresh upsurge of the collective-farm movement, which started in the autumn of 1930, was accompanied not only by a growth in the number of associated peasant farms, but also by a qualitative change, i.e., a high degree of socialisation of the means of production formerly owned by individual peasants.

The most difficult problem was the socialisation of productive animals, particularly of dairy cattle. In addition to this it must be pointed out that up to 1931 the socialised cattle of most collective farms were not kept on animal farms but simply belonged to the common collective-farm herd. In many instances, because there were no suitable farm buildings or fodder reserves, the animals which were to be socialised were temporarily kept by the collective farmers. In 1931 the situation changed. By that time many collective farms ran stock-raising farms which were the best form of developing common animal husbandry and improving its productivity. This experience was borrowed from the state farms.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party and the USSR Council of People's Commissars pointed out in their decision of 30 July 1931, "Concerning the Development of Socialist Animal Husbandry", that collective commodity farms were a form of socialised animal and poultry breeding which corresponded best of all to the current co-operative stage of development of the collective farms and, alongside state farms, provided the speediest solution

to the task of establishing large-scale commodity livestock production. Giving every possible support to this new economic form, issuing from the experience of collective-farm organisation, the Central Committee of the Party and the Soviet government set the Party and government organisations the task of solving the problem of animal husbandry by developing and strengthening the collective commodity farms.

As the socialisation of the principal means of production was extended and the productivity of collective labour grew, the public socialist property of the farm co-operative increased, becoming the main source of growth of the material and cultural well-being of the collective-farm peasantry. One graphic indicator of the growing strength of the public economy of the young collective farms was the emergence of the indivisible funds and their increasing proportion in the collective farms' total means. A large part of the collective farms' indivisible funds at that time consisted of the property of expropriated kulak farms. It was made over to the collective farms for good and free of charge. The indivisible funds of the collective farms in grain-growing areas were fairly large:

Territory	Funds per collective farm (rubles)	Including the property of expropriated kulak farms	
		rubles	%
North Caucasus	31,505.2	5,453.5	17.3
Lower Volga	26,618.7	6,165.5	23.2
Middle Volga	13,543.5	3,056.4	22.6

Whereas at the start of 1929 total common funds did not exceed 1,000 rubles on most collective farms, in 1931 they had vastly increased. A great role in establishing the common funds of collective farms belonged to the Soviet state. This was natural, because the new social system could only develop, grow stronger and prosper with the all-round material assistance from the working class. This assistance was particularly valuable at a time when the young collective farms were taking shape. The large-scale construction of farm buildings owned in common, and the acquisition of machines, productive and draught animals, all required considerable capital expenditure, and without credit from the state

the young collective farms could not have coped with these problems.

During the reorganisation period, relying on the experience of organising the collective farms, the Communist Party found, studied, tested out and firmly established the principal form of collective farm—the farm co-operative. This was a momentous, historic achievement of popular initiative, embodied in the practice of collective-farm organisation. *The agricultural co-operative therefore proved to be the best form of production co-operation, covering all aspects of the social and private life of the collective-farm peasantry, and was thus the backbone of the collective-farm system.* That this was indeed so is clear from figures referring to the organisational structure of collective farming in the Russian Federation. At the end of 1932, the co-operatives accounted for 96.5 per cent of collective farms of all kinds, while agricultural communes and associations accounted for 1.9 and 1.6 per cent respectively.

During 1932 the Central Committee of the Party and the Soviet government adopted a number of extremely important measures aimed at further developing and strengthening the agricultural co-operatives. The keynote of these historic measures was the policy of strengthening the collective farms both organisationally and economically in every possible way and ensuring stability in every part of collective-farm production. Drawing general conclusions from the positive experience of the collective farms, and exposing the shortcomings of Party organisations in guiding the development of the collective farms, the Central Committee adopted a decision on February 4, 1932, "On the Immediate Measures to be Taken to Consolidate the Collective Farms Organisationally and Economically". The decision stated that the "task of consolidating the collective farms organisationally and economically is currently one, above all, of developing and improving the *co-operative* form of collective farms. In this the Central Committee is working from the premise that any attempt to artificially speed up the change from the co-operative form of collective farm to the commune, at the present stage of development of the collective farms, constitutes a grave *danger*. The Central Committee cautions all Party organisations against this danger of *skipping* the form of agricultural co-operative which has not yet had time to develop sufficiently or take root."¹

¹ *Kollektivizatsija selskogo khozjaistva. Vazhneishie postanovlenija Kommunisticheskoi partii i Sovetskogo pravitelstva, 1927-1935* (The Collectivisation of Agriculture. Major Party and Government Decisions, 1927-1935), Moscow, 1957, p. 409 (in Russian).

Working to further consolidate the collective farms organisationally and economically, the Party and government put a number of measures into practice to regularise collective land use. On September 3, 1932, the Central Executive Committee and the Council of People's Commissars of the USSR adopted a special decision, "On Establishing the Stable Land Use of Collective Farms". This put an end to the seizure of collective-farm land for various economic departments and the unauthorised changing of boundaries between collective farms. "While preserving the stable land ownership of the state of workers and peasants," the decision ran, "each collective farm should be assigned the land in its present use, prohibiting any repartition thereof."¹

To settle land disputes and all conflicts relating to collective-farm land use, the government set up land commissions in the districts and in territorial, regional and republican centres. A Supreme Land Commission was instituted under the USSR People's Commissariat for Agriculture. The state land commissions were to put collective farm land use in order, ensure its stability, and put an end to all arbitrary and unauthorised repartition of collective-farm land and alteration of boundaries between collective farms. This Soviet government decision was of immense significance for the further development and consolidation of the collective farms; it created conditions for a systematic improvement of tillage, the introduction of proper crop rotation, and the planning of farm production.

Consistently strengthening all components of the collective farms, the Party brought them closer to solving the main task of raising the yield of the collective-farm fields. On 27 September 1932, the USSR Council of People's Commissars and the Central Committee of the Party adopted the decision "On Measures for Increasing Crop Yields" which stated, in part: "The time has come to pass from building up the size of the farms by enlarging the area under crops, to improving its land cultivation and ensuring higher yields, the main task in agriculture at the present stage.... To redirect the efforts of all Party, government, Young Communist League and economic organisations concerned with agriculture towards raising the yield of all crops—this is the central task in the development of agriculture today."²

¹ *ibid.*, p. 424.

² *ibid.*, p. 426.

3. PROBLEMS INVOLVED IN ENSURING A NEW, SOCIALIST LABOUR DISCIPLINE. THE MEASURES TAKEN BY THE PARTY TO ORGANISE WORK ON THE COLLECTIVE FARMS

The experience of collectivisation showed that, complex as the many tasks involved in organising the peasants into production collectives were, the chief difficulties encountered on the path of the socialist reorganisation of the countryside were those which had to do with establishing new forms of the farm, arranging its internal organisational and economic structure, introducing new labour discipline among the collective farmers and helping them to master the whole complex mechanism of collective-farm production.

In his article "A Great Beginning", Lenin pointed out that new labour discipline did not just drop from the skies or result from mere wishful thinking. Every social mode of production, with its inherent social organisation of labour, had a labour discipline of its own. "The communist organisation of social labour, the first step towards which is socialism, rests, and will do so more and more as time goes on, on the free and conscious discipline of the working people themselves who have thrown off the yoke both of the landowners and the capitalists."¹

This new, communist discipline is forged in the very practice of building the socialist economy in agriculture, in the practice of consolidating the collective-farm system, in the struggle against the vestiges of petty-owner mentality and against hostile class influences. Therefore the establishment of this new labour discipline, Lenin wrote, "cannot take place without friction, difficulties, conflicts and violence against the inveterate parasites and their hangers-on".²

What, then, is the essence of this new labour discipline and what goes to make it up?

Working from Lenin's ideas, one can say that the new labour discipline was determined by three main factors: *first*, by an honest, conscientious attitude to work in the common economy, for work had turned from the ignoble and onerous burden it had been into the first commandment of every toiler, extolled by all of society; *second*, it was determined by a thrifty attitude to com-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Great Beginning", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 420.

² *ibid.*, p. 407.

mon, collective property, for socialist public property is the foundation on which the productive forces are able to develop and living standards rise, and is therefore sacred and inviolable; and *third*, it was determined by a meticulous fulfilment of obligations to the state, as the Soviet socialist state is the state of the working people themselves, standing guard over the interests of workers and peasants.

These were the main requirements to which the entire economic, organising and political-educational work of the Party was subordinated in the countryside. The most difficult and intricate problem that the young collective farms had to face was the establishment of new relations of production, the correct distribution of jobs in collective production, and the organisation, assessment and remuneration of collective farmers' labour. One must say that as far as these points were concerned, there was much confusion at the beginning, and quite a few mistakes were made.

A great role in eliminating these mistakes and shortcomings was played by the All-Union Conference on Labour, called by the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Collective-Farm Centre of the USSR in January 1931. The conference generalised from the experience of the collective farms' production work and drafted valuable measures with regard to organisation, accounting, wage-rating, and setting norms for, and remunerating labour on the collective farms. Before the conference, a thorough inspection of many collective farms was carried out.

The evidence collected locally showed what great difficulties the collective farms had to cope with and how urgently they had to be removed. First of all, there was much that was wrong with the remuneration of labour on the collective farms, which in some places resulted in a slackening labour discipline, the break-down of production plans, a loss of the farmers' interest in working in the common economy, and the depreciation of the workday unit. These accounted for the dangerous signs of discontent to be observed on some collective farms among a proportion of the collective farmers who increasingly protested against petty-bourgeois equalisation which undermined the material incentive to the collective work.

What, specifically, were the defects in the organisation and remuneration of collective labour?

First of all, up to 1931 an erroneous system of labour remuneration "by shares" took root on many collective farms. Under this system, the main yardstick was not the amount and quality of the work performed, but the amount of property contributed

to the indivisible funds when joining the collective farm. Naturally, with a system like this, the former poor peasants and farm labourers, however well they worked, received much less than the former middle peasants.

Secondly, there was a system on many collective farms of payment "by the mouth". In this case, it was not a better worker but one who had more mouths to feed that was paid more. Needless to say, this system of remuneration was hardly an encouragement to efficient work.

Thirdly, in some places they used a system of payment by the day, which was a typically petty-bourgeois way of remunerating labour. Under this system, one was not paid for the work one did but for the amount of time spent at work, i.e. per hour or day. And all workers, regardless of how efficient they were or whether it was light or heavy work, skilled or unskilled, or whether they worked well or not, stood to receive the same pay.

Hostile elements assiduously propagated these systems of payment, demagogically arguing that "all are equal on the collective farm" and so "all should receive equal pay". They knew very well that the use of these forms of labour remuneration, alien to the collective farms, would easily kill the farmers' interest in work, depreciate the workday unit, and make collective farmers lose all hope of ever being paid according to the work they actually did. In order to eliminate these distortions and introduce the right, truly socialist system of distributing the income of the collective farms and remunerating labour, the Central Committee of the Party recommended the Party organisations to introduce on all the collective farms the system of payment by the job, the main principle of which is "He who works more and better than others receives more accordingly; he who does not work receives nothing".

Much attention was paid to the introduction of payment by the job by the June 1931 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party. This decided that "all work on collective farms should be based on *payment by the job*, following a system of the simplest kind, to be easily understood by every collective farmer, so that the number of workday units accruing to him can be entered in his work-record card without any complicated calculations, stating not only the amount, but also the quality of the work he has done."¹

The measures taken by the government and the Central Committee did much to tighten up labour discipline on the collective

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions..., Vol. 4, p. 527.

farms, striking at petty-bourgeois wage-levelling, at loafers and grabbers. But the introduction of payment by the job on collective farms largely depended on the work of production teams being properly organised. On many collective farms such teams did not exist while on others they often had no definite place of their own in farm production. A collective-farm chairman or a field superintendent could disband teams at their own discretion and send their members to do any job that needed to be done on the spur of the moment. Work in the fields was usually done on an all-over-the-place basis which made it difficult to organise, keep account of, and remunerate it.

Having looked into the team organisation of labour on the collective farms, the Central Committee of the Communist Party found that on many collective farms field work was done by farmers turning out en masse, and where there were teams, they were organised quite incorrectly, not on the production principle (according to the sown area, the available implements and labour) but on the territorial principle (by the farmstead). Besides, there was tremendous disagreement over the principles on which the teams were organised. They can be divided basically into three types.

The first type featured narrowly specialised teams that were formed to do a job—e.g., harrowing, ploughing, sowing, mowing or binding—and then were disbanded. Under this system, nobody was personally responsible for the job or encouraged to do his best to obtain a good harvest. The single process of farm work was, as it were, broken up into parts, each of which was done by somebody else the next time round.

The second type featured teams that did a series of related tasks. They were better organised but equally failed to meet the requirements of collective-farm production. A team of this kind would be set up, for example, to do the tilling, harrowing and sowing in the spring. That done, it was disbanded. At harvest time, another team would be set up to mow, bind, stack and thresh the corn. Next, a team would be formed to do the autumn sowing and ploughing. Although such teams were responsible for a series of related production processes, forming a definite cycle, they were not in fact held accountable for the final results of the entire process of farm work.

Teams of *the third type*, which first gained currency on collective farms in the North Caucasus in 1931, were better in that they had certain plots assigned to them for the entire duration of the farm's work, beginning with the sowing and ending with getting

in the harvest. And they were accountable for the results of the work. Nevertheless, teams of this type also had a grave shortcoming, namely their seasonal character.

Shortcomings and omissions in the organisation and remuneration of labour were due in the first place to the absence of experience in this field, as well as to the incompetence and high turnover of farm executives most of whom were inexperienced and insufficiently trained in the management of big farms.

The economic activities of the collective farms were also adversely affected by the fact that there were no uniform management principles, the functions of the different collective-farm bodies overlapped, and the mass of collective farmers was insufficiently drawn into running the affairs of the farm. Many farms had the most diverse of managerial structures, often cluttered with wholly unnecessary intermediary bodies. For example, the collective farms in the Middle Volga Territory had the following executive bodies: general meetings, board meetings involving from between 10 to 30 board members, presidiums with a 3- to 5-man work unit, and auditing committees consisting of three persons. In addition large collective farms had meetings of representatives instead of general meetings, and councils instead of board meetings.

The absence of uniform principles of collective-farm management, and the overlapping of the functions of the collective-farm bodies—which, besides, met irregularly—inevitably impaired the management of the common economy, giving rise to irresponsibility and inefficiency in dealing with economic problems. Poor participation of the mass of collective farmers in running the affairs of the collective farm often resulted in shortcomings that could be avoided if due public control were ensured.

The most serious defect was the tendency shown by many farms towards increasing administrative personnel at the expense of the fields.

The collective-farm economy, and particularly the remuneration of labour, suffered as a result of breaches in the financial discipline on the part of the financial bodies themselves. Regardless of the decision of the USSR Council of People's Commissars of 12 July 1931, which strictly prohibited "any withdrawal of money from the current accounts of the collective farms unless actually requested by the latter", financial agencies continued to abuse their rights. They withdrew huge sums of money from the collective-farm accounts. This practice led to a situation where many collective farms began to conceal their incomes and keep their money in "black tills".

An additional problem was that the bodies in charge of state purchases failed to settle their accounts in due time with the collective farms from which they bought produce.

There were some instances of machine-and-tractor stations overcharging collective farms for their services in order to patch up their own finances.

Seeing how difficult it was to introduce payment by the job on the collective farms, some local officials tried to convert co-operatives into communes once again and thus deal with the obstacles more quickly. The Central Committee of the Party stopped these dangerous tendencies. Drawing on the experience of the best collective farms, the Central Committee instructed the Party organisations to work indefatigably to build up the co-operative farm and establish payment by the job as the main principle behind the remuneration of labour.

With this in mind, all the collective farms were asked to set up permanent production teams manned by the same people and with requisite machines and implements, draught animals and plots of land assigned to them, enabling them to carry out all the principal farm operations throughout the year and even throughout the whole period of crop rotation. Every production team, which had definite rights and duties, would thus be in a position to plan its work, organise it on a piecework basis, use its force to the best effect, and increase the responsibility of each member. The team was to become a stable production unit of the collective farm.

The attention of Party organisations was also drawn to the need to eliminate the turnover of collective-farm chairmen and team leaders, and to improve their selection, training and education. Party organisations were instructed to build up stock-raising teams, eliminate the lack of personal responsibility in tending the animals, and to increase the responsibility of each member of a stock-raising team for raising young stock and better tending the animals. The Central Committee set the Party, government and collective-farm organisations an important task – that of working tirelessly to educate collective-farm activists from among the advanced collective farmers, members of the socialist emulation movement, and team leaders, and it pointed out that collective-farm activists should be a reliable prop for the local organisations in carrying out all the major economic and political measures of the Party and government.

The Central Committee approved the decisions of the USSR People's Commissariat of Agriculture and the USSR Collective-

Farm Centre on introducing additions to the Rules of agricultural co-operatives. The additions stipulated that collective-farm boards were to be elected for a term of one year, all early re-elections were prohibited and could be held only in exceptional cases with the consent of the regional or territorial collective-farm union; collective-farm team leaders were to be appointed by the board for at least a year and could be removed only in exceptional cases with the consent of the district collective-farm union. The Procurator's Office was requested to call to account officials who infringed the elections of collective-farm boards and other bodies.

The Party required its local organisations to strengthen the more important sectors of the collective farms by introducing Communists and Komsomol members into them. In its decision of 15 May 1932, "On the Placing of Party and Komsomol Members on the Collective and State Farms", the Central Committee of the Communist Party criticised certain Party organisations which put Communists and Komsomol members on the less important, non-productive sectors of collective farms. Communists and Komsomol members were to be assigned jobs in collective-farm production and were to be placed in the most important work areas.

The organisational and economic consolidation of the collective farms was one of the most difficult problems involved in collective-farm development. To solve it successfully, the Party organisations carried out painstaking work with the collective-farm personnel and brought in a whole range of measures to develop the common economy and educate collective-farm members in a socialist spirit. Thus, guiding the collective-farm development and relying on the creative initiative of the masses, the Communist Party applied forms of internal organisational and economic structuring of collective farms such as would help the collective farmers quickly shed the vestiges of their old, private-owner habits and develop new, socialist relationships as members of a socialist society.

The correct organisation and remuneration of labour on the collective farms, the meticulous fulfilment of state assignments, the all-round enhancement of common collective-farm property, the establishment of ordered collective-farm land use, the obtaining of high yields and farm produce to satisfy the growing needs of the working people—all these were tasks of the first importance. They were in the focus of the Party's efforts in the field of political and organisational work among the masses in the countryside.

4. THE CAUSES OF THE DECLINE OF AGRICULTURE IN THE PERIOD OF REORGANISATION

Towards the end of the period of reorganisation, the main tendencies in the development of agriculture became evident, the path of collective development in the countryside became more clear, and the strong and weak points in the Party and government leadership of the collective-farm organisation could be seen. In the first place, it should be noted that during socialist reorganisation the economic indicators of agriculture decreased, which was expressed in a considerable drop in the gross grain output and live-stock.

The gross grain output amounted to 801 million metric centners¹ in 1913, 835.4—or 34.4 more—million metric centners in 1930, and 694.8 million metric centners in 1931. In 1932 the gross grain output registered a slight growth, rising to 698.7 million metric centners. It must be borne in mind, that the sown area was almost 30 million hectares larger in 1932, than it was in 1913. It is true that the years of reorganisation were extremely unfavourable weather-wise in the Volga area, some parts of the Ukraine and the North Caucasus: there was a severe drought, which certainly told on the grain balance in the country. Nevertheless, the general tendency towards a reduction in the gross grain output was observable in other areas of the country as well during this period. Animal husbandry was the hardest hit during the reorganisation period. All kinds of livestock kept drastically decreasing, which is shown by the following figures for the USSR:

Item	1916	1929	1930	1931	1932
	millions				
Horses	35.1	34	30.2	26.2	19.6
Cattle	58.9	68.1	52.5	47.9	40.7
Sheep and goats	115.2	147.2	108.8	17.7	52.1
Pigs	20.3	20.9	13.6	14.4	11.6

Besides the fact that less grain was being produced, there were other reasons for the decrease in the number of animals.

¹ 1 metric centner equals 100 kilogrammes or 220.46 lb.

One of these was that when collectivisation was developed on a mass scale, the kulaks and well-to-do peasants began to destroy and sell livestock right, left and centre. As it was precisely these people who had the most animals before collectivisation, it will be clear what great damage this caused to animal husbandry.

Moreover, livestock breeding was adversely affected by leftist deviations during collectivisation. In many places the socialisation of cattle was disorganised and wasteful, local officials were not prepared for it. Sparing no efforts to ensure high quantitative indicators of collectivisation, they did not pay sufficient attention to how the socialised animals were kept, did little to fit out sheds, procure fodder and train stock breeders. This all resulted in a decrease in the socialised stock.

One may well ask why it was that, on one hand, the most progressive socio-economic system triumphed in the countryside, and, on the other, agriculture became less productive.

Of course it would be wrong to try and explain this discrepancy merely in terms of subjective circumstances and miscalculations, as some writers do. Such complex social phenomena should not be oversimplified. In reality, we have here a complicated nexus of a whole range of causes which were, of course, not only subjective, but objective too. It seems to us that of all the causes which resulted in this discrepancy, the following were the most important:

first, the unification of isolated and atomised small peasant farms into collective farms and the establishment over a period as short as this of an immense number of large grain and animal farms was a new and extremely difficult matter which required a long period and great financial outlay for them to be firmly established and developed;

second, the complexity of this process, the interweaving of a whole range of new economic, organisational, and political problems which had to be dealt with simultaneously, the lack of experience in running the organisation of the collective farms, the extreme dearth of skilled managers and organisers capable of improving collective-farm production, all this made the formation of the collective-farm system still more difficult;

third, as the organisation and remuneration of labour were imperfect and petty-bourgeois levelling in the allocation of social products still existed in many places, collective farmers were not encouraged to take an interest in the common economy and thereby the objective basis for growth in labour productivity was about to be lost;

fourth, the class struggle which the reorganisation period entailed and the grave leftist errors of the time could not but affect the productivity of the young collective-farm system which had only just begun to see the light of day.

The decline in farm production was quite considerable. Of course, every revolution entails inevitable economic losses. And if we bear in mind that the socialist reorganisation of agriculture amounted in character and scope to a major revolutionary change it becomes apparent that some losses were to be expected. A real Marxist revolutionary, Lenin said, must not be afraid of such losses. "To achieve the success of this revolution, the proletariat should not shrink from a temporary decline in production...."¹

During the reorganisation of agriculture, the collective farms in one sense underwent the process that took place in the factories in 1920-21. The collective farms at that time were like a well-built structure, resting on a solid foundation, but yet to be equipped, furnished, and lived in. As a matter of fact, the peasants who had just joined the collective farms did not yet know how to operate a large collective farm—they were entirely new to it. Naturally, they could not immediately get used to working together in common production, it was difficult for them to learn the new ways in which the work was organised and the social products distributed and to assimilate the new rules and standards applied to those living in a collective.

The collective farms suffered from an acute shortage of experienced managers, of literate people who could plan the operations of a big farm, keep account of things and do the book-keeping. Whereas the old collective farms, with all their faults in economic organisation, already had their activists and had learned how to run the common economy, most of the collective farms founded in 1931, at the height of the reorganisation period, had not yet had time to gather strength.

Never hiding the immense difficulties that arose in the countryside in 1932, the Communist Party, with its usual Leninist straightforwardness, exposed the bad side of the reorganisation period. Relying on the experience of the masses, the Party pointed out specific methods for dealing with the drawbacks, clearly defining ways to bring about an upsurge in the productive forces of agriculture. The Party called on the workers and

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Preliminary Draft Theses on the Agrarian Question", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 160.

collective farmers to mobilise their forces and tackle the large-scale and complicated problems that had to be dealt with if the collective-farm system was to develop.

Enemies of the Party treated the drawbacks of the reorganisation period in an entirely different spirit. They interpreted it as the collapse of collectivisation and the failure of Lenin's co-operative plan. Again they flaunted the Trotskyist thesis that socialism cannot be built in one country, that the peasants are a reactionary class which must inevitably clash with the working class. The Trotskyists declared that the collective farms were "unprofitable", that the money allocated to them by the state was "wasted", and that the collective farms should therefore be disbanded. The Party scotched these arguments showing that the collective farms, these big socialist associations, were just gaining a foothold, and had a radiant future before them.

"It would, in view of this, be ridiculous to expect," stated the January 1933 Plenum of the Central Committee, "that all these numerous new large agricultural enterprises, set up in the culturally and technologically backward countryside, would after a single year become highly profitable model farms. It will evidently take time and tireless painstaking effort to strengthen the collective and state farms organisationally, to drive out the saboteurs from them, and carefully select and train reliable new Bolshevik personnel to make the collective and state farms shining examples of how to run agriculture. And this they will certainly become, just as many of our factories have, even though they were poorly equipped and organised in 1920-21."¹

Summing up the results of the reorganisation period, one can say that in the general process of reorganising farming along socialist lines two closely linked policies were clearly manifested.

The first policy, which reflected the Party's activity during the mass collective-farm movement of 1930-32, was dictated by the need to solve the main task of uniting the small peasant producers in big collective farms. Its practical results were therefore mostly expressed in quantitative terms—the amount of peasants drawn into collective farms, the expansion of the sown area, and the elaboration of adequate patterns of management and an inner structure for the collective farms. This huge-scale task naturally absorbed the entire attention of the Party, government and non-government organisations, diverting them from questions of qualitative development of farming.

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions..., Vol. 5, p. 84.

The second policy, worked out by the January 1933 Plenum of the Central Committee, marked a sharp change towards consolidating the positions gained, focussing on the need to qualitatively improve all components of collective farms. The main task was now to switch the attention of all the Party, government and collective-farm bodies to the problems of strengthening the collective farms organisationally and economically and to that of achieving an upsurge in the productive forces of socialist agriculture.

Thus during the socialist reorganisation of the countryside two types of farms—state and collective—took root, based on the two forms of socialist property. Accordingly, in each of them internal principles of management and standards of social life were shaped and refined. There is every reason to believe that these two types of farm will go on for a long time, growing stronger and continuing to improve. They will develop concurrently, reciprocally enriching each other with advanced methods of work and the experience of socialist management. On this basis, there will eventually develop common economies of a single type.

It must be said that in pursuing this correct policy the Party showed itself to be exceptionally firm and consistent. It managed to contain the numerous attempts made to prematurely turn the co-operatives into state farms or communes, and to show those who strayed from the Leninist path where they were wrong. At this stage, the important thing was to maintain a proper balance between these two homogeneous types of common economy and to promote their development and prosperity.

CHAPTER XIII

THE SETTING UP OF POLITICAL DEPARTMENTS IN THE MACHINE-AND-TRACTOR STATIONS AND THEIR HISTORICAL ROLE IN CONSOLIDATING THE COLLECTIVE FARMS POLITICALLY AND ORGANISATIONALLY

1. INADEQUATE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC WORK OF THE COLLECTIVE-FARM PARTY ORGANISATIONS. THE SETTING UP OF POLITICAL DEPARTMENTS IN THE MACHINE-AND-TRACTOR STATIONS AS SPECIAL PARTY BODIES IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The decline in agriculture and the inefficient operation of many collective and state farms and machine-and-tractor stations were not wholly due to the objective factors discussed in the preceding chapter. There were also other reasons, of a subjective nature, particularly the inadequate political work done in the countryside, the unsatisfactory guidance of the collective farms provided by many village Party organisations which only very slowly adapted themselves to the changed conditions of Party work in the countryside. The January 1933 joint Plenum of the Central Committee and the Central Control Commission of the Communist Party, after discussing the results of collective-farm development, pointed out that many rural Party organisations failed to grasp the new situation and the changed relation of class forces which arose with the victory of the collective-farm system. In view of this, some erroneous trends appeared in the leadership of collective-farm development.

These were specifically manifested *firstly in a certain overestimation of the collective farms as a socialist form of economy.* Many people thought at that time that once the collective farms became the predominant form of the economy, things could well be left to take care of themselves. Of course such complacency in building socialism had nothing in common with Leninism. In fact, with the changeover to collective farms the concern and responsibility of the Party and government for agriculture did not diminish but, on the contrary, increased many times over. With collective farms becoming predominant in agriculture, the leading role of the working class and its vanguard, the Communist Party, immensely increased.

To relax the Party's guidance of collective farms or to over-

estimate the possibilities of the latter would be to deny the working-class leadership of the peasants, which inevitably resulted in a weakening of the socialist positions in the countryside. Although they are a socialist form of economy, the collective farms are in no way secure from the meddling of alien class elements and in certain conditions they can be used by hostile anti-Soviet forces for their own ends.

We have already mentioned that in the history of collective-farm development former kulaks, whiteguards and other enemies of Soviet power took advantage of the political shortsightedness of some Party and government officials to try to set up various pseudo-collective farms. The class enemies at that time spread the slogan "Collective farms without Communists". They were well aware that without Communist Party leadership the collective farms as a form of economy could easily be used against the interests of the working peasants and Soviet power. That was why the January Central Committee Plenum gave the Party the urgent task of strengthening the collective farms politically, organisationally and economically, of driving out hostile elements, and imbuing the already existing socialist form of collective farm with a socialist content. This had to be done if the collective farms were to display their immense superiority to the full extent.

Secondly, these erroneous bends were manifested in the fact that many Party organisations which overestimated the collective farms as a form of economy, also overestimated the political awareness of the collective farmers, imagining them to be perfect socialists capable of building socialism in the countryside on their own, without the help and guidance by the working class. In this they were in fact sliding from the positions of Leninism to the path of petty-bourgeois, peasant socialism. Many people failed at this time to understand the new conditions in which the Party had to work in the countryside. They imagined that once the individual farmers joined the big collective farms, and once these became predominant, everything would work itself out. This incorrect supposition possibly derived from the fact that people did not understand the laws of social development. Lenin wrote that "for some time after the revolution traces of the old ethics will inevitably predominate over the young shoots of the new. When the new has just been born the old always remains stronger than it for some time; this is always the case in nature and in social life".¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Great Beginning", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 425.

Naturally, in the course of the struggle for a new, collective-farm system, there occurred great changes in the social, economic and private life of the peasants. Their political and cultural level rose immensely, their socialist consciousness and their social and production activity increased. Working peasants were no longer small producers, scattered and isolated by the individual mode of small-scale production; they became active builders of the new, socialist way of life. *Having rid themselves forever of kulak bondage and exploitation, the Soviet peasants firmly sided with the workers on the main issue of building socialism in the Soviet Union.*

Yet, it would be quite wrong to imagine for this reason that on joining a collective farm a peasant immediately turned into a consummate socialist, a conscious socialist farmer. The peasants had lived for centuries in conditions where private property was the basis of socio-economic life. That could not but make a deep imprint on their minds, way of life, traditions and habits. So it was natural that whenever there were difficulties and economic troubles, petty-bourgeois habits and private-owner mentality should drag the peasant back, to his old way of thinking. Lenin wrote that "until small-scale economy and small-scale commodity production have entirely disappeared, the bourgeois atmosphere, proprietary habits and petty-bourgeois traditions will hamper proletarian work".¹

Fighting petty-bourgeois habits and traditions is an extremely hard job. To get rid of the birth marks of capitalism, it is necessary to completely remake small commodity production, to put farming on a modern industrial foundation, overcome petty-bourgeois habits and establish a new labour discipline. Consequently, to turn the collective farmers into real socialist workers *the Party had to exert protracted efforts to re-educate them and imbue them with a socialist mentality.* That, too, was not at the time understood by many rural Party organisations.

Thirdly, these tendencies were manifested in the fact that some Party organisations failed at that time to see that the class enemy was applying new tactics and thus there was a need to fast reorganise the front of the struggle. Many local functionaries endeavoured to spot kulaks outside the collective farms, while in fact

¹ V. I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 117.

some kulaks, having escaped being dispossessed, pretended to be humble and found jobs on collective or state farms or at machine-and-tractor stations, and there started to engage in sabotage. The kulaks were in close touch with other counter-revolutionary elements and, skilfully exploiting the blunders made by the rural Party organisations, caused great damage to the collective and state farms and the machine-and-tractor stations.

Taking advantage of the dearth of trained personnel, hostile elements wormed their way into the collective farms and posing as "educated people" and "experts" seized important executive jobs there. Engaging in anti-Soviet sabotage, these hostile elements sought to isolate the collective farms from the guiding influence of the Soviet government and the Communist Party, to erode labour discipline there, and undermine the common economy. They tried to prevent the collective farms fulfilling state plans for crop and stock farming and particularly the plans for state grain procurements. On some collective farms the kulaks advanced a hostile slogan aimed against the Soviet state, "Grain first to the collective farmers, second to the state".

The class struggle was particularly tense in Kuban, the principal grain-growing area of the North Caucasus. There the kulaks and other counter-revolutionary elements cunningly penetrated the collective farms during the mass collectivisation drive, becoming record keepers, accountants, storekeepers, mechanics and even running collective farms, machine-and-tractors stations, Soviets and even village Party cells. With their men on the collective and state farms and in the machine-and-tractor stations, they managed to frustrate several major government measures.

They fought the collective farms chiefly by wrecking tractors and machines as "but for them, there would have been no collectivisation", and by destroying draught animals, for "if there are no horses, there will be no collective farms". Choosing new tactics, the class enemies gambled on sapping the collective farms from within by embezzling common property and destroying the productive forces.

In doing so, the enemies found allies in grabbers, loafers, thieves and rogues. This gang were at one in trying to undermine the foundations of the collective-farm system. Lenin wrote that the "rich and the rogues are two sides of the same coin, they are the two principal categories of *parasites* which capitalism fostered; they are the principal enemies of socialism. These enemies must be placed under the special surveillance of the entire people; they must be ruthlessly punished for the

slightest violation of the laws and regulations of socialist society".¹

The Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Soviet government took drastic revolutionary measures to punish theft of socialist property. On 7 August 1932 the Central Executive Committee and the USSR Council of People's Commissars passed an extremely important law, "On the Protection of the Property of State Enterprises, Collective Farms and Co-operatives and the Strengthening of Public (Socialist) Property". The Law stated that "public property, whether of the state, collective farm or co-operative, is the foundation of the Soviet system and is sacred and inviolable...".²

Bourgeois propaganda-mongers like to dwell on how severe and unjust the Bolsheviks were in everything that concerns public socialist property. But it is well-known in history how ruthlessly the bourgeoisie established its private ownership of the instruments and means of production and how zealously it is guarding it now. Why then should the socialist state of workers and peasants not take drastic measures to establish and protect socialist property?

The January Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party analysed in depth the nature of the tactics employed by the class enemies and showed that it was necessary to reorganise the front of the struggle against them. The collective and state farms, machine-and-tractor stations, and land management bodies were to be purged once and for all of the kulaks, whiteguards and other enemies of Soviet power who had wormed their way into them. A number of urgent problems had to be dealt with: the collective farms had to be reinforced with staunch Bolsheviks, collective-farm activists had to be brought together and trained, and the work of rural Party organisations had to be thoroughly reorganised. These tasks were very hard to carry out because of the great obstacles presented by the changed situation and conditions of work in the countryside.

Although during 1932 the Central Committee and the Soviet government brought in a number of most important measures for strengthening the organisation and economy of the collective

¹ V. I. Lenin, "How to Organise Competition?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 26, p. 411.

² *Collectivisation of Agriculture. Major Party and Government Decisions, 1927-1935*, p. 423.

farms, these measures were not enough to bring about a change in the development of their common economy. In view of the immensity of the new tasks and the complex political and economic situation in the countryside, the Central Committee Plenum decided to set up political departments at all the machine-and-tractor stations and state farms, 3,368 at the former and 2,021 at the latter. The Central Committee selected 17,000 and 8,000 staunch Bolsheviks, respectively, to work in them.

Political departments as a special form of Party work were not a new invention. They first emerged in the Red Army during the Civil War when they were efficient organisers and fearless leaders of the masses fighting the enemies of the Soviet state. The political departments were a school of fighting skill, a school in which Red Army men and commanders were organised and trained. What was new this time was that the Communist Party transferred this special form of Party work to the economic front. By setting up political departments at the machine-and-tractor stations the Communist Party greatly helped the collective farms and the collective-farm peasantry.

2. THE GREAT ALLIANCE BETWEEN THE WORKERS AND THE COLLECTIVE-FARM PEASANTRY

The First All-Union Congress of Advanced Collective Farmers, held in Moscow in February 1933, did much to bring about the transition to the next stage of collective-farm development. It dealt mainly with questions of tightening up the new labour discipline, consolidating the commonly-owned property of the collective farms, and making it impossible for class enemies to continue their harmful activities. The Congress was an imposing demonstration of the triumph of the collective-farm system in the USSR and marked a turning point in the development of Soviet agriculture.

The Congress received a steady flow of letters and cables of greeting from factories, plants, collective farms and machine-and-tractor stations in every part of the Soviet Union, from workers, farmers, and intellectuals in foreign countries and from fraternal Communist parties expressing their joy at the greatest triumph of socialism in the countryside, achieved under the guidance of the Communist Party. The great proletarian writer Maxim Gorky wrote, welcoming the Congress: "More strength to your elbow, dear comrades. Work, learn, respect one another. Each of you

is worthy of respect because each of you is a hero in his field.”¹

Revolutionary farmers from different states of the USA sent a letter to the Congress. They described the ruthless capitalist exploitation and the decline of the capitalist system of agriculture in their country and expressed their admiration for the achievements scored by the Soviet farmers. We know, the letter ran, that you have fought and won. Not only have you secured the land but you have taken a stride forward, to a higher system of farming, to the collective farm, stamping out individualism and backwardness under the leadership of the government of workers and peasants. While our government and our social system are pushing us backwards, away from the machine to the use of our own muscles, annulling technological progress in farming, your government makes heroes of those who master machinery. Your government helps you with the best and latest machines, seeds, training and advice. You are marching forward together with the workers. Your example is a ray of light to us.²

The Soviet workers always, at every stage of economic development, helped the working peasants, contributing to the upsurge in farming. With the establishment of the collective farms, the workers' concern for socialist agriculture increased still more. It was graphically manifested in the great scope of the socialist emulation movement developing at that time at Soviet plants and factories to provide the countryside with industrial help.

The tasks to be achieved at the new stage of collective-farm development were set out in the *Pravda* leader devoted to the opening of the Congress of Advanced Collective Farmers. It ran (in part): “Today sees the opening of the All-Union Congress of Advanced Collective Farmers. It is a historic turning point in collective-farm development, moving from expansive growth to the organisational, economic and political consolidation of the collective farms, aimed at raising the efficiency of the collective farms, obtaining higher yields, and making all the collective farms in the country Bolshevik and highly profitable.... We are speaking about a change of immense political and economic significance, about the tackling of new tasks that the peasants cannot cope with on their own. This is something ... that advanced collective farmers are aware of themselves, and they demand fresh

¹ Maxim Gorky, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, Moscow, 1953, p. 16 (in Russian).

² See: *Pravda*, 15 February 1933.

support from the towns, they demand firm, Bolshevik leadership."¹

Greeting the advanced farmers, Leningrad workers undertook to strengthen ties between industry and farming, to help the collective farms complete their work in time and conduct mass political campaigns. "We hereby pledge ourselves to building up constant and direct workers' control over all bodies that have to do with the countryside. We call on the advanced factory workers all over the Soviet Union to maintain personal contact with the advanced collective farmers, to help them with advice and their own efforts; every advanced industrial team must keep in touch with a collective-farm team. In addition to the thousands of proletarians we have sent over the years to build up socialist farming, we are sending from Leningrad at least 150 trained comrades to permanent jobs in the countryside.... To help with ... the sowing, Leningrad is sending ... 500 executives to stay there till the end of the autumn."²

The initiative of these Leningrad workers was warmly supported by workers elsewhere.

All this was evidence of the growing friendship between workers and collective-farm peasants, aimed at strengthening the young collective-farm system in every possible way. The assistance rendered by the towns to the villages was greater than ever before. Factories launched a large-scale campaign to establish patronage over the collective farms. It was a real alliance between the socialist towns and the collective-farm villages. In a short time, hundreds and thousands of collective farms showed wonderful examples of work. But the Party could not be content merely with the success of the advanced collective farms. It set out to raise all the collective farms to a new and higher level.

At the Congress of advanced collective farmers, the best people of the countryside, tireless organisers and creators of the collective-farm life, described the successes scored by the advanced collective farms and the momentous changes that had taken place in the countryside which had so firmly embarked on the socialist path. The delegates reported back to the Congress, and here is one of such reports made by the Komsomolets collective farm in the Novoderovensky District of the Moscow Region. Its land was previously owned by two landlords and several kulaks who rapaciously depleted it. Before the revolution a homestead had on average no

¹ *Pravda*, 15 February 1933.

² *ibid.*, 16 February 1933.

more than 2.7 acres of land while dozens of poor peasant families had no land at all.

After the October Revolution, when land was organised under the Soviet government, an individual homestead had as much as 3.5 hectares, and on the collective farm, each homestead accounted for 5 hectares. There had been people so poor that they had had no place of their own and lived in dugouts. The collective farm had since moved some of them into the best kulak houses, giving others brick and timber to build houses for themselves. Former poor peasants were now prosperous. In three years the collective farm had built a large cattle shed for 112 animals, a 40,000-pood brick granary, a village library, a creche and a dining room, and organised a commodity dairy farm. The collective farm had bought 20 cows, 5 bulls, a mechanised threshing-machine, 5 harvesters, a horse rake, and many ploughs and harrows. The collective farm had been one of the first in the Moscow Region to fulfil the state grain-purchasing plan. Ahead of schedule it had delivered 3,540 metric centners of grain and 2,760 metric centners of potatoes to the state.¹

At the First Congress of Advanced Collective Farmers, the Communist Party advanced the slogan "We must make all the collective farms Bolshevik, and all collective farmers prosperous". This slogan was applicable because the Party had put the collective farms on a solid material foundation, providing them with the best land, first-rate machines, and staunch Bolshevik personnel. Now the task was to put all these immense material and organising forces into operation. Addressing the collective farmers, the Central Committee called upon them to guard the collective-farm system as they would their own children, to strengthen labour discipline, look after collective-farm property, and take care of the machines.

After the farmers' All-Union Congress, similar congresses were convened in territories, regions and districts. Their keynote was the slogan "We must make all the farms Bolshevik, and all collective farmers prosperous". The congresses gave a powerful impetus to the socialist emulation and shock-worker movements on the collective farms and strengthened the alliance between town and country.

¹ See: *Pravda*, 16 February 1933.

3. THE POLITICAL DEPARTMENTS START FUNCTIONING

It was typical of this new stage in the development of the collective farms that the Bolsheviks who came to the assistance of the peasantry began competently organising collective-farm production, teaching the collective farmers how to manage their commonly-owned economy, and selecting and training executive personnel from among the collective farmers. It was necessary to train, in a relatively short time, real Bolshevik leaders and organisers of large-scale socialist farms from among the collective farmers themselves. At the same time, all the collective farmers were to be helped to understand the nature of the new, socialist mode of production, the off-spring of the collective-farm system. In compliance with the new mode of production in the countryside, the Party began to train new personnel capable of developing large-scale socialist farms and ensuring an upsurge of the productive forces in socialist agriculture.

Early in 1933, political department personnel, selected and appointed by the Central Committee, began to arrive in the villages. During the first three months of 1933 more than half the political departments began functioning. The entire network of political departments was set up by January 1934.

The first political departments of machine-and-tractor stations were formed and began functioning in the North Caucasus. As early as February 1933, 255 of those, headed by the political section of the territorial land department, began to function in the area. Who they were staffed with is clear from the following data. About 10 per cent of the political department heads had joined the Party before the revolution, 25 per cent had been Army corps commissars, chiefs of divisional political departments and heads of recruiting offices, and about 30 per cent had been leading Party or government officials.

Most of the MTS political department personnel hailed from the Party organisations of Moscow and Leningrad, and from the Red Army Political Department.¹

At first, every political department consisted of its chief and three assistants in charge of mass Party work and Komsomol work. Later they also came to include the editor of the political department newspaper and an assistant chief, in charge of the work among women.

¹ See: *Materialy o rabote politotdelov MTS za 1933 g.* (MTS Political Departments, 1933), p. 205 (in Russian).

The practical activities of the political departments took place in an extremely complicated political and economic situation. The spring sowing was drawing near, but many collective farms and machine-and-tractor stations were not ready for it. The crop failure that occurred in 1932 in many areas, and the considerable disorganisation on the collective farms, made the situation in the countryside extremely difficult.

Owing to these immense difficulties, some rural officials and collective farmers began to show dangerous signs of confusion and doubt. All this complicated the situation in the countryside. Party work in the countryside was not carried on efficiently enough. Before the political departments were set up, there had mainly been area-based Party organisations whose members usually did no farm work but were engaged in work of secondary importance.

Some local Party workers had a rather curious idea of the part Communists should play in collective-farm production. They believed that it was more dignified for a Communist to do some kind of office work than to work in the field.

This abnormal situation was partly due to the fact that the system of building Party organisations on an area basis now failed to focus Communists' attention on how to organise production, and how to bring Communists, Komsomol members and non-Party activists together. But reorganising the activities of the Party organisations and drawing their attention to the new problems of collective-farm development was not such an easy matter.

The Central Committee discussed the work done by Party cells, in preparation for the 1933 spring sowing, on the Iskra collective farm in the Solntsevo District, the Central Black Earth Area, and on the Vperyod collective farm in the Novo-Moskovsky District, Dnepropetrovsk Region, and passed a resolution on March 22, 1933, disclosing the causes for the inadequate work done by the Party organisations in the countryside and demanding that the work should be altered so as to focus on questions of the collective farms' production work (the organisation of permanent teams; the careful selection of team leaders, section leaders, record keepers, prouhmen and stablemen; rating and remuneration of labour; the care of the horses; quality of tillage, sowing and harvesting; labour discipline, and so on).

Having analysed the work of these Party organisations in depth, the Central Committee used specific examples to show that all

the Party cells had a much greater role to play in running the collective farms. Although the Vperyod and Iskra had more or less equal potential, their economic indicators were quite different. The Vperyod, thanks to the daily guidance it got from the Party cell, had successfully coped with all its work, raised its collective income and improved the living standards of its members. Not so the Iskra, whose 13-man Party cell was isolated from the mass of the collective farmers and collective-farm production.

The Central Committee condemned this passive attitude and isolation and demanded that every Communist take an active part in production and mass political work on the collective farm. Its decision ran (in part): "...Just as during the Civil War the work of Communists and cells at the front was judged by the standard of combat discipline, and just as the work of a factory cell is judged by the fulfilment of its production and financial plan, so will the work of collective-farm cells .. be judged by the Central Committee according to how much the cell as a whole and each individual Communist is at home in collective-farm production, organisation, rating and remuneration of labour, the efforts made to tighten up labour discipline on the collective farm and carry out sowing successfully, according to how the collective farm fulfils its obligations to the proletarian state, and how the mass of collective farmers are rallied to fulfil these tasks."¹

The situation in which the political departments started functioning was, as we can see, quite complicated. If the political departments did not organise and lead the mass of collective farmers in a movement to wipe out kulak sabotage and strengthen the collective farms, the kulaks would take advantage of the past errors of the Party organisations and their weak contact with the masses to undermine the prestige of the political departments and prevent them from carrying out their tasks.

The political departments got down to work with great dedication, energy and skill. They quickly grasped the situation, established the true causes of the unsatisfactory state of the collective farms, and took measures at once to remove these causes. Relying on the Party cells and collective-farm activists, the political departments began first of all to drive the kulaks and other

¹ *Collectivisation of Agriculture. Major Party and Government Decisions, 1927-1935*, p. 458.

hostile elements out of the collective farms, at the same time taking measures to select and promote devoted, honest collective farmers to executive jobs and to the more important sectors of work.

The political departments kicked all the alien class elements out of the collective and state farms, and machine-and-tractor stations. At the same time they relieved incompetent and slack workers of their leading posts. In the MTS in the North Caucasus, for example, they replaced 41.5 per cent of the mechanics, 26.7 per cent of the agronomists, 39.2 per cent of the accountants, 46 per cent of the production sector managers, 17.4 per cent of the tractor team leaders, 17.4 per cent of the tractor drivers, and 31.7 per cent of the lorry drivers, which comes altogether to 22.9 per cent of the total personnel.

Similar measures were carried out on collective farms too.

How, one may ask, did these alien elements manage to get into leading positions on many collective and state farms and in MTS? Where did they come from? And were they really as numerous as all that?

First of all, it must be remembered that at least 60 per cent of the dispossessed kulaks stayed in their villages; this number includes the kulaks who were to be resettled on land beyond the fields, and those who had evaded resettlement or escaped from exile. This embittered mass was dispersed throughout the villages and districts in search for shelter. With help from relatives and friends, they were admitted to the collective farms or found jobs at the MTS or state farms, and there, employed as experts and educated people, they began to carry out sabotage, taking ruthless revenge for what they considered their "wrongs".

Next, it must be recalled that in the provinces there were quite a few hostile elements such as former whiteguard officers, landlords, capitalists and active members of whiteguard units. There is ample evidence that these disguised enemies of Soviet power, in touch with the White emigre centres in Europe, supported kulaks in everything and worked with them in sabotaging the collective and state farms and MTS.

Lastly, one must not forget that many experts hailed from the leisured classes. A particularly large portion of such experts—agronomists, land surveyors, livestock specialists, vets, and foresters, who had been not so long before active Socialist Revolutionaries, did not like collectivisation at all. Besides, their opposition to the collective farms had the blessing of the Social-

ist-Revolutionary emigré centre at Prague, which called itself the Agrarian League. Socialist-Revolutionary literature has itself since shown that the Agrarian League maintained fairly broad contacts with the Socialist Revolutionaries who carried on illegal activities on the territory of the Soviet Union.

This was attested by such pillars of Menshevism as Trotsky and Abramovitch. Trotsky wrote in the *Opposition Bulletin* in February 1936: "*The Fourth International possesses already today its strongest, most numerous and most hardened branch in the USSR.*"¹ The same was affirmed by Abramovitch, leader of the Menshevik Centre abroad. "In the 1920s," he wrote, "when—as political expatriates—we made our home in Germany and later in France, we still were a political movement, *closely connected with numerous comrades in Russia, who represented the only organised opposition to the Soviet regime.*"²

All these hostile forces stepped up their activities against the Soviet government with the deterioration in the international situation caused by the coming to power of the Nazis in Germany and the continuing aggression of the Japanese militarists. That was why, in 1932-33, acts of terrorism and sabotage became more frequent in many places. Collective-farm activists were murdered, farm buildings set on fire, cattle infected with epidemic diseases, and tractors and machines wrecked.

In addition to this, some of the people in leading positions on the collective and state farms, and MTS acquired their jobs by chance during mass collectivisation, and some had disgraced themselves as ruffians and hard drinkers. Naturally, it only did the collective farms good to get rid of such "leaders". Therefore, objectively speaking, the political departments would not have done their job if they had not rid the collective and state farms, and MTS of hostile and morally degenerate elements.

This revolutionary measure was a necessary step in the political, organisational and economic consolidation of the collective farms and in organising and rallying the collective-farm peasantry. Guided by instructions from the Central Committee, the political departments concerned themselves from the very start first and foremost with selecting, promoting and training collective-farm personnel and retaining them in their executive posts.

¹ Quoted from R. Palme Dutt, *The Internationale*, London, 1964, p. 248 (Italics mine.—S.T.).

² Raphael R. Abramovitch, *The Soviet Revolution*, N. Y. 1962, p. xiii. (Italics mine—S.T.)

They successfully coped with the main task, rallying the collective-farm activists, winning the support of the honest peasants (who were in the majority), and promoting and training new leaders of collective-farm production. In 1933 alone the political departments and Party organisations of three areas promoted over 30,000 advanced collective farmers to leading posts on collective farms.

This infusion of new blood into the collective-farm leadership, to which the best collective-farm workers were promoted, helped build up the collective farms more quickly, as well as make the collective farmers more politically aware and more efficient in their work.

The political departments would not have accomplished their tasks if they had not, from the start, attacked the root of the problem in the political and economic campaign, i.e. a well-organised spring sowing. Tractors at the MTS were to be repaired, draught animals made ready, seeds and fodder found, and, most important of all, people were to be trained and properly distributed in production—all in the shortest possible time. To carry out all these measures took great organisational skill, revolutionary energy, and indestructible confidence in victory. The envoys of the working class, the energetic political department personnel, had all these valuable Bolshevik qualities. They inspired and mobilised the mass of collective farmers to tackle the political and economic tasks that faced them.

The most acute was the problem of repairing the tractor fleet and training skilled mechanics. Here too, the political departments got things going. The workers of the Morozovskaya MTS in the North Caucasus, displayed the patriotic initiative: they gave up their days off, ate and slept on the spot and worked 10 hours a day. It was there that they first introduced labour accounting and did away with the lack of personal responsibility and with wage-levelling. This wonderful initiative was followed up by other MTS in the North Caucasus and elsewhere.

As they had many times before, workers from plants and factories came to the collective farmers' aid at this point of socialist reorganisation.

The training of machine operators and other skilled farm workers at courses attached to the MTS was in full swing. Political departments paid special attention to who was sent to take the courses. Each candidate was discussed at collective-farm meetings and approved by special selection committees in the political departments. In the North Caucasus alone, MTS courses

trained 69,624 persons. They were reliable fighters for the collective-farm system, deeply devoted to the Party. They formed the hard core of advanced collective farmers, were models of efficiency, and initiated many patriotic undertakings. One of such initiatives was the launching of a nationwide socialist emulation movement for the best organisation of spring sowing.

The MTS political departments awakened more and more collective farmers to creative work. They found and promoted ordinary, modest men and women, helping them to become advanced workers, figures in the collective-farm countryside and even farm managers. They used various forms of persuasion, education, and influence. The strength of the political departments lay in their prompt, day-to-day guidance of the collective farms. They did as little paper work as possible. Instead, they went into every detail of collective-farm production and took steps to nip defects in the bud.

Besides persuasion, education and instruction, the political departments also applied coercive measures to those collective farmers who broke the rules of community living, shirked work or neglected their social duties, to grabbers and parasites. Relying on persuasion as their chief method of educating the masses, the Communist Party never rejected coercion, not just for dealing with exploiters, but also with the backward minority of working people infringing the rules of community living.

As a matter of fact, the overwhelming part of the workers and peasants worked earnestly to build socialism, to establish new, socialist labour discipline. Yet it happened often enough that a backward minority of the working people, for all the persuasion applied to them, hampered the introduction of the new labour discipline, harming the cause of building socialism. The Party could clearly not afford to indulge this minority. In founding and spreading the new labour discipline, the Party firmly curbed both leftist practices which ignored the mass political education work and the method of persuasion in general, and those who wanted to let things take care of themselves and ignored coercion as a method in general.

The political departments printed MTS newspapers which were a powerful means of educating, organising and mobilising the collective farmers to fulfil their production tasks. The first such newspaper, *Udarnik* (The Advanced Collective Farmer), appeared in January 1933 at the Shevchenkovo MTS in the Ukraine. It was followed by the *Udarnik* MTS (Advanced MTS Worker), brought out by the Kantemirovka MTS political department.

Then political department newspapers appeared in the North Caucasus. Altogether in January 1933 there were 40 MTS newspapers, and their number greatly increased during the spring sowing. There were 400 such newspapers in March, 450 in April, and 500 in May. The season of harvesting and grain procurement saw a further increase in these newspapers, there being 846 of them in June, 1,217 in July, and more than 1,400 by August 1. More than 300 MTS newspapers were published in non-Russian languages.

The political department newspapers came out in editions of between 250 and 1,500 copies. Together, they reached 675,000 copies. Most of the editorial offices had experienced specialists and printing facilities of their own. At the end of 1933, 700 political department printshops were in operation. At the same time collective farms regularly issued wall newspapers of which there were upwards of 200,000.

Political department newspapers had a large force of contributors which included collective-farm activists. Apart from newspapers, political departments also issued a wide range of pamphlets, leaflets, posters, and other propaganda.

The political departments had extensive statutory rights and were independent bodies in the area of MTS activity. At the same time they were obliged to coordinate their work closely with district Party committees which they had to inform regularly on the state of things on the collective farms and in the Party organisations. MTS political department heads usually belonged to the district Party Committee bureaus. Thus, the political departments represented a great political and organisational force in the countryside.

4. STREAMLINING COLLECTIVE-FARM MANAGEMENT AND BUILDING UP THE COLLECTIVE-FARM TEAMS AS THE MAINSTAY OF FARM PRODUCTION

One distinctive feature of the new stage of collective-farm development was that the formation of collective farms and the establishment of new patterns of organisation were now mainly over. The Party had amassed enough practical experience in the different areas of collective-farm organisation to buckle down to the task of building up the common economy of the collective farms, introducing a truly socialist labour discipline and raising efficiency still further. There were, at that time, however, some

important problems in collective-farm organisation still waiting to be solved. The most difficult of these were the problems of managing a farm co-operative, organising and remunerating labour, and finding a more expedient way to use manpower and social production reserves.

In particular, it was urgently necessary to thrash out what size a collective farm should be. The experience of collective-farm development had proven quite well enough that neither tiny nor giant collective farms paid. The thing to do was to enlarge the small farms and break the giant ones into smaller units. The problem had to be dealt with promptly. It had arisen out of the attitude of the middle peasants who vacillated mainly because of disorder and mismanagement on the giant collective farms and were equally disgusted with the low productivity of the small ones.

Breaking the giant collective farms into smaller units and enlarging the small ones would not solve everything. It was of the utmost importance to find the optimal size of a collective farm to relate its means of production to the available manpower in the best possible way and to organise its land to suit the direction of its operations and the local conditions. The Central Committee was quick to call the attention of local Party, government and collective-farm officials to the complexity of the problem and warned against an irresponsible approach to it.

The success of this work affected many other economic measures such as land management on the collective farms, the introduction of multiple crop rotation, the proper organisation of labour, the distribution of manpower, the training of personnel, and so on. Of course, all these difficulties were temporary, but they had to be taken into account. They became an obstacle to the further development of collective farms, an obstacle which the Party got down to removing.

First of all, the Party organisations in the North Caucasus and the Middle and Lower Volga territories had to break the giant collective farms into smaller units. Much of this was to be carried out by the political departments. Together with village Party organisations, they made in-depth studies of the organisational structure of the collective farms and took a thorough look at the management of the common, co-operative economy. Thus they managed to reveal the defects in collective-farm operations, to generalise from the advanced experience of collective-farm management and introduce it in every sector of collective-farm production.

The question of breaking the farm into smaller units was first discussed at a general meeting of collective farmers and was then considered by the political department, district Party Committee and district Executive Committee, and only then was the decision taken to reorganise the farm. New collective farms were usually set up on the basis of collective-farm production teams. This made it unnecessary to move people about too much in production or to re-allocate the commonly-owned means of production. As the collective farms were broken down into smaller units, so too were the production teams. As a result of efforts made in the North Caucasus, more than 600 new collective farms were set up and teams became smaller. A team in the Middle Volga Territory previously had 1,000-1,500 hectares to tend, and now it had an average of 600 hectares.

All redundant superstructural bodies – the collective-farm councils, plenums and presidiums – were abolished and the role of collective-farm boards and general meetings was increased. Some supervisory jobs (field superintendent and chief of the farm's economy) were abolished and the responsibility of team leaders increased. Stock-breeding teams were made into independent production units subordinate to the collective-farm board (formerly they were incorporated into the field crop teams). A major result of the effort to streamline collective-farm management was an increase in the role of the collective farmers' general meetings. Instead of trifling matters, they now discussed essential problems affecting the basic needs of the farm.

The collective-farm executive force was considerably renewed. The political departments' contribution to this welcome development was that they did not just promote new people but helped them to improve their skills and gain practical experience. Most of these people eventually became prominent collective-farm organisers and leaders. The political departments and Party organisations did much to build up collective-farm teams – the mainstay of farm production. Each team now had a certain amount of land assigned to it in each field for the whole period of crop rotation, was manned by the same people, and used the same draught animals and implements.

As a result of these measures, the collective-farm team became a compact and well-organised production unit, quite different to the old homestead teams based on the area principle. Each team was divided into sections which were integrated or specialised. Within these sections one could make more efficient use of manpower and tools and, if necessary, easily switch a section from one sector of work to another.

Establishing teams on the production principle, providing stable material facilities and manning them with a permanent force, were all important measures which helped improve the organisation and economic standards of the collective farms. The next step was to provide the teams with experienced leaders. The high turnover of team leaders had to be stopped and their prestige increased. It was not an easy thing to accomplish, but thanks to the extensive organisational and educational work carried out by the political departments and Party organisations, team leaders became the real organisers and leaders of the masses.

To build up the role of the field crop teams, the political departments introduced Party and Komsomol organisers into them, enlisting the support of active collective farmers directly engaged in production. A most important step was to give each team a Party organiser. They quickly grew in number, there being 10,000 team Party organisers in the North Caucasus and 7,000 in the Middle Volga Territory.

The Party organisers were the team leaders' best helpers—tireless organisers and propagandists. As they were mainly advanced production workers and actively fought to fulfil and overfulfil output quotas, they were held in great esteem and found extensive support among the collective farmers.

Alongside Party organisers, Komsomol organisers and numerous Party-and-Komsomol groups appeared in the teams. Another important measure serving to consolidate the teams was the introduction of women's organisers, assistant team leaders responsible for work among women. They played an immense role in organising female labour on the collective farms.

Soon every team had a wall-newspaper editor. The political departments arranged things in such a way as to make it obligatory for every field crop team to issue a wall newspaper regularly. The collective-farm team became the centre of mass political work. Many teams had libraries of their own and were provided with newspapers, wall posters, etc.

Political work in the teams was organised by Party, Komsomol, and women's organisers, helped by the activists who read newspapers out loud, librarians, wall-newspaper editors, book pedlars, etc. The team also played a very important part in developing advanced workers' and socialist emulation movements.

Thus, the first steps taken to improve the organisation and performance of collective farms notably altered the situation in

the countryside. The farm co-operatives became stronger, the role of the production team was increased, and all areas of collective-farm production were improved.

5. INCREASING THE MATERIAL INCENTIVE TO WORK IN THE COMMON ECONOMY, AND MEASURES TAKEN TO REWARD ADVANCED COLLECTIVE FARMERS

A material incentive to work in social production is a major condition for boosting labour efficiency and expanding the national economy. This was convincingly demonstrated by Soviet economic development and in particular by the lessons of the collective-farm movement. The steep decline of economic indices in farm production during the reorganisation period was largely due, as has been pointed out, to this most important principle in many instances being ignored. The greatest harm was done to collective farms by the petty-bourgeois egalitarianism which prevailed on many new farms.

Deeply aware of the importance of getting the collective farmers economically interested in the results of common labour, the political departments waged a determined battle from the start against petty-bourgeois wage-levelling and lack of personal responsibility. They focussed the attention of Party organisations and collective farmers on ensuring proper organisation of labour and enhancing the material interest to work in the common economy, which they saw as a major prerequisite for attaining an upsurge in socialist farming. But in order to make the collective farmers materially interested in their work, certain conditions had to be present.

The first condition was that all farmers should be put on piece wages, and specifically on incentive wages, paid to individuals and small groups according to the work done. The second was that all advanced workers, in whatever jobs, should be encouraged and their experience passed on to all the other collective farmers. The third condition was that the socialist emulation and shock-worker movements should be developed in all sectors of collective-farm production, and the fourth was that the fundamental co-operative principle, that of combining the collective farmers' individual interests and the farm's common interests, should be strictly observed.

Only these conditions could give the collective farmers a greater stake in making the common economy pay and ensure

a steep growth in labour productivity. And such conditions certainly could be created. Take, for example, payment by the job (or piece-work payment). This was nothing new to or unusual for collective farms. As a method of organising labour, payment by the job had been applied on collective farms ever since 1931. But it was then applied purely nominally, the collective farms getting no great results from it. In the new conditions, the political departments eliminated the distortions that had previously existed in the piece-work organisation of labour and introduced incentive-based, individual and small-group piece wages on a broad scale. This was largely facilitated by such measures as breaking down the over-big collective farms and teams into smaller units, reinforcing the latter with experienced personnel, removing a whole range of unnecessary intermediate bodies, and streamlining management.

Another important condition which made for the successful introduction of payment by the job was that the political departments introduced record-keepers into all teams, whose duty it was to keep account of and enter workday units in the collective farmers' record cards. The fulfilment of daily quotas and the number of workday units earned were regularly reported to team production meetings which were held at least once every five days or every day. The Party, Komsomol and women's organisers established strict control over the accurate recording of workday units earned.

The introduction of payment by the job resulted in a steep rise in labour productivity which, in turn, caused all the work on the farms to be finished more quickly than before. The fact that the spring sowing and other field operations were finished much earlier in 1933 than in the previous year was due solely to the growth in labour productivity. It is worth noting that, unlike in 1932, the Soviet collective farms not only fulfilled the state grain-delivery plan on time, but also paid the MTS all they owed them in kind, and provided themselves with seeds for 1934. Many collective farms were able to lay in fodder and food stores as stipulated in their Rules.

The year of 1933 saw the first results of the Party's efforts to improve grain farming. The collective and state farms harvested 5,478 million poods of grain crops, or 1,217 million poods more than in 1932. The state received 1,379 million poods of marketable grain, or 257 million poods more than in 1932 and 412 million poods more than in 1929. It is also significant that valuable marketable crops made up a large proportion

of the state purchases. Thus, 49.3 per cent more wheat was laid in than in 1932.

In order to get the collective farmers interested in the prosperity of the collective farm, the political departments and Party organisations applied a whole system of incentive measures aimed at still further increasing the role of shock workers and innovators in collective farming and at spreading their experience to the mass of collective farmers. One of the most important of these measures was that of propagating the progressive methods of work used by the shock workers. This was done through the newspapers issued by political department and through district and area newspapers which regularly carried pictures of advanced collective farmers, described their lives and production achievements.

All the collective farms had show-cases and picture-books with photographs of the best workers regularly fulfilling or overfulfilling their quotas. The political departments also used such means to glorify the names of the best collective farmers in the particular MTS area. At territorial centres they had Red Books and Honorary Lists in which the names of collective-farm heroes were entered. The national newspapers systematically published lists of the best collective and state farms and MTS, the best districts and the names of the best collective farmers entered in the roll of honour. Numerous rallies and conferences of advanced collective farmers made their names popular and widely known.

Another measure to encourage efficiency among the collective farmers was the bonus system. At the end of 1933 the total funds allocated for bonuses to be paid to advanced collective farmers were upwards of 1,362,000 rubles. More than 47,000 collective farmers received bonuses for efficient work.

These measures made it possible for the political departments to distinguish hundreds of thousands of good workers. The shock-worker and socialist emulation movements assumed truly unprecedented dimensions in the countryside. Figures follow on the shock-worker movements on the collective farms and MTS in the North Caucasus and Lower and Middle Volga territories during certain seasons of farm work.

(a) In the North Caucasus
(figures put out by 200 MTS Political Departments)¹

Work according to season	Shock Workers		
	Collective farms	Tractor teams and repair shops	Total
Spring sowing	49,325	5,931	55,256
Weeding and fallowing	53,844	4,355	58,199
Harvesting, threshing, autumn ploughing and sowing	95,758	8,296	104,054

(b) the Lower Volga Territory
(figures put out by 136 MTS Political Departments)²

Work according to season	Shock Workers		
	Collective farms	Tractor teams and repair shops	Total
Spring sowing	36,297	4,591	40,888
Weeding and fallowing	25,901	3,444	29,345
Harvesting, threshing, autumn ploughing and sowing	51,992	6,152	58,144

(c) the Middle Volga Territory
(figures put out by 30 MTS Political Departments)³

Work according to season	Shock workers		
	Collective farms	Tractor teams and repair shops	Total
Spring sowing	6,989	497	7,486
Weeding and fallowing	6,303	493	6,796
Harvesting, threshing, autumn ploughing and sowing	11,856	857	12,713

¹ CSAOR, f. 315, op. 30, d. 2, l. 456.

² *ibid.*, d. 7, l. 1402.

³ *ibid.*, d. 11, l. 502.

It would be hard to overestimate the part played in farm production by the shock workers, those vigorous and indefatigable exponents of the Party policy in the countryside. They helped the political departments to introduce new labour techniques and instil new, socialist principles and norms of social life. The shock workers initiated the drive against the then widespread evil of wasting working time. They filled up the working day and launched a campaign for fulfilling and overfulfilling daily output quotas and ending the absence of personal responsibility. Advanced collective farmers themselves set an example of efficient work and of a thrifty attitude to collective-farm property.

One factor which significantly boosted the collective farmers' material interest in the commonly-owned economy was that the lawful principles of remunerating labour on collective farms were strictly observed. The political departments put a stop to people even slightly infringing the rules of advance payments made to collective farmers, of allocation of income, and of payment for workday units. They made the appropriate economic and state procurement bodies pay back their immense debts to the collective farmers, debts that had accumulated over the years.

The principle of material incentive being steadily put into practice meant that many collective farms made great strides, implementing the Party slogan, "Let us make all collective farms Bolshevik farms, and all collective farmers prosperous."

All this helped to make the collective farms more efficient and to get their members still more interested in obtaining good results in their work.

An entirely new situation had arisen in the countryside which bore undeniable witness to the final triumph of the collective-farm system. This triumph was largely due to the efforts of the political departments which were major levers used by the Party to strengthen the collective farms and MTS organisationally and economically and to increase the organising role of the Communists and Komsomol members on collective farms.

CHAPTER XIV

A FUNDAMENTAL ALL-ROUND IMPROVEMENT OF ALL SECTORS OF THE ORGANISATIONAL PARTY AND MASS POLITICAL WORK DONE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

1. RESTRUCTURING RURAL PARTY ORGANISATIONS ON THE PRODUCTION PRINCIPLE AND INCREASING THE COMMUNISTS' VANGUARD ROLE IN COLLECTIVE-FARM PRODUCTION

Restructuring rural Party organisations on the production principle and increasing their guiding role in collective-farm production was the most significant part of the extremely diverse work carried out by the political departments. This task was made necessary by a need to alter the nature of Party work in the countryside once mass collectivisation had been brought about. It was thus necessary to shift the emphasis of the work done by rural Party organisations to the sphere of production and into the heart of the mass of collective farmers.

From the outset, the political departments began to mobilise Communists to work in collective-farm production and to build strong, full-blooded Party organisations and Party-and-Komsomol groups on the collective farms, as well as to set up the posts of Party organisers in production teams, on stock-breeding farms and in other major sectors. Political department personnel, immensely experienced in organising Party work at factories and in the Red Army, and noted for being excellent organisers, were themselves exponents of the new work methods to be used by the Party and were quick to apply them in the rural Party organisations.

Work in setting up and consolidating the production collective-farm Party organisations proceeded in three principal directions—(1) mobilising the Communists in the towns to work in farm production, (2) transferring rural Communists from jobs of secondary importance to the crucial sectors of farm production; and (3) drawing reliable collective-farm activists into the Party. Particularly valuable and interesting experience in this was accumulated by the political departments in the North Caucasus Territory. As early as the spring of 1933 they set up a wide network

of production Party organisations and Party-and-Komsomol groups in teams on the collective farms there. On the initiative of its political sector, the North Caucasus Party Committee mobilised the Communists in the towns to work in the key sectors of farm production. About 14,000 Communists were fast sent to jobs in the collective farms and MTS.

As a result of their work in mobilising urban Communists and in internally restructuring the rural Party organisations, the political departments were able to concentrate over 70 per cent of all rural Communists in farm production. The proportion of Party members among collective-farm chairmen, team leaders, tractor drivers and combine operators increased sharply. Thus in the North Caucasus Territory in mid-1933 Communists accounted for 70.5 per cent of the collective-farm chairmen and 16.5 per cent of the field crop team leaders. In 40 districts of the Middle Volga Territory, two-thirds of all village Communists were directly engaged in farm production and about 20 per cent were promoted to executive jobs on the farms.

The June 1933 Plenum of the Lower Volga Territorial Party Committee decided to mobilise 1,500 Communists to work in the collective farms. The resolution stated (in part): "200-300 Communists from the city [Stalingrad-*Ed.*] and 400-500 from the regional and district centres to be selected by the Bureau of the Territorial Committee in June-July and sent to work as secretaries in the collective-farm cells and as Party organisers. 500-700 Communists to be mobilised during 2-3 months to work as team Party organisers."¹ According to data supplied by 20 political departments in the Stalingrad zone of the Lower Volga Territory, 2,257 of the 2,917 Communists, or 77 per cent of the total, were mobilised for work in collective-farm teams. On the collective farms attached to 22 MTS in the Khoper zone, 1,640 of the 1,887 Communists belonging to area cells went over to collective-farm cells and joined in their production activities. Instead of 146 area Party organisations, 197 production collective-farm organisations were set up; 3,525 of the 4,284 Communists and Komsomol members in the zone became active production workers.

Nevertheless, the reorganisation of Party work in the countryside encountered certain obstacles. In the spring of 1933, relations between political departments and district Party committees became abnormal in some areas. District Party committees often

¹ C.P.A. I.M.L., f. 17, op. 21, d. 3652, l. 263.

ignored the initiatives advanced by the MTS political departments. To quote an example, the political department of the Ar-mavir MTS reported: "People are often sent to the cells, removed from their jobs, etc., without the political department's knowledge, so that often enough the political department believes that it has a representative on a certain collective farm, but when people from the political department visit this farm, the representative is no longer there, having been recalled some time ago by the district Party Committee."¹

Frictions between the political departments and the district Party committees were dangerous because they affected the work carried out by Party organisations and had a deleterious effect on the mood of the mass of non-Party collective farmers. Class enemies and backward elements took advantage of such friction to discredit the political departments and thwart their measures to build up collective farms organisationally and economically.

When it was informed that not all was well between the political departments and district Party committees, the Central Committee adopted a resolution on 15 June 1933, "On the Work of the MTS Political Departments, the Collective-Farm Cell, and Relations Between Political Departments and District Party Committees". The Central Committee summed up the results of the work carried out by the political departments and expressed its approval of it. "The results of the work carried out so far by the MTS political departments just before and during the spring sowing show that the political departments are indeed becoming major levers of the Party in making the collective farms and MTS better organised, clearing them of hostile class elements, increasing the role of Communists and Komsomol members on collective farms and correcting drawbacks in the work of village Party organisations. The political departments are turning into real centres consolidating the best and most advanced elements in the collective-farm countryside."²

At the same time the Central Committee criticised the old methods by which district Party committees exercised their guidance of collective-farm development. Many of them were isolated from the life and needs of the collective farms and began to "guide" them on paper only, losing contact with the masses. This came about mainly because most rural Party branches were organised

¹ CSAOR, f. 315, op. 30, d. 11, l. 98.

² CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions.... Vol. 5, p. 108.

on the area principle and failed to provide prompt and efficient guidance of the collective farms.

The Central Committee therefore put particular emphasis on reorganising village Party branches on the production principle. "A special role in further developing the work carried out by the MTS political departments," the resolution continues, "should be played by the *collective-farm* Party cells being the main source of guidance of collective farms. The existing *area* organisation of Party branches in the countryside does not actually help draw the attention of village cells to the practical problems of collective-farm production and neither does it help rally the majority of collective farmers round the Party and Komsomol Bolshevik nucleus.... The new conditions of work in the countryside and a specific approach to the problems of collective-farm development require that the collective farms have strong *production* Party cells closely linked with the collective farmers, directly engaging in production, and capable of exercising day-to-day guidance of collective-farm activities."¹

The Central Committee warned the political departments and Party organisations against the danger of taking a formal approach to this all-important measure. It was necessary that the reorganisation of the rural Party branches on the production principle result in a decisive improvement in the political and economic work done in the countryside and in the enhancement of the leading role of the Party organisations on collective farms and in MTS.

One must additionally stress that in setting up Party organisations to deal with collective-farm production one should not lose sight of the area Party organisations which united the Communists in various rural institutions. But while the collective-farm Party organisations were wholly subordinate to the political departments, the area organisations within the scope of the MTS were under the direct control of the district Party committees. The Central Committee allocated the duties of these two bodies and defined the range of problems that each was to tackle. In the specific historical circumstances dual leadership of the rural Party organisations was temporarily allowed, the main emphasis being laid on increasing the role of the MTS political departments as special bodies which had proved that they were up to the job and were successfully applying new methods of guiding the collective-farm development. At the same time attention was drawn

¹ *ibid.*, p. 109.

to the need for these two bodies to act together on all matters of practical control.

This decision of the Central Committee was a great spur to the activity being carried out by the Communists, Komsomol members and all the social forces in the countryside.

An apt definition of the work done by the collective-farm Party organisations in the new conditions was given by the political sector of the North Caucasus land department. In reporting to the Central Committee on work done in 1933, it said: "To write about the work being done now by the Party cells is to write about all the work done on collective farms, as there is no area of work on the collective farms that the Party cells do not concern themselves with."¹

The Distribution of Party Forces on the Collective Farms as of November 1933²

	North Caucasus (163 MTS)		Lower Volga Territory (141 MTS)		Middle Volga Territory (30 MTS)	
	Communists	%	Communists	%	Communists	%
Collective-farm chairmen, board members, commodity farm managers	4,271	24.2	2,776	20.6	1,080	20.8
Accountants, storekeepers and other staff	649	3.7	446	3.3	188	3.6
Production personnel including team leaders, tractor drivers, combine and threshing-machine operators, weighters, stablemen, and milkmaids	12,767	72.1	10,388	76.1	3,919	75.6
Total	17,687	100	13,610	100	5,187	100

¹ CSAOR, f. 315, op. 30, d. 2, l. 458.

² Compiled by the author from figures submitted by the MTS political departments.

Having restructured the work of the village Party organisations, the political departments thus focussed the attention of village Communists on collective-farm production. As a result, the Communists' political and production activities were appreciably invigorated and more and more advanced collective farmers renowned for their work joined the Communist Party. From the 16th Party Congress till 1 October 1933, the number of nationwide rural Party cells increased more than twice and the number of Communists in them almost doubled. Whereas in June 1930 there were 30,000 rural cells with an aggregate membership of 404,000, on 1 October 1933, there were 80,000 cells and Communist Party probationary groups which had altogether 790,000 members. Most of these cells were organised on the production principle.

Now that the collective-farm system had finally triumphed, the main task was to achieve a radical improvement in organisational leadership. Practice bore out that the better the Party's organising work among the masses, the greater the economic successes. One can therefore describe the first year of the political departments as one in which the Party's work was drastically reorganised to suit the new conditions, a year in which their guiding influence grew stronger in every area of farm production.

2. STRENGTHENING THE COLLECTIVE-FARM KOMSOMOL ORGANISATIONS AND INCREASING THEIR ROLE AS ORGANISERS

The political departments also reorganised the Komsomol cells on the production principle. Under their guidance, rural Komsomol organisations underwent serious schooling, developing into a major political force and proving themselves in practice to be the best helpers of the Party. At a time when the political departments were just beginning their work, the state of many rural Komsomol organisations was unsatisfactory. Isolated from collective-farm production and receiving no proper assistance from the Party organisations, many rural Komsomol cells were inactive. This was due to the same factors we described when analysing the work of the rural Party organisations.

The area principle on which the Komsomol cells were organised proved, in the conditions prevailing in the countryside, to be the main obstacle to the development of their creative initiative. Earlier we described the immense contribution made by the rural Komsomol members to the success of collectivisation. Naturally, in the specific historical circumstances of this time the

area principle was the only right one. It made it easier for progressive village youth to unite and enabled Komsomol organisations to cover all aspects of village life.

But with the triumph of the collective-farm system in the countryside the situation radically altered, along with the work conditions of the Party and Komsomol organisations alike. Now the emphasis had to be shifted to collective-farm production—to the field crop team and the commodity farm, and it was there that the Komsomol organisations had to display as much initiative and enterprise as they had shown during collectivisation. This, however, did not happen, and not through any fault of the Komsomol cells, but merely because their area-based structure made them out of touch with the decisive sectors of collective-farm production and the young collective farmers.

This situation certainly affected the nature and content of the work done by the Komsomol organisations, which now had no objective ground on which to develop their activities. To enable Komsomol members to do their part in building up the collective-farm system, the Komsomol cells had first of all to be reorganised on a production basis. As a result of tremendous work done in reorganising and in the political and educational spheres, the political departments and village Party organisations acquired a strong and reliable support in the Komsomol cells. After reorganisation, the structure of the Komsomol cells was radically altered to directly involve them in collective-farm production. The table below shows the number of Komsomol cells in three different areas.

Area	Komsomol cells on collective farms before reorganisation	Ditto after reorganisation	% of growth	Komsomol groups in teams before reorganisation	Ditto after reorganisation	% of growth
North Caucasus (165 MTS political departments)	1,138	1,678	148.1	551	1,711	308.7
Lower Volga (120 MTS political departments)	950	1,134	119.0	133	620	466.1
Middle Volga (30 MTS political departments)	306	411	134.6	43	149	346.4

In addition to this, it must be stressed that their switch to collective-farm production fundamentally altered the content and direction of the work of the Komsomol organisations, providing a basis for Komsomol members and other young collective farmers to be correctly educated. This is obvious from the following table which shows the distribution of Komsomol members after reorganisation (compiled by the author from figures submitted by the MTS political departments).

Komsomol members on collective farms in the North Caucasus	Collective-farm chairmen, board members, commodity farm managers	%	Accountants, store-keepers	%	Komsomol members in collective-farm production teams	%	Of whom team leaders, weighters, stablemen, threshing-machine operators	%
23,258	339	1.5	630	2.7	21,967	94.5	4,541	20.7

The significance of the role played by village Komsomol members in collective-farm production is indicated by the fact that in 1933 prizes for excellent work were awarded to over 8,500 Komsomol members in the North Caucasus alone. The Komsomol members were the real organisers and leaders of young people in the collective farms, they led the socialist emulation and shock-worker movements, and organised shock-work Komsomol-and-youth sections. Suffice it to say that during the 1933 harvesting season Komsomol organisations in the North Caucasus formed 1,092 shock-work Komsomol-and-youth sections. Taking part in the emulation movement in the Middle Volga Territory were 800 Komsomol-and-youth sections.

Now better organised and more politically aware, the Komsomol organisations in the North Caucasus and the Lower and Middle Volga territories initiated many important patriotic campaigns which later spread throughout the country.

Having consolidated the collective-farm Komsomol organisations and increased their production and political activity, political departments entrusted them with the task of radically improving the work of Young Pioneer organisations and enlisting their active participation in collective-farm production. In the spring of 1933, the Party and Komsomol organisations inspected the

state of all the Young Pioneer groups in the North Caucasus. The results of this inspection showed that Komsomol organisations had not been paying enough attention to their work among the Young Pioneers and schoolchildren. To eliminate these shortcomings and improve the work of the Young Pioneer organisations so as to meet the new requirements, the territorial Komsomol Committee selected and sent 4,000 Komsomol members from the towns to the villages as Young Pioneer leaders. This was of great help to the collective-farm Komsomol organisations. Soon Young Pioneer groups were formed everywhere, uniting great numbers of schoolchildren.

Among many other things the Young Pioneer organisations took an active part in protecting the harvest. In the North Caucasus in July 1933 there were numerous "light cavalry" groups and "observation posts" manned by Young Pioneers, schoolchildren and Komsomol members. Up to 100,000 Young Pioneers in the North Caucasus took part in protecting the harvest. During the harvesting season, 120 of the political departments set up 2,895 harvest protection posts and 23,330 "light cavalry" groups of Young Pioneers and other schoolchildren, while about 68,000 of them took part in gleaning. The young patriots helped save 61,180 poods of grain. This harvest protection movement was widespread in the Lower and Middle Volga territories in which "light cavalry" groups and "observation posts" were set up everywhere. On the collective farms served by 72 MTS in the Middle Volga Territory alone, over 73,000 Young Pioneers, schoolchildren and young people took part in preventing loss of grain.

As Party guidance was improved, the Komsomol organisations stepped up their work among non-Komsomol youth on the collective farms and among the collective farmers generally. Their influence in all sectors of the economic, political, and cultural life of the countryside increased enormously.

3. THE MARXIST-LENINIST EDUCATION OF VILLAGE COMMUNISTS. TRAINING COLLECTIVE-FARM PERSONNEL

The great strength of the Communist Party lies in the fact that in all its practical activities it invariably relies, as it has always done, on Marxism-Leninism, the only theory to reveal the laws governing social development and to determine the meth-

ods to be used to reorganise society on socialist lines. Guided by the scientific theory of Marxism-Leninism, the Communist Party brought the scientific laws of class struggle in the countryside to light, determined the right working-class policy towards the peasants and pointed out the ways to transform the countryside along socialist lines. At the very birth of the revolutionary Marxist Party in Russia, Lenin called its attention particularly to the need to make a constant study of the revolutionary Marxist theory and to be able to apply it creatively in practice. Lenin's well-known dictum that without revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement was an immutable law to the Party and every Communist.

As Soviet society advanced towards socialism, the Party was faced with more and more complicated problems of economic and cultural development, and consequently there was an even greater need for in-depth creative study of Marxism-Leninism. The vast experience of the Communist Party's struggle in building socialism conclusively shows that the higher the ideological level and theoretical knowledge of Party, government and economic personnel, the more competent their guidance of the masses, and the more productive their practical work.

At the same time as reorganising Party and Komsomol work, the political departments got down to the business of organising Marxist-Leninist studies for village Communists and Komsomol members. Educated Marxists-Leninists themselves, the political department members set out to introduce village Communists to the systematic, in-depth study of works of the founders of Marxism-Leninism and to help them combine theory with their daily efforts to strengthen the collective-farm system.

So that local Communists and Komsomol members should have a good understanding of major Party and government directives on the collective-farm movement, the political departments organised study of the historic decisions of recent Party congresses, the documents of the January 1933 Central Committee Plenum and of the First All-Union Congress of Advanced Collective Farmers, and major Party and government resolutions relating to agriculture and the organisation of the collective farms. With this end in view, a wide network of political study circles was set up in the winter of 1933, and these were attended by all Communists and Komsomol members and numerous collective-farm activists.

All the rural Party organisations fixed special political education days on which cultural, educational and mass political events

were held according to a time-table. The introduction of political education days was of immense significance to the theoretical training of personnel and to making village Party organisations more active politically. This measure put an end to snatchy Party studies. Besides the numerous political study circles, the political departments organised and systematically conducted theoretical seminars for secretaries of Party organisations, team Party organisations, propagandists and leaders of Party education circles.

Party education programmes for Communists, Komsomol members and collective-farm activists were at their most extensive in the autumn of 1933 and winter of 1934. The political departments exercised a strictly differentiated approach to each Party and Komsomol member. Taking due account of extent of the Communists' theoretical knowledge, time-tables were worked out, textbooks provided, and lecturers trained for every level of political school or circle. The network of Party education in the countryside was greatly ramified. It now comprised primary political education schools; advanced political study circles; specialised study circles on the history of the Party, philosophy and political economy; Soviet and Party schools and higher schools of Communist education attached to political departments, theoretical seminars for propagandists and study circle leaders, correspondence classes at territorial higher schools of Communist education, and periodical theoretical conferences on different problems of Marxism-Leninism. As a rule, many study circles and schools of political education offered obligatory instruction in general and some specialist subjects like agronomic and livestock studies.

The network of Party education took many different forms. In November 1933 in the Lower Volga Territory, for example, according to figures supplied by 17 political departments, there were 96 political education circles including 15 circles studying the history of the Party, philosophy and political economy, 67 schools for Party probationary members and 14 integrated circles for both Party and Komsomol members. These political education schools and circles were attended altogether by 3,772 Communists and Komsomol members and by 1,262 non-Party activists. In the autumn of 1933 in the Middle Volga Territory, according to data supplied by 20 political departments, there were 427 circles studying the fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism, i.e. there were more than 20 circles for each political department.

The Party education system took in vast numbers of young people, Komsomol members and otherwise.

The work begun in the autumn of 1933 to set up this Party education network was completed in 1934 not only in the collective-farm, but also in the area village Party organisations. The political departments initiated the development of political studies at district Party organisations. From 1934 onwards, theoretical seminars for district Party activists were set up by many district Party committees. The seminars were usually presided over by heads of the MTS political departments. District Party Committees and political departments opened Party study rooms, Party education houses, radio lecture rooms, and consultation centres. Libraries were enlarged and replenished with new reading matter.

In the course of these daily theoretical studies, a local force of propagandists and lecturers arose, specialising in different areas of knowledge such as the history of the Party, philosophy, political economy, international affairs, and so on.

One distinctive feature of the theoretical studies pursued by the Communists and Komsomol members was that they were closely linked with the specific practical tasks of economic development in the countryside. This not only gave Communists a better knowledge of theory but made them more active, politically and in production. Lenin taught that the workers must train their personnel from among those devoted heart and soul to the cause of the revolution and well versed in modern technology. He wrote: "...management necessarily implies competency, ... a knowledge of the conditions of production down to the last detail and of the latest technology of your branch of production..."¹

Political departments in the Middle Volga area initiated a campaign to get every rural executive to learn to drive a tractor and operate a combine. Early in 1934, 700 members of political departments and district Party bodies qualified as 1st and 2nd grade tractor drivers. Among them were 70 political department heads, 60 district Party Committee secretaries and officials, 12 district Executive Committee chairmen, 70 MTS directors, 222 political department officials, 50 MTS agronomists, and 112 collective-farm chairmen. The movement to master machinery was joined by vast numbers of collective farms. In the Middle Volga Territory alone, circles studying agrarian technology were attended by about 163,000 collective-farm activists.

In view of the great need for trained machine operators, the Party set out to establish a wide network of specialised

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Third Congress of Water Transport Workers", *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, p. 428.

agricultural schools, state farm training programmes, machine operators schools, technical schools and colleges with a prolonged term of study. The emphasis laid on a thorough training of personnel for large-scale mechanised socialist farming. A great contribution to personnel training was also made by the system of short-term courses. Personnel training was conducted in an organised, planned fashion. Thus at the end of 1933, the political departments and district Party committees worked out measures for training personnel for the whole of 1934. Personnel training was to be conducted in an organised way both at courses and permanently functioning schools. District collective-farm schools were set up to train highly qualified personnel for every sector of collective-farm production, in particular skilled mechanics, team leaders, and combine operators. The MTS continued to take charge of training the rest of machine operators.

Numerous collective-farm lecture centres and all kinds of schools for collective-farm activists were opened. The first of such lecture centres with a two-year curriculum was sponsored by the Venev MTS political department in the Moscow Region. It was attended by 120 advanced collective farmers. The course was given by lecturers from Moscow colleges.

Without unduly exaggerating the significance of the early collective-farm schools, one must note nevertheless that they played an immense role in the further upsurge of farm production. They may have been far from perfect in many respects, but in setting up these centres of culture and agricultural knowledge, the political departments and Party organisations were placing theory at the service of practice, taking the first steps towards uniting science and production. Thus the political departments carried on the precious Bolshevik tradition of guiding the masses to the letter and left an indelible imprint on the theoretical training of local personnel, the political education of Communists, and the inculcation of socialist awareness into the collective farmers at large.

4. THE POLITICAL DEPARTMENTS AS ORGANISERS OF MASS POLITICAL, CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL WORK IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

The strong point in the Party guidance exercised by the political departments lay in the fact that they closely co-ordinated their organising and their mass political work, which increased

their prestige among the collective-farm peasantry. Political relevance, effectiveness and an eye for the specific were the basic features of the various forms of mass political work used by the political departments. Striving to increase the collective farmers' political and production activity, the political departments always looked for and found new forms of mass political, cultural and educational work.

The political departments of the North Caucasus engaged in many ingenious and interesting activities to achieve this end.

They launched many new measures which later spread throughout the country including regular production conferences of collective-farm teams, held right in the field, meetings of advanced workers and those in key jobs, quick briefings, spot-checks, competitions, political department and wall newspapers, and so on. Mobile forms of mass political work such as sending travelling propaganda stations (carts and trailers) to field camps, issuing a newspaper on the spot, using portable film and radio equipment, etc., fully justified themselves.

Political departments carried on political work among the masses enlisting the help of numerous activists—village teachers, cultural organisers, senior school pupils, Young Pioneers and Komsomol members—volunteering their services as propagandists, readers, and book vendors and mobile-library assistants. Delegates of the First All-Union Congress of Advanced Collective Farmers carried on propaganda work in collective-farm teams. To give the reader an idea of the vast scope of the organisational and political work carried out among the farmers during this period, it is sufficient to say that at 120 MTS in the North Caucasus alone, the political departments, together with Party and government organisations, conducted about 7,000 different rallies and conferences attended by almost 500,000 people in 1933.

It was the great merit of the political department members that they were able to link political education with solving the practical tasks involved in collective-farm development. Very often they rolled up their sleeves and showed workers how to do the job in hand. One of the written reports sent in by the Kazan MTS political department stated: "In teams which failed to fulfil the production quotas, we got behind the plough and fulfilled the quota ourselves. Where they did not do enough to reduce grain losses, we ourselves gathered the left-over ears per square metre, weighed the grain, calculated the loss per hectare and showed the collective farmers, figures in

hand, how much they stood to lose if they weren't more careful."¹

The following example also testifies to the organisational skill and well-grounded knowledge typical of political department members. On many collective farms in the Lopatino MTS zone in the Lower Volga Territory, activists were not organised, the collective farmers tended to keep each to himself, and the economic indices were low. Once it had familiarised itself with the situation, the political department first of all got in touch with the older collective farmers and talked things over with them. As a result, many causes of unsatisfactory work on the collective farms were revealed. Old collective farmers complained that "the young farmers don't take advantage of our advice and don't listen to us. 'If they had supported us,' they said, 'we could have moved mountains. ... We have been with the collective farm for three years and nobody has called us together throughout this time'".²

Soon the political departments convened a rally of the older collective farmers from all the collective farms served by the MTS, at which their numerous suggestions and recommendations were listened to carefully. The older collective farmers said they were ready to help build up the collective farms and asked to be supported in this. After the rally, the older men were appointed inspectors in charge of checking the standard of field work on the collective farms and in the teams, and they did their job very well indeed. The experience of the Lopatino political department was applied by others in the Lower Volga Territory.

The Party and government organisations in the North Caucasus did a particularly large amount of work to involve the older collective farmers in the common economy; as a result of this effort about 30,000 old farmers took part in the spring sowing and harvesting.

The best and most esteemed workers were selected for the "collective-farm Old Guard" and their candidatures were discussed and approved by general meetings of collective farmers. A special "Collective-Farm Inspector" medal was brought in for these older collective farmers. The older men considered it a great honour to belong to the "Old Guard" and be an inspector of field work. Many of them performed their duties with great zeal.

To draw general conclusions from the experience of the "Old Guard", the first territorial rally was convened in October 1933

¹ CSAOR, f. 315, op. 30, d. 2, l. 488.

² *ibid.*, d. 7, l. 945.

on the initiative of the North Caucasus political departments of the MTS. The rally was attended by 417 inspectors. It aroused great enthusiasm among the older collective farmers and was a real red-letter day for the socially active collective farmers. According to a questionnaire, 71 of the 417 delegates were Party members, 254 were between the ages of 50 and 60, the rest being over 60; three delegates were 100 years old, and one was 123 years old. These collective-farm inspectors were also active in production and had the greatest number of workday units to their credit. For example, 80 of the delegates to the rally had 350 to 400 workday units, 90 had 200 to 250, 150 had 150 to 200, and the rest had up to 150 workday units.

If the collective farms were to be further strengthened it was essential to draw women into production and increase their role in it. Women made up more than half of the able-bodied collective-farm population, yet during the early years of collective-farm life they took hardly any part at all in collective-farm production.

This was due to several reasons. Firstly, most women could not take part in production because they had to look after the children and mind the house. Secondly, they were put off doing so by the poor accounting and remuneration of labour and the prevalence of petty-bourgeois wage-levelling. In these conditions their labour was often depreciated. Thirdly, unsatisfactory standards of mass political work among women reduced their social and production activity still further and it was not particularly good as it was. It was necessary to create normal conditions to draw women into active work on the collective farms. In the first place the political departments set about providing a wide network of children's institutions at the collective farms. As early as the spring of 1933, numerous courses were started, training personnel for collective-farm kindergartens, playgrounds, and other establishments. At the same time they fitted out buildings, set aside foodstuffs and bought equipment and bed linen.

Overcoming numerous obstacles, the political departments and Party organisations quickly launched a wide network of children's centres which took care of hundreds of thousands of children. To quote an example, in 1932, the children's centres of the collective farms and MTS in the North Caucasus looked after 286,000 children. In 1933 the number increased to 1,131,000, and in 1934 the network of children's centres at collective farms expanded still further. Women collective farmers went on special courses to train as managers of kindergartens and creches, teachers,

games organisers, cooks, etc. Over 18 months, according to incomplete figures, 12,448 persons in the North Caucasus Territory, 25,704 in the Middle Volga Territory, and 7,003 in the Lower Volga Territory were thus trained.

More women came to work on the collective farms as the accounting and remuneration of labour underwent radical improvements. With the introduction of piece wages, especially individual and small-group piece wages, the inequality between male and female labour that had existed on many collective farms was finally stamped out. And when women's organisers appeared at political departments, the women collective farmers became more active politically and in production.

The first women's organisers started work in the spring of 1933 at the request of the North Caucasus political section. Towards autumn full-time women's organisers were to be found in most of the political departments in the Middle and Lower Volga territories. They did much to organise the women collective farmers, to improve mass political work among them, and promote many active women to executive jobs on the farms. Suffice it to say that over two years the political departments of the North Caucasus, and Lower and Middle Volga territories promoted about 56,000 women to the key sectors of farm production. Many of them were excellent organisers of collective-farm production and true leaders of the masses.

One major feature of the work carried out by the political departments was their constant concern for people, for personnel, for providing them with the necessary cultural and everyday amenities. Thanks to this, work on the collective farms became much more efficient. The political departments in the Middle Volga Territory were the first to organise teams to build permanent field camps and tractor sheds on the collective farms. The bureau of the territorial Party Committee, which approved of this initiative, decided to organise the building of 14,260 field camps by October 1933. This initiative was supported in the North Caucasus and the Lower Volga Territory. In these areas, with their enormous tracts of land stretching far from the villages, the building of such structures in the fields was of immense significance to production, for the success of the farm's operation depended on them.

Field camps were constructed on a large scale, with more than 2,000 of them being built in 1933 in the North Caucasus alone. At the same time as providing amenities for field crop teams, the political departments spared no efforts to build suffi-

cient cultural and everyday amenities for tractor drivers. Tractor sheds, special mobile cars, etc. were built in all the MTS of the Volga area and the North Caucasus. Soon such sheds and trailers appeared in a great majority of the tractor teams.

The political departments saw the improvement of cultural standards in the countryside as one of their major tasks. Once they had set up the conditions necessary for the collective farmers and tractor drivers to work efficiently, the political departments set out, with their characteristic energy, to improve the villages, build public service centres and cultural and educational establishments, and put the collective farmers' private houses and plots in good shape.

The cultural development of the collective-farm villages is borne out by the following figures concerning the collective farms served by the 136 MTS in the Lower Volga Territory. In 1932 there were 8 film projectors there, and in 1933 there were 17. Between the two years the number of mobile film projectors went from 62 to 267, of local broadcasting centres from 7 to 16, of radio rooms from 7 to 112, of radio sets from 231 to 507 and of loudspeakers from 1,016 to 2,208. In the North Caucasus 729 mobile film projectors, 500 radio sets and 2,700 loudspeakers were taken out into the fields during the spring sowing. The collective farms of the Middle Volga Territory opened more than 2,300 clubs and reading rooms and built 56 Houses of Culture in a single year.

It is safe to say that cultural and educational work had never been conducted on such a scale in the countryside in the entire preceding period of Soviet power. Relying on the increased political and production activity of the collective-farm peasantry, the political departments and Party organisations set up centres of new, socialist culture everywhere. To use Lenin's words, the political departments taught the masses and learned from them, profiting by the people's creativity. We dwell on this aspect to stress how correctly the political departments understood the process of new socio-economic development in the countryside.

Marxist-Leninist theory has sufficiently substantiated the truth that the main and determining role in the development of any social system belongs to production. That was perfectly true of the young collective-farm system too, as the level to which collective-farm production is developed determines the standards of everyday life, the cultural level and all other aspects of collective-farm life. It is very important in this case not to let

consumer tasks get priority over production goals. Everyday amenities are doubtlessly important, but they are nevertheless subordinate. Thus to have forgotten or belittled production tasks might well have led the entire practical work astray, hampered the consolidation of the collective farms, and thus caused serious harm to their organisation.

It was consequently a grave mistake on the part of certain people to sometimes underestimate the essential production goals in their daily practical activities, putting to the fore the derivative tasks of providing everyday amenities, building houses in the countryside, and so on. At the same time, it was no less dangerous that some people concentrated wholly on production, forgetting or even not wishing to do anything to improve culture and services. It is perfectly clear that production cannot develop one-sidedly as that is bound to hold it back and cause great harm.

Can one, for example, successfully develop production if the collective farmers and tractor drivers lack the conditions necessary for efficient work, or for rest and leisure because adequate housing and services have not been provided? The lessons of collective-farm development showed that the slightest underestimation of these derivative tasks immediately told on production. Consequently, concern for building cultural and everyday amenities is essential to the production mechanism running smoothly and provides a material incentive for the collective farmers to ensure its progress.

It was the great merit of the political departments that they approached each task involved in collective-farm development from the Marxist standpoint of interrelation and interdependence. Without in the least relaxing their attention to the main production task of strengthening collective farms organisationally and economically they showed at the same time immense concern for satisfying the farmers' vital personal needs, everywhere developing the construction of cultural and everyday amenities and houses, and extending agronomic and technical knowledge among all the collective farmers.

The strength of the political departments lay in their close contact with the mass of the collective farmers, in their considerate and solicitous attitude to the daily needs and requirements of collective farmers of both sexes. This aspect of their activity was aptly described by the political section of the Lower Volga Territory, writing that the "political departments' work with the collective-farm activists has two distinctive features. The first

is their ability to find the right person, to boost his self-respect and confidence in his own strength and to infect him with a desire to do excellent work. The second is that they know how to find as yet unused organisational forms of directing the activity of the masses along socialist lines, at strengthening socialist construction."¹

The most important result of the work carried out by the political departments was that they built up the machine-and-tractor stations and turned them into real centres providing state, organisational and economic guidance of the collective farms. The MTS right from the moment they were set up, were of the greatest help to the collective farms. But during the reorganisation of agriculture, the MTS acted mostly as technical service centres for the collective farms. They did not concern themselves much with the farms' internal affairs and did not give them sufficient guidance; in some places they were no more than hiring-out stations. With the help of the political departments, the MTS became not only technical service centres but also real centres providing state leadership of the collective farms, centres where the working class exerted political influence on the mass of collective farmers.

The political departments carried out tremendous work to put the MTS central estates in good shape and eliminate mismanagement and disorder. From the summer of 1933 onwards, the MTS built sheds for their machinery, garages, repair shops, oil tanks and other installations. Some MTS built electric power plants for themselves, and many were well-appointed cultural centres, with a telephone and radio service. Suffice it to say that MTS political departments ran 1,673 printshops, 2,000 radio stations, 2,000 book stalls, over 2,000 film projectors, and issued 2,153 newspapers. All this enabled the political departments to improve their guidance of the collective farms, to increase the prestige of the machine-and-tractor stations, and enhance their influence over all aspects of political and economic life in the villages.

Thus, the main economic and political results of the first year of the political departments' existence may be defined as follows:

1. The political departments worked tremendously hard to rid the collective farms and machine-and-tractor stations of alien and degenerate elements and thus frustrated attempts made by class

¹ CSAOR, f. 315, op. 30, d. 7, l. 945.

enemies to destroy the young Soviet collective farms and sap them from within. As a result, socialist public property was consolidated, labour discipline improved and the collective farmers' economic activities intensified. The impressive change that occurred in the collective farmers' attitude to their work is obvious from the fact that in 1933 an absolute majority of the collective farmers took an active part in all field operations and earned many workday units.

2. The Party cells were quickly reorganised on the production principle and a wide network of Party production organisations was established at the collective and state farms and MTS. The reorganisation of Komsomol cells was effected on the same basis. Over 70 per cent of rural Communists and Komsomol members were directly engaged in collective-farm teams, animal farms and other key sectors of farm production.

3. The political departments rallied numerous activists and drew them into work aimed at building up the collective farms. Many of these activists were promoted to responsible jobs on the collective farms. Socialist emulation and shock-worker movements were raised to a higher level. It would be no exaggeration to say that these socialist methods of work became a common phenomenon at collective-farm teams and machine-and-tractor stations.

4. The chief economic and political campaigns were organised better than before. A major step forward was made in strengthening the collective farms organisationally and economically. The collective-farmers' labour productivity was appreciably improved and their material and cultural standards raised. The Party's slogan, "To make all collective farms Bolshevik and all collective farmers prosperous" became the slogan of the farmers themselves, who put it into practice on many collective farms.

CHAPTER XV

THE FINAL STAGE IN THE WORK OF THE POLITICAL DEPARTMENTS

1. THE 17TH PARTY CONGRESS ON THE FURTHER UPSURGE IN SOCIALIST FARMING. THE PARTY LINE ON COMPLETING THE TECHNICAL RECONSTRUCTION OF AGRICULTURE

The interval between the 16th and 17th Party congresses was a complex and at the same time a bright period in the history of the Soviet Union. It was then that the country emerged at the historical frontier which predetermined the complete triumph of socialism in the USSR. The 17th Party Congress, which took place in January and February 1934, noted the decisive success scored by socialism and stated that the Party's Leninist policy had triumphed all along the line, in every field of economic and cultural development. In the shortest possible time, the Soviet Union had become a mighty socialist power opening up the way to the emancipation of the working class and all the working people in the capitalist countries.

One of the major political results of that period was that the Communist Party, carrying out Lenin's co-operative plan, transferred the most numerous section of the Soviet population—the working peasantry—to the socialist path. At the very birth of the Soviet state Lenin had pointed out that 10 to 20 years of correct relations between the workers and peasants would be enough to ensure a victory of world-wide historic significance. The outstanding success achieved during the first five-year plan graphically bore out the truth of this brilliant prediction.

The Soviet economy had become uniformly socialist and the socialist mode of production was firmly established both in industry and agriculture. By the 17th Party Congress the socialist system accounted for 99 per cent of industry while in agriculture the collective and state farms accounted for 84.5 per cent of the area under grain crops—they were the main suppliers of commodity grain. To quote an example, in 1933 the collective farms delivered more than a thousand million poods of grain to the state while

individual peasants delivered 130 million poods. If we recall that in 1929 individual farmers delivered 780 million poods of grain to the state, and the collective farms 130 million, it becomes obvious that the collective farms had become the predominant force in agriculture. Now the very process of economic development taking place in collective farms made it inevitable that the remaining individual farms would form collectives. The collective farms gradually absorbed what individual farms there remained, impressing them with their economic progress.

It must be borne in mind, besides, that during the reorganisation period the collective farms could not demonstrate all of their advantages as their development was held back by various objective and subjective causes. The very process of reorganising agriculture could only be effected at great cost, for the main task at that time was to unite the millions of peasants in the collective farms and to introduce them to the new mode of production. In addition, almost half the collective farms were not served by MTS and worked with their old tools.

The line taken by the Party to bring about an all-round strengthening of the collective farms, higher yields, and the further development of animal husbandry, allowed it to deal with the shortcomings of the reorganisation period and to speed the collective farms on towards economic progress. The solution of these problems was facilitated by measures taken by the Party even before the 17th Congress. One of these was the establishment of the political departments, which played an enormous role in improving the performance of the collective and state farms and MTS. At the same time the Central Committee sent 23,000 Communists and 111,000 engineers and agronomists to the villages. On top of this over 1,900,000 tractor drivers, combine operators and lorry drivers, and more than 1,600,000 collective-farm chairmen, accountants and team leaders were trained. This was the Party's contribution to the success of the collective farms.

The next measure was to ensure a continuously rising supply of machinery to the countryside, and to organise the patronage of the collective farms by industrial enterprises. Relying on socialist industry and the alliance between the workers and peasants, the Communist Party re-equipped Soviet agriculture, making it large-scale and mechanised. Whereas at the beginning of mass-scale collectivisation there were about 7,000,000 wooden ploughs in the USSR, in 1933 there was no trace of them left.

Within the space of four years Soviet power gave the villages tens of thousands of tractors and 1,600 million rubles'

worth of farm machines and tools. The farmers received 120,000 tractors, 70,000 lorries, 13,690 combines, 62,400 tractor-driven threshers and numerous other machines and tools.

The 17th Congress analysed the reorganisation period in agriculture in depth, and defined ways to bring about a further upsurge in the collective farms. Indiscriminate expansion of the area under crops was to be stopped, and the attention of the Party switched to better soil cultivation, the introduction of correct crop rotation, the better selection of seeds, and to raising the standards of socialist agriculture as a whole. The Party set those engaged in socialist agriculture a range of new and urgent tasks.

The first task was to create facilities for the production of farm produce in all regions of the country so that each region could have its own vegetables and potatoes and boast developed animal husbandry and grain production. This task followed directly on from the immense growth in socialist industry and the towns, which resulted in a new distribution of the productive forces and the disappearance of the old division into industrial and agrarian areas.

The second task was to establish a grain-producing land area in the central belt, in the so-called consumer areas. This was dictated, on the one hand, by the fact that the division into consumer and producer areas had lost its earlier significance, and, on the other, by the economic interests of the state. Take, for instance, such consumer areas as the Moscow and Gorky regions. These had about 5,000,000 hectares of fallow land overgrown with shrubs, which could be cleared and sown to grain which would yield additional reserves of commodity grain production.

The third task had to do with combatting drought in the area east of the Volga. Afforestation and irrigation of this area were urgent measures introduced to fight drought. The idea was, above all, to make farming in these arid areas more stable. At the same time it was intended to push the sowing of grain crops further north, to East Siberia and the Far East. This was also important in view of the international situation becoming worse.

The 17th Congress approved the programme of development of socialist agriculture for the second five-year plan. It set the task of at least doubling agricultural output, increasing its value from 13,100 million rubles to 26,200 million rubles (1926/27 prices). In the key branches of agriculture the Congress set the targets

as follows: for grain crops, 1,048 million centners with yields of 10 centners per hectare; for sugar beet, 276 million centners, with yields of up to 200 centners per hectare; for cotton, 7 million centners, with yields, on irrigated land, of 12 centners per hectare; for flax, 8 million centners, with yields of up to 3.7 centners per hectare. Looked at in the objective conditions, this plan was quite realistic. The Congress decision stressed that these targets could be achieved "through completing collectivisation and carrying out the technical reconstruction of agriculture as a whole".¹

The plan was backed up by considerable material means, in the first place by the further supply on up-to-date machinery to the farms. The number of MTS was to increase in the second five-year plan from 2,446 in 1932 to 6,000 in 1937, so that all the collective farms would be able to use them. Accordingly the tractor fleet of the MTS was to increase 3.7 times over. The combine fleet was to be increased to up to 100,000, and the number of lorries to 170,000, i.e. more than 12 times over.

This made it possible to more or less complete the mechanisation of agriculture. By the end of the five-year plan tillage and autumn ploughing done by tractor was to amount to 80 per cent; mechanised cultivation to 70 per cent; grain harvested by tractor harvesting machines to 60 per cent; and mechanised threshing to 85 per cent. It was proposed to introduce large-scale advanced farming techniques on a mechanised basis, such as efficient rotation, sowing 75 per cent of the area under grain crops with selected seeds, the autumn ploughing of at least 50 per cent of the cultivated area, a greater output of mineral fertiliser and adding 1,000,000 hectares of irrigated land.²

How did the second five-year period differ from the first? *First of all it differed in the depth of the tasks of economic development. The first five-year period was mainly one of rapidly constructing new enterprises in industry and developing the collective and state farms and MTS in agriculture, whereas the second five-year plan was mainly one of getting the new enterprises under way and strengthening the economic organisation of the collective and state farms and MTS.* The second five-year plan did not rule out further new construction, but it was mainly devoted to consolidating the positions already won.

The January 1933 Plenum of the Central Committee and the

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions..., Vol. 5, pp. 136, 137.

² *ibid.*, p. 137.

Central Control Commission of the Party, which endorsed the plan for the first year of the second five-year period, formulated its new tasks clearly, stating that the "main emphasis should be laid not on quantitative growth in output but on improving quality and increasing labour productivity in industry; not on expanding sown areas but on increasing yields in crop farming and improving the quality of work done in agriculture".¹

The Communist Party knew very well that it would take great efforts on the part of the workers and all the working people to master collective-farm production, strengthen the collective farms economically, and to educate the collective farmers in a socialist spirit as the workers of a socialist society. It was necessary to master the tremendous material and technical facilities made available to the collective farms, using them to the best possible effect in order to increase yields, develop livestock breeding and raise labour productivity. Only by doing this could one bring about a change in the development of the collective farms' productive forces, enjoy a more abundant supply of produce, and keep socialist industry adequately provided with raw materials.

Implementing these historic tasks of collective-farm organisation presupposed an all-round increase in the guiding role of the Communist Party in the countryside, an improvement in the living standards and cultural level of the collective farmers, and the training of new collective-farm personnel so as to realise the rich potential of the collective-farm system. Relying on the socialist economic foundations laid during the first five-year period, the Party worked out a scientifically substantiated plan for building socialism in the USSR. The Congress resolutions formulated the three main tasks which formed the basis for the practical activity of the Party and the working people in carrying out the second five-year plan.

In the economic field, to complete the technical reconstruction of the Soviet economy as a whole. Every branch of the national economy was to be provided with the latest technical facilities. In agriculture, besides completing collectivisation in all parts of the country, every collective farm was to be given the opportunity to use the services of the machine-and-tractor stations and to complete the main mechanisation of farm production; much greater crop yields were to be aimed at, livestock farming was to be developed and advanced agrarian techniques applied.

In the political field, capitalist elements were to be finally

¹ *ibid.*, p. 74.

eliminated, the causes of class differences and exploitation stamped out, survivals of capitalism in the economy and people's minds were to be overcome, and all the active population gradually turned into politically conscious, energetic builders of socialist society.

In the field of raising living standards, the output of consumer goods was to be steadily increased. Complete reconstruction of all branches of the national economy, elimination of capitalist elements in the towns and villages, domination of socialist economic forms made it possible to increase the output of consumer goods and to raise the incomes and living standards of the workers and peasants at least twice over.

The Congress expressed its confidence that the working class, collective-farm peasantry and intelligentsia would find Bolshevik organisers and leaders in the Party, Komsomol and trade union organisations engaged in implementing the second five-year plan—the plan for building socialism in the Soviet Union.

The 17th Congress drew the attention of Party, government and economic bodies to the particular need to step up the circulation of goods and to find and make use of internal reserves by putting all economic operations on a profit-and-loss basis. Only by improving the supply of industrial goods and foodstuffs to the population and by expanding trade would it be possible to cancel rationing and replace centralised distribution by well-organised Soviet trade.

With regard to this the Party pointed out the anti-Leninist nature of the theory of passing to an immediate exchange of products and the “withering away” of money. The Party resolutely rebuffed the “Leftist” phrase-mongers who had sought to abolish commodity and money circulation and replace it by a direct exchange of products even at the beginning of collectivisation. Rejecting such anti-Marxist attempts, the Congress pointed out that product exchange was a matter for the distant future, that it could be carried out only after commodity circulation had been organised and immense reserves of industrial and farm output had been created. The emphasis was laid mainly on an all-round upsurge in the productive forces, the development of commodity circulation, and the expansion of Soviet trade.

The 17th Congress became known in the history of the great Leninist Party as the congress in which the ideas of Marxism-Leninism triumphed. Indeed, these victories were truly historic. Leninist industrialisation policy had triumphed, and the USSR had been transformed from an agrarian into an industrial country;

the Leninist policy of organising the peasants into producers' co-operatives had triumphed, and the USSR had been transformed from a country with a disunited small-commodity economy into one with the biggest public economy in agriculture; the Leninist policy of cultural revolution had triumphed, and the USSR had turned from a country with a low level of literacy and culture into a country with one hundred per cent literacy and with a population which boasted the highest level of political awareness. Another outstanding victory was the strengthening of Leninist unity in the Party. It was the first congress in the history of the Party from which all opposition currents were absent and, moreover, at which all previous opposition leaders openly declared that their conceptions had been erroneous and that they were ready to work together with the Party.

2. ORGANISING THE MASSES TO ACHIEVE A FURTHER UPSURGE IN AGRICULTURE

In the new historical conditions, with the victory of the collective-farm system, the task was to overcome difficulties as regards organisation and management and to set out to further develop the productive forces of agriculture. Having amassed experience at previous stages of collective-farm organisation, the political departments and village Party organisations launched large-scale political and organisational work in the countryside. On their initiative, a series of new organisational and economic measures were brought in at the MTS and collective farms.

Production sectors in the MTS were abolished thereby increasing the role of the tractor teams. Many of the latter were headed by former sector mechanics. Tractor teams were put on a profit-and-loss basis, a personal account being opened for each tractor, stating the assignment set for the entire season of field work. In all teams, tractor drivers had to do tests to get a certificate; each had his own tractor together with a set of tractor-drawn implements and tools with which to make repairs out in the fields. This strengthened the tractor teams and did away with wage-levelling and absence of personal responsibility.

The measures introduced into the collective farms were concerned first of all with streamlining the management of production and organising labour. Collective farms and field crop teams were broken into smaller units and stock-breeding teams made into inde-

pendent production units. As a result, the Party organisations managed to increase the role of collective-farm production teams, eliminate the lack of personal responsibility, and increase the responsibility of collective-farm boards, chairmen and team leaders. The most important thing was that these measures enabled the collective farms to introduce efficient crop rotation. To quote an example, in the spring of 1934 in the North Caucasus new crop rotation plans were adopted by 97 per cent of the collective farms, and in the Saratov Territory, by 94.8 per cent of the collective farms.¹

Guided by the decision of the 17th Party Congress, the political departments and Party organisations focussed their attention on two major economic and political tasks—raising yields and improving collective livestock farming. The first step towards implementing these tasks was the well-organised preparations for the spring sowing campaign that meets high-established standards. Preparations for the spring sowing started at the collective farms and MTS in the autumn of 1933. In November 1933 workers from advanced factories in Moscow and the Moscow Region appealed, to mark the 17th Party Congress, to all workers and farmers to launch a drive for socialist emulation. This call got a warm response from the collective farmers.

Collective farms, MTS, teams and sections all joined in the drive for socialist emulation. They undertook to finish preparations for the spring sowing ahead of time and to carry out the sowing efficiently and quickly. The emulation movement spread especially after the historic resolutions of the 17th Congress had been passed.

The socialist emulation movement of 1934 was marked firstly by its long-term character. It took in the entire cycle of farm operations from start to finish and permanently replaced the "seasonal" emulation movement; secondly it was marked by its specific nature, written undertakings being submitted by each collective farm, MTS, team, section, individual collective farmer or tractor driver, as the case may be; and, thirdly, it was notable for the systematic reciprocal checking of how these undertakings were fulfilled.

It is worth noting that the emulation movement was becoming

¹ In late 1933 the Saratov Territory was divided along with the Stalingrad Territory from the Lower Volga Territory which was broken into smaller units. Also broken into smaller units were the North Caucasus and Middle Volga territories. Divided from the North Caucasus Territory was the Azov-Black Sea Territory, and from the Middle Volga Territory, the Orenburg Region.

an organised system taking in all areas of collective-farm production. The political departments and Party organisations in the Middle Volga area twice checked how ready the farms were for the spring sowing—in December 1933, in the collective farms of 70 MTS, and in March 1934, in all the collective farms of 160 MTS. The Party organiser of the Krupskaya collective farm, attached to the Kochkurovo MTS, wrote that “the inspection opened our eyes to where we were amiss. The commission sent by a neighbouring collective farm shared its experience with our activists, showed us that we did not look after the horses well enough and helped us to establish personal responsibility for every job”.¹ The conference of the collective farms in the Zheltino and Saraktash MTS, held to sum up the results of their reciprocal inspections, stated: “We have entered a new stage in the emulation movement. The chief drawbacks in our work were exposed with unsparing Bolshevik self-criticism.”²

It would be no exaggeration to say that reciprocal inspection was the school in which the masses learned how to run the collective economy. It raised socialist emulation to a higher level, making it a real grassroot movement. From the early autumn of 1933 onwards, a real Bolshevik battle was waged by the collective farms and MTS all over the country to obtain a good harvest and carry out large-scale agrotechnical measures. A great deal of work had to be done by the political departments and Party organisations in the Volga area.

The first measure aimed at getting a good harvest was snow retention. The political departments and Party organisations mobilised the public, and the collective farmers themselves first of all, to carry out a range of measures. A particular amount was done with regard to this by the political departments and Party organisations in the Middle Volga area (or, more specifically, in the area on the left bank of the Volga), which set out to retain the snow on an area of 2,295,000 hectares.

The second measure aimed at getting a good harvest was seed vernalisation. The political departments and Party organisations all across the country began training specialists in this field. Every political department in the Middle Volga Territory had 200 to 600 people trained at special courses during the winter. Altogether 32,000 persons were trained to carry out vernalisation in the area. It was well worth the effort as, according to

¹ CSAOR, f. 315, op. 30, d. 12, l. 238.

² *ibid.*

the experts, vernalisation brought in an additional 3,000,000 poods of grain.

The third measure aimed at getting a good harvest was the irrigation and afforestation of the steppes on the left bank of the Volga. According to incomplete data, the collective farms in the Middle Volga Territory irrigated an area of 23,600 hectares in just one year, building and repairing more than 30 dams. Collective farms in the Saratov Territory irrigated an area of 20,500 hectares, building 86 new and repairing 499 old dykes. Afforestation also proceeded at a good pace.

To obtain a good harvest in the arid districts on the left bank of the Volga and in the droughty steppes of the Northern Caucasus, the spring sowing had to be done as quickly as possible. This called for a thorough preparation of machines and draught animals and maximum use of all available possibilities so as to complete the early crop sowing within the shortest time possible. The extensive preparatory work, high level of organisation and proper utilisation of the tractor fleet and draught animals made it possible to carry out the sowing campaign most efficiently. At many collective farms in the Lower Volga Territory and the North Caucasus the early crops were sown within the space of 5-7 working days.

The spring sowing showed a considerable growth in the efficiency of the tractor fleet. This partly resulted from the high quality of the repairs, but was also due to the greater skill of machine operators and tractor drivers. Most of the MTS in the Azov-Black Sea Territory notably exceeded their quota, bringing it up to 600-700 hectares of arable land per tractor.

Leading tractor teams, besides going over the quota, managed to save a great deal of fuel. The team led by Shestopalov, the initiator of the socialist emulation movement among the Territory tractor teams in the Surovikino MTS, did 1,189 hectares of soft ploughing per tractor and saved 11,873 kg of fuel.

This and other evidence of high political and production activity speaks of the decisive turning point in the collective farmers' attitude towards bringing in higher yields and solving the vital problem of grain production. Responding to the concern shown by the Communist Party and Soviet government, and to the great help given to the countryside by the workers, the collective farmers spared no efforts in building up the collective farms, increasing yields, and advancing socialised livestock farming.

3. OVERCOMING BACKWARDNESS IN LIVESTOCK FARMING. ORGANISING COMMODITY FARMS AT EVERY COLLECTIVE FARM

The struggle to achieve an upsurge in farming was closely bound up with efforts to develop socialised livestock breeding. This sector of farm production was still in a bad state. Herds continued to diminish in many parts of the country right up to the latter half of 1933. This was mainly due to three causes.

First, it was due to mismanagement at many collective farms and to the saboteurs who made livestock farming the main object in fighting the collective farms. Deliberate infection with epidemic diseases killed a great deal of cattle in many districts.

Second, it was due to the fact that many female animals remained barren because the coupling campaign of 1932 had been disrupted and was poorly organised in the spring of 1933.

Third, the worst evil hampering the development of livestock farming was the lack of personal responsibility and the enormous turnover of personnel. Political departments and Party organisations managed to eliminate these shortcomings comparatively quickly in field crop teams but it proved much harder to do in livestock teams, the more so as they tackled the problem much later than they should have done.

Socialised livestock farming is a key sector in farm production. A great effort had to be exerted to improve it sufficiently to meet the requirements that had grown up in economic development. From the latter half of 1933 onwards, particularly after the 17th Party Congress, this branch received considerably more attention from the political departments and Party organisations. To build up livestock teams, the best Party, Komsomol and collective-farm activists were sent to work in this area. The teams were headed by collective farmers who had received special training in livestock science. They also sent Party and Komsomol organisers to the livestock teams.

The political departments and Party organisations persuaded women to join the livestock teams, and during the winter of 1934, according to figures submitted by 156 political departments in the Middle Volga Territory, 242 women collective farmers became leaders of livestock teams, 497 women became commodity farm managers and livestock breeders, and 1,010 women began to tend the horses. In the North Caucasus, also within the space of a single year, about 1,800 women took up jobs in livestock farming. In March 1934, women collective farm-

ers of the Bashmakovo District in the Middle Volga Territory made an appeal to all the women collective farmers of the Soviet Union to take an active part in the livestock teams and to launch a nationwide emulation movement for the best care of cattle. The appeal was discussed at all the collective farms and at numerous women's meetings, and induced many women collective farmers to go over to stock-raising farms.

In May and June 1934 most of the political departments in the North Caucasus organised meetings of women stock-breeders at which the appeal of the Bashmakovo women collective farmers was discussed. The meetings were held at machine-and-tractor stations. They decided to establish a sense of personal responsibility in looking after cattle, to provide the farms with fodder, to end loss of cattle and to raise responsibility in tending young animals. After this livestock farm managers held their own conferences on the maintenance of young animals, the organisation of labour and provision of fodder. As a result of these measures, a socialist emulation movement for the title of the best collective-farm dairymaid was launched in the area. In the Saratov Territory, conferences, rallies and meetings devoted to livestock breeding were attended by more than 7,100 women collective farmers who unanimously approved the challenge made by the advanced livestock breeders.

An exceptional contribution to the development of socialised livestock farming was made by the Komsomol organisations and young collective farmers. In the autumn of 1933, many political departments mobilised Komsomol members to work in livestock teams and on stock-breeding farms. Coming to the teams and farms, Komsomol members set up check points, took young animals under their patronage and performed collective voluntary work heating the livestock farms buildings and digging silo trenches. This important movement was initiated by the Komsomol organisation of the Lenin's Behest collective farm in the Azov MTS. In September 1933 it announced that it was taking under its patronage the commodity dairy farm and sent its best members there. The Komsomol members also enlisted the help of Young Pioneers and schoolchildren.

The Komsomol drive for an upsurge in socialised livestock farming spread throughout the area and beyond it. The political department of the Urvan MTS in the North Caucasus Territory reported that Young Pioneers had been very helpful with young animals, keeping them clean, well-fed and strong. At many collective farms there appeared Komsomol-and-young people

stock-breeding teams and farms; special teams in charge of fodder supply, silage making and the building and heating of cattle sheds. Certification of commonly-owned cattle, conducted on the initiative of political departments, finally did away with the lack of personal responsibility for cattle and increased stock-breeders' responsibility for growth in commonly-owned cattle stock.

Owing to the enterprise and initiative displayed by the political departments and Party and Komsomol organisations, the state of things in socialised livestock farming began to change for the better. Cattle stock increased first of all through the internal reproduction and preservation of young animals. Earlier, cattle stock had been increased through the socialisation and purchase of animals, but now it was increased internally. For example, the increase in cattle stock at the collective farms in the Middle Volga area amounted, as of 1 May 1933, to 30,880 calves, 63,698 lambs, and 45,260 piglets, and, as of 1 May 1934, to 44,000 calves, 148,452 lambs, and over 62,000 piglets.

The situation with the cattle in collective farmers' personal ownership was also changing. A drive was launched for every farmer to have a cow and other cattle. As early as 1934, there were many collective farms every member of which had a cow and other animals, and their socialised livestock was in very good condition, too.

Although the measures taken by the Party resulted in some progress in livestock farming, it still lagged behind. The Central Committee and the government implemented various measures aimed at improving livestock farming. The June 1934 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Communist Party discussed the problem of improving and advancing livestock farming. Its decision pointed out that the "triumph of the collective-farm system in the countryside, which has provided a successful solution to the grain problem, has also provided favourable conditions for fast advancing the development of animal husbandry at the state and collective farms and in the collective farmers' individual holdings".¹

Stating that the collective-farm stock-breeding should be the main factor in achieving an upsurge in livestock farming, the Party suggested that during 1934 the socialised herd of collective farms should be organised into collective-farm commodity farms. As a major government measure, it was decided to "apply, in similar fashion to the state sowing plan, a method of state planning to develop animal husbandry, by fixing plan

¹ *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 5, p. 182.

targets for growth in cattle stock at state farms and commodity farms, for raising young animals in state and collective farms, and by collective and individual farmers, and for fodder production, about all of which the state and collective farms and village Soviets should be duly informed".¹

Thus, the government plan was to be the focus of attention for Party and Soviet organisations and to serve as an important means in mobilising every effort towards the successful development of livestock farming.

4. NOTABLE CHANGES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COLLECTIVE FARMS' PUBLIC ECONOMY. THE REORGANISATION OF MTS POLITICAL DEPARTMENTS

Owing to the measures taken by the Central Committee of the Party to consolidate the collective farms politically, organisationally and economically, farming made further confident strides. 1934 was marked by notable changes in the development of the collective farms' public economy, by their growing efficiency and an enormous upsurge in the political awareness and production activity of millions of collective farmers.

The economic and political results of that year serve as proof that Soviet agriculture was beginning to develop its productive forces. That this was so is clear from the fact that in 1934 the spring sowing was finished some 15-20 days earlier than in 1933, and some 30-40 days earlier than in 1932; harvesting and state grain purchases were completed six weeks earlier than in 1933.

All farm operations in the main producing areas of the country were over by the anniversary of the October Socialist Revolution.

The main economic result of 1934 was that many collective farms obtained good grain harvests. The Middle Volga Territory provides an apt illustration of this. The gross grain harvest in the area amounted to 70,698,000 centners or 28,000,000 centners more than in 1928, 25,000,000 more than in 1932, and 16,000,000 centners more than in 1933. The state acquired over 1,500 million poods of commodity grain as against 650 million poods procured in 1928 and 200 million poods more than in the exceedingly good year of 1913. The collective and state farms together de-

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions..., Vol. 5, pp. 183-84.

livered 92 per cent of the total grain procured to the state.

Notable successes were achieved in livestock farming, the other major branch of farm production. According to preliminary data from the national census of 1 January 1935, a comparison with the livestock figures of 1 January 1934 shows that the number of cattle in the collective-farm and peasant sector increased by 21 per cent, and at the collective farms by 30 per cent and the number of sheep and goats increased respectively by 11 and 18 per cent. The country had 194,000 commodity farms with 7.4 million head of cattle, 10.2 million sheep, 3.5 million pigs, and 4,700 horse-breeding farms with 276,000 horses. Owing to the progress made in livestock farming at collective and state farms, the important problem of providing each collective farmer with a cow could now be tackled. In 1934, according to the People's Commissariat for Land, 1,463,200 heifers were contracted for, bought and turned over to collective farmers previously without cows. 456,800 of these came from collective-farm commodity farms, and 1,006,400 were purchased or contracted for. To buy them the collective farmers received 106 million rubles in loans from the state. The government decided to grant more privileges to the collective and individual farmers who raised and sold heifers under contract to collective farmers who had no cows.

The collective farms grew in number and strength with the all-round material, technical, financial, and organisational help provided by the state. The scope of this aid is indicated in the following figures. In the four years between 1931 and 1934 the collective farms received long-term loans amounting to 1,168 million rubles. Over the same period the MTS received 4,723,600,000 rubles, including 2,300 million rubles for capital expenditure. Consequently the collective farms and MTS received state budget bank loans totalling 5,891,600,000 rubles, including 3,200 million to be spent on capital investment.¹

The Party dealt step by step with the task of improving socialised farming. The collective and state farms now produced enough grain for the state to lay in stocks of it and abolish bread rationing. Summing up the results of the development in socialist agriculture, the November 1934 Central Committee Plenum decided to abolish bread rationing. It was a great triumph for Soviet socialist agriculture which had made possible a big

¹ See: *Gosudarstvennaya kreditnaya pomoshch kolkhozam i kolkhoznikam* (Government Credit Aid for Collective Farms and Collective Farmers), 1935, p. 8 (in Russian).

leap forward in raising the material standards of the working people of the USSR.

Growth in the material well-being of the working peasantry provided, in turn, the foundations for improving its cultural level. General primary education had been introduced by 1934. In the countryside alone, four-grade schools were attended by 16,009,000 children. There was not a village in the country that had no school of its own. There was a sharp increase in the number of secondary school pupils. Six million children went to secondary school and 400,000 adults attended schools of an advanced type. Illiteracy was stamped out for good.

The collective-farm countryside was covered by a dense network of cultural and educational establishments. There were clubs and reading rooms at 53,300 collective farms. Within the space of two years, 10,000 new clubs and social centres were built in the villages. The country had 16,000 collective-farm libraries, not counting those in schools and other places, 17,565 film projectors and 200 collective-farm theatres. Country newspapers had a circulation of 17 million copies.

The growth of culture in the villages found expression in the ever-extending training of collective-farm personnel. At the end of 1934, there were 550,000 tractor drivers, 64,000 combine operators, 68,000 lorry drivers and 70,000 tractor team leaders working at the collective and state farms. Altogether, they made up a force of 750,000 skilled workers. On top of this, 939,000 collective farmers and 70,000 state farm workers were being instructed at the schools and courses organised by the MTS and state farms. A total of 165,000 commodity farm managers, 65,000 medical assistants and veterinary surgeons, 8,300 horse-breeders, 82,400 book-keepers, and 48,800 field crop team leaders were trained at different courses for collective-farm production. The countryside had never seen personnel being trained on such a scale before.

Success in developing the commonly-owned economy of the collective farms was a direct outcome of the growing might of large-scale socialist industry. It made it possible to rapidly raise the technological level of agriculture, equipping it with sophisticated Soviet-made machines, tractors and combines. A total of 281,000 tractors, 33,000 combines, 34,000 lorries, 845,000 horse- and tractor-driven sowing machines, 129,000 threshers, and over 2 million different kinds of harvesting machines were at work in 1934 in socialist fields. There were 3,500 MTS operating in agriculture, with a strong fleet of tractors and other complex machines.

Carrying out the historic decisions of the 17th Congress, the Communist Party confidently led socialist farming along the path that would complete its technical reconstruction. A ramified network of MTS was set up in the country. At the end of 1934, the USSR had 1,009 districts with one MTS, 515 with two, 214 with three, 89 with four, 38 with five, and 41 districts with six MTS in each one. There were only 629 districts without MTS. The area served by MTS accounted for 63.9 per cent of the collective farms' total area under crops. Thanks to the increase in the number of MTS and in their technical equipment, there was a sharp increase in the mechanisation of collective-farm production.

In the short time that had elapsed since their organisation, the collective farms managed to demonstrate their great viability, emerging with honour from all the trials they went through. Historical experience shows that a truly great role was played by the political departments established on the Party's initiative in consolidating and developing the collective-farm system. Efficiently leading the collective farms, the political departments devised and applied such work methods as best suited the reciprocal interests of the state and collective farms, helping the collective farmers to get rid of their private-owner habits and promoting the emergence of new, socialist relationships in production.

In the almost two years of their existence in the countryside, the political departments enjoyed immense prestige among the collective farmers. The best judgement of the activities of the political departments must be that of the collective farmers themselves. Here is a common opinion. "The political department has helped us to clear the collective farms of alien and corrupt elements and overcome the kulaks' resistance to the sowing campaign," wrote collective farmers from the Bezenchuk MTS area. "But that is not all. The political department does not ignore any aspect of life in the collective farm, it exerts its influence everywhere. This made itself felt at once. Now initiative from the collective farms is quickly acted on in the political departments. People go to the political departments, with all kinds of problems."¹

The political departments successfully coped with the task of consolidating the collective-farm system and paved the way for a still more extensive development of work in the countryside.

¹ *Pravda*, 17 May 1933.

However, once they had fulfilled their historic mission, the political departments no longer met the growing requirements made on them in their guidance of the countryside. To meet these requirements, it was necessary to complete the division into districts and build up the ordinary Party and Soviet bodies.

The November 1934 Plenum of the Central Committee decided to reorganise the political departments into ordinary Party bodies. The Plenum pointed out that the "establishment of political departments was fully justified, and they played an exceptionally important role in eliminating the shortcomings that existed in the countryside. But the successes achieved in rebuilding agriculture on socialist lines, building up the collective farms, uniting the collective-farm activists, providing firm support for the village Party organisations and in improving the work done by the district Party committees, require that the process of dividing the country into districts, begun earlier, be *completed* and that the bodies of government be brought fully into contact with the *countryside...*"¹

In reorganising the political departments, the Central Committee proceeded from the well-known directives of the Tenth Party Congress that the "revolutionary Marxist party rejects any search for an absolutely correct form of Party organisation, suitable for every stage in the revolutionary process, and the same goes for the methods of its work. On the contrary, the form of organisation and work methods entirely depend on the distinctive features of the specific historical situation and on the tasks which immediately follow from it".²

After the political departments had been disbanded, their experienced Bolshevik personnel were asked by the Central Committee to stay in the countryside in order to build up the district Party committees along with the Soviet and economic bodies. It was to improve still further the work of the rural Party organisations in carrying out their new tasks. Out of the 2,604 former heads of MTS political departments, 2,534 remained in leading jobs in the districts and only 70 were transferred to leading jobs at regional organisations. A total of 1,506 former heads of political departments were approved as secretaries of district Party committees.

In accordance with a resolution of the 17th Congress the territories, regions and districts were broken down into smaller units.

¹ CPSU in *Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 5, p. 201.

² *ibid.*, Vol. 2, p. 206.

At the beginning of 1935, 670 new districts were formed in 32 regions, territories and republics, and altogether about 800 were to be formed throughout the country. New districts were formed around the bigger machine-and-tractor stations and they were provided with all the proper amenities. By reorganising the MTS political departments into ordinary Party bodies, breaking some districts into smaller units and establishing certain new districts, the Central Committee of the Party brought the district Party committees, district Executive Committees and land authorities nearer the collective farms and machine-and-tractor stations making it easier for them to exercise control.

CHAPTER XVI

WORKING TO FURTHER CONSOLIDATE AND DEVELOP THE COLLECTIVE-FARM SYSTEM

1. THE COLLECTIVE-FARM RULES—A MANIFESTO OF COLLECTIVE-FARM LIFE

The victorious collective-farm system led the working peasants towards a new, socialist life, introducing radical changes into the social and economic life of millions of peasants. During the first five-year plan the Party tested out and firmly established the farm co-operative as the main form of collective farm, and accordingly worked out socialist forms for the internal economic and organisational structure of the collective farms. The farm co-operative, born of the experience of the collective-farm movement, was a major historic achievement of the Party and the people.

It was an outstanding event in the life of the collective-farm peasantry when the Second All-Union Congress of Advanced Collective Farmers convened in February 1935. The congress went down in the history of the Soviet farmers' struggle for socialism as the congress in which it was shown that Lenin's ideas had triumphed in practice. The Congress summed up the great victory of the collective-farm system in the USSR by adopting the Collective-Farm Rules—a manifesto of collective-farm life. The best farmers came to Moscow from all over the Soviet Union, and, together with scientists, scholars, and Party and government officials, they worked out, point by point, this remarkable document, rightly called by the collective farmers "the inviolable law of collective-farm life".

This law meant that for the first time in human history the hopes and aspirations of millions of peasants came true, after a search for a way out of poverty and oppression, that had taken them centuries. In working out the new regulations for co-operative life, the congress of collective farmers was guided

first of all by the lessons learned in organising the collective farms, taking into account the reciprocal interests of the collective farms and the state. The new collective-farm Rules were warmly welcomed by the collective farmers because they reflected their social and private life most fully, and elaborated the cardinal principles by which the collectively-owned economy was organised and developed.

Section 1 of the Rules states that the "collective-farm path, the path to socialism, is the only correct path for the toiling peasants". They clearly formulate the goals of the collective farms and determine the rights and duties of collective farmers. The toiling peasants in one locality or another, the Rules run, "unite freely in a farm co-operative to build, using the common means of production and by common work, a collective, i.e., a commonly-owned, farm to ensure a complete victory over the kulaks and all exploiters and enemies of the working people, to ensure a complete victory over poverty and ignorance, over the backwardness of the small individual farms and to attain a high labour productivity and thus secure higher living standards for the collective farmers".¹

From this it follows that the farm co-operative rests on a strictly voluntary basis, its members enjoying equal rights as full masters of their co-operative, and securing material and cultural benefits for themselves through their collective labour. Giving broad rights to collective-farm members, the Rules at the same time imposed great duties on them, namely, the duty "to build up their farm co-operative, to work honestly, to allocate collective income according to work, to protect public property, to be thrifty with collective-farm possessions, to take good care of the tractors and machines, to look after the horses well, to fulfil the assignments of the workers' and peasants' state, and thereby make the collective farm a Bolshevik farm and make all its members prosperous".²

Section 2 of the Rules is devoted to land, to the rules concerning its distribution both in common and individual use. While retaining its immutable right to nationalise all land, the Soviet state turned vast tracts over to the collective farms to use free in perpetuity. This sacred right to the use of the land

¹ *Ustav selskokhozyaistvennoi arteli* (Collective-Farm Rules), Moscow, 1951, p. 3, (in Russian).

² *ibid.*, p. 3.

is written down in the Collective-Farm Rules: "The land occupied by collective farms, like all other land in the USSR, is the state property of the whole people. In accordance with the laws of the workers' and peasants' state, it is turned over to the farm co-operative for use in perpetuity, i.e., forever, and may not be sold, bought or leased."¹

Nor is that all. The collective farms, which received boundless tracts of land, meadows, pastures and watering places from the state for use in perpetuity, were to use them efficiently to obtain an abundance of farm produce and raw material for industry. The Communist Party, which insisted on strict observance of the Rules, effected a range of measures in the area of land use. Title deeds were drawn up for each collective farm, stating the exact limits of the land in its use and its right to use it in perpetuity.

In accordance with Article 2 of the Collective-Farm Rules, the USSR Council of People's Commissars adopted, on 7 July 1935, a resolution on issuing title deeds to collective farms for their permanent use of the land. This required the authorities concerned to begin issuing title deeds to collective farms under the guidance of the USSR People's Commissariat for Land, which was "to carry out land organisation measures in order to eliminate strip farming, far-off lands, and other defects in land use and to determine the exact limits and area of the land of the farm co-operatives concerned by the time of issuing title deeds to farm co-operatives for using land in perpetuity".

The collective-farm system provided conditions for planned farm production. Now that agriculture had become a part of the socialist national economy, the problem of planning was of great significance. The section of the Rules devoted to the activities of the farm co-operative and of its board states: "The farm co-operatives undertake to conduct operations according to plan, strictly observing the plans of farm production established by the bodies of the state of workers and peasants, and their obligations to the state."²

The Communist Party helped the collective farms to stop using inconvenient forms of remunerating labour and to introduce socialist principles for organising and remunerating it, i.e. piece-work payment which corresponds most fully to the co-operative form of collective farm, inculcating as it does a socialist attitude

¹ *ibid.*, p. 4.

² *ibid.*, p. 7.

to work. Piece-work payment rests on the socialist principle of distribution, on the equal duty of all to work according to their abilities and the equal right of all working people to receive according to their work. In the section of the Rules, devoted to the organisation and remuneration of labour, and to labour discipline, it states that "farm work at the collective farm is carried out on a piece-work basis. The collective-farm board works out—and a general meeting of the collective farmers approves—output quotas and the rate at which each job is to be paid in terms of workday units."¹

Piece-work payment by the job, as the sole correct system for organising and remunerating labour, was an important means of fighting loafers and parasites, and at the same time it made for better discipline, inducing the collective farmers to work efficiently and with interest. As a result, progressive piece-work payment was widely introduced into all sectors of collective-farm production and was eventually supplemented with new, socialist principles which did not just take the quality and amount of the work done into account, but also its results, i.e. how soon and how well the sowing or the harvesting was done, the amount of produce obtained, and how well the obligations to the state had been fulfilled.

Piece-work payment developed with the further strengthening of permanent teams and the subsequent introduction of sections in teams concerned with industrial and inter-tilled crops. The Rules grant broad rights to the production teams and team leaders, for they are responsible to the collective farm for the organisation, accounting and remuneration of labour and bear material responsibility for the results of the farm's operations. The Rules state: "Field crop teams are formed for the rotation period at the minimum, and have plots assigned to them for the rotation period. Every field crop team gets all the tools, draught animals and farm buildings it may need from the collective-farm board. Stock-breeding teams are formed for at least three years, every team gets producing animals, tools, draught animals and farm buildings from the collective-farm board."²

The farm co-operative is run on broad democratic principles which further the political education of the collective farmers, help to engage them in public control, ensure their active parti-

¹ *ibid.*, p. 15.

² *ibid.*, p. 14.

cipation in running the farm, and increase their socialist awareness. The Rules state that the "affairs of a farm co-operative are directed by general meetings of its members, and in the interval between them, by the board elected by a general meeting. The general meeting is the highest body of management of the co-operative farm."¹

The section entitled *The Means of Production* shows how well the common and private interests of collective farmers are combined. The main means of production which are owned in common are socialised at the farm co-operatives. These are draught animals, farm tools, seed reserves, fodder for the commonly-owned animals, farm buildings, and all produce-processing enterprises. The Rules state that the farm co-operative may not deprive any collective farmer of the right to have an individual small-holding but the latter must be of a subsidiary nature, merely serving to satisfy the personal and everyday needs of the collective farmer and his family more fully.

The Party took it into consideration that a co-operative farm could not immediately satisfy all the personal and everyday needs of its members and that it was necessary therefore for every collective-farm homestead to have an individual holding consisting of an individual plot, some animals, and so on. Accordingly, there is a special point in the Rules stating that an individual plot, without the land on which the house is built, may be from a quarter to half a hectare, and in some areas may be enlarged to a hectare, depending on local conditions.

The Rules also determined the size of the individual holding, again according to local conditions. All these points were recorded in the 1936 Soviet Constitution, stating: "In addition to its basic income from communal farming, every collective-farm household shall have a small plot of land attached to the house for its own use, and as its personal property, a subsidiary husbandry, a house, livestock, poultry, and minor agricultural implements—in conformity with Collective-Farm Rules."

Safeguarding the sacred principle of collective-farm life, the Party helped the collective farmers arrange their public and private life in keeping with the goal of building a socialist society, in which the abilities of every working man and woman are not hampered but, on the contrary, come to full fruition. The main thing is that the collective farm should become the prin-

¹ *ibid.*, p. 18.

cial source of growth in the material and cultural well-being of the collective farmers.

The Collective-Farm Rules are a scientifically-founded document through which runs the Leninist idea of harmonising collective farmers' private interests with those of the nation as a whole. This lasting scientific basis, on which the collective farm rests, gives it great internal strength and is its source of growth as well as being that of the personal well-being and socialist education of the collective farmers. Thus, the collective farm is a school of economic management providing the peasants with socialist education and extensive public control.

The Communist Party resolutely fought both those who tried to undermine the public economy and those who sought to infringe the collective farmers' personal interests. The Rules, tested by many years of collective-farm life, have shown that, given correct guidance, the collective farm provides to the most harmonious combination of the common and individual interest of the peasants united in the collective farms.

The farm co-operatives owe their firm establishment as the main form of socialised farm largely to the 17th Party Congress which urged the need to reorganise communes in conformity with the Collective-Farm Rules. In view of the lessons of collective-farm organisation and of the fact that communes did not at the time match the productive forces, the Communist Party decided to establish the co-operative as the principal and optimum form of the collective-farm movement. It was also taken into consideration that the communes themselves saw no reason for going on as they were and everywhere adopted the Collective-Farm Rules. Petty-bourgeois wage-levelling failed to meet the interests of the commune members themselves.

This Party decision which was perfectly correct and was prompted by the interests and wishes of the peasants themselves, was seen by some theorists as a departure from socialism. In their opinion, the commune, in which all were expected to have the same needs, was socialism, and the farm co-operative, in which everybody was paid according to his work, was a departure from socialism. The Party made mincemeat of these simplistic views on socialism, showing their proponents that they did not have a leg to stand on.

The farm co-operative brought to light by the experience of the collective-farm movement in the USSR, found full recognition among the collective farmers. As for the commune, it was not rejected for good but is not a suitable form at the present

stage of collective-farm development. The commune, which arose on backward material and technical foundations and was corrupted by the system of petty-bourgeois egalitarianism, was pushed aside by the very process of economic development and was therefore obliged to adopt the Collective-Farm Rules. The Communist Party, however, does not see the farm co-operative as the sole form of collective-farm development possible, good for all time, but watches it as it progresses. The Party's slogan, "We must make all collective farms Bolshevik, and all collective farmers prosperous", most fully reflected the substance of collective-farm life within the framework of the farm co-operative.

One must say, however, that erroneous opinions were also expressed over this new slogan. Some people, oblivious of the changed socio-economic conditions in the countryside, compared it with Bukharin's "get rich!" It was argued that without the poor peasants the Party's position in the countryside would be weakened, that there would be no building socialism if the poor disappeared. The opportunist yes-men alleged that if all peasants become prosperous and cultured it would obstruct the future struggle for socialism, that without the poor the Party and Soviet government would lose support in the countryside. It was an attempt to undermine the peasants' faith in the collective farms. These preachers of petty-bourgeois ideology, distorting the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, depicted socialism as equality based on poverty, with everybody's needs levelled off and the same low living standards for all.

In reality the strength of the collective-farm system lies precisely in the fact that it ends the poverty and ruination of the toiling peasants for good, finally abolishes the social differentiation between the peasantry, and delivers it from kulak bondage. The poor exist as a numerous section only in the presence of capitalist elements, and then they indeed support the Party in fighting these elements. But as soon as the collective farms begin to win and the capitalist elements disappear, the poor as a section of the peasantry disappear also. They rise to the level of the middle peasants and continue to work for a prosperous life. *One does not build socialist society to live like the proletariat, but to make it possible for the working people to do away with the miserable living standards of the proletariat for good.*

2. SOCIALIST FARMING ON THE UPSURGE

Having built and consolidated the collective farms, the Communist Party directed its will and energy towards achieving an upsurge in farming, an upsurge which was vitally necessary for the people. The political departments had already paved the way for it by the colossal work they had done. Now the Party knew much more about how to organise and raise the efficiency of the collective farms. The gradual upsurge that had begun in farm production occurred on the basis of growing mechanisation and the use of more advanced cultivation techniques.

Availing themselves of their new material and technical facilities, the collective farms were gradually becoming more efficient. At many of them yields became higher, the cattle stock was increased, indivisible funds grew and the collective farmers got more for their work. The new Collective-Farm Rules were a document of great mobilising force which raised the production and political activity of the collective farmers still higher.

As a result, the movement for socialist emulation in the countryside, aimed at increasing labour productivity and raising the collective farmers' material and cultural level, continued to grow. The labour enthusiasm of the masses, geared at consolidating the collective-farm system, was an important factor in the development of the collective farms. The year of 1935 was decisive to the fulfilment of the second five-year plan. It was a year of great all-round change in socialist agriculture.

First of all, the organisation of labour at the collective farms notably improved, and the collective farmers' responsibility for efficient use of the machines and draught animals increased. As a result, all farm operations were much better organised and took less time to carry out. Appraising the results of the 1935 spring sowing, the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU(B), held on 5-7 June 1935, noted in its resolution "On the Harvesting and Purchase of Farm Produce" that the "results of the farm operations of spring 1935 highlight the success of the collective-farm system. The shorter time in which the sowing was done by the collective and state farms, and the fact that it was of better quality than in previous years, have provided every opportunity to obtain a good harvest".¹

¹ *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 5, p. 212.

The Plenum required of the Party, Soviet and collective-farm bodies to consolidate the success of the spring sowing and focus on tending the crops properly, and getting them in quickly and without losses. With this end in view, 21,000 combines, 99,000 tractors, including 17,000 caterpillar tractors, 30,000 lorries and 335 million rubles worth of other farm machines were sent to countryside to add to the machinery already there. It was stressed, incidentally, that equipping the farms with machinery was just one side of the matter, while the main thing was that all farm operations should receive proper guidance from the Party organisations. "To ensure success in harvesting, it must be given systematic, day-to-day guidance by the Party organisations. The collective farmers and state-farm workers must be made active in getting in the crop, and all machines, combines in particular, must be used to the full."¹

Rallying the collective farmers to implement the decisions of the Central Committee Plenum, the Party organisations ensured that all the farm operations were carried out at a really fast rate. A good harvest was obtained and brought in efficiently. Specially important in doing this were the combines, in use for the first time on a large scale at the collective farms. The gross grain output in 1935 amounted to roughly 5,500 million poods, and the state purchase plan was fulfilled by October. Notable progress was also made in industrial crops.

Great strides were made in collective livestock breeding. The number of collective-farm livestock farms increased while that of collective farmers without cows diminished. Nevertheless, the 7th All-Union Congress of Soviets, which met from 28 January to 6 February 1935, pointed out that animal husbandry still lagged behind a good deal. The Congress resolution said (in part): "In view of the success achieved in 1934, in 1935 the cattle stock must be enlarged, and its quality improved, at a faster pace. The 1935 government plan for the development of animal husbandry will play an exceptional part in rallying the masses to deal with the problem of livestock breeding."² The task put forward by the Congress was that by the end of 1935 all collective farms without exception should have commodity livestock farms of their own and that not a single collective farmer should be left without a cow.

¹ *ibid.*

² *Congresses of Soviets in Resolutions and Decisions*, p. 479.

Helped by the government, the Soviet collective farms overfulfilled the 1935 plan for animal husbandry. Compared with 1934, the number of horses increased by 5 per cent, of cattle by 18 per cent, of sheep and goats by 25 per cent, and of pigs by 38 per cent. The number of collective-farm commodity animal farms more than doubled—there were now 339,412 of them. Nevertheless, despite the notable increase in the collective-farm cattle stock, many collective-farm livestock farms were still very weak. It was urgently necessary to provide them with a steady supply of female animals, so that they could always be relied on to produce an ever larger marketable surplus.

In 1935 the Stakhanovite movement was launched. It started in the Donbass collieries and soon spread all over the country. It was facilitated by the conditions brought about by the Party in its work of reorganising the national economy on socialist lines, by the presence of new machinery and new personnel trained to use it, by the improvement in the material and cultural level of the working class and peasantry, and by the absence of exploitation and exploiters.

This movement of innovators (for that was what the Stakhanovite movement essentially was) was initiated in the countryside by sugar-beet growers, led by Maria Demchenko, a Ukrainian collective farmer, who obtained 500 centners of sugar-beet per hectare, the average for the Ukraine being 130. Another advanced woman collective farmer, Koshevaya, a section leader, brought in 631 centners per hectare. This movement showed what immense reserves there were lying untapped in the collective farms growing sugar-beet. To illustrate this, 78 collective-farm sections in the Kharkov Region brought in over 500 centners of sugar-beet per hectare in 1935. According to incomplete data, up to a third of the collective farms in the country harvested more than 200 centners of sugar-beet per hectare. A movement was launched in the cotton growing areas to bring in at least 30 centners of cotton per hectare.

The Stakhanovite movement revealed that there were reserves in other branches of farm production as well. For instance at the Red Partisan collective farm in the Verkhne-Uralsk District of Cheliabinsk Region, Berlizov, a team leader and innovator, brought in 46 centners of winter wheat per hectare, and innovators at the Ivaninsky collective farm of Kologriv District, Gorky Territory, brought in 33 centners per hectare. Some bumper harvests were possible when innovators worked sizeable areas of land.

More and more innovators and master crop growers appeared in socialist agriculture. There were combine operators and tractor drivers, cotton growers and grain growers, livestock breeders and gardeners, who extolled the collective-farm system and consolidated its strength by their success in production. It is worth noting that a force of gifted tractor drivers and combine operators who were top-notch specialists in their field appeared at the collective farms.

These facts indicate that the Party was able to put the great forces latent in the collective-farm system into action, to bring out and demonstrate in practice all the advantages offered by large-scale socialist agriculture. The results of 1935 showed that great strides had been made, and both yields and incomes of the collective farms and their members had increased. This was made possible by the further consolidation and growth of the socialist system which was becoming unquestionably the dominant one in the Soviet national economy.

Socialism was taking root in the Soviet Union. At the end of 1935, socialist forms of the economy accounted for 97.8 per cent of the national income. The level of collectivisation had increased by that time to 90 per cent. Capitalist elements had disappeared and individual peasants were joining the collective farms. The collective and state farms accounted for 95.2, 94.2, 91.5 and 99.2 per cent of the total area sown respectively to grain crops, cotton, fibre-flax, and sugar beet. The number of MTS, as of January 1936, increased to 4,376. They now dealt with 72.8 per cent of the area cultivated by the collective farms.

Indefatigably equipping agriculture with the latest machinery and raising the efficiency of labour on the collective farms, the Communist Party led them towards further developing their productive forces.

3. THE GREAT VITALITY OF THE COLLECTIVE-FARM SYSTEM

Taking the success achieved by the collective farms in the three years of the second five-year period as its basis, the Central Committee and Soviet government drew up a plan for 1936, the fourth year of the second five-year period, with a view to fulfilling the five-year plan targets in four years by stepping up

the development of the productive forces in agriculture. For example, the gross agricultural output was to be increased by 24.2 per cent in 1936 compared with 11 per cent in 1935. As a result, socialist agriculture was to catch up with socialist industry for which a 23-per cent increase in output was planned.

These figures indicate that the new relations of production in agriculture made it possible to ensure balanced growth in all branches of the socialist economy. Under capitalism, agriculture inevitably lags behind industry. Capitalism cannot eliminate this disproportion. The socialist system alone ends this lag in agriculture for good and creates unlimited opportunities for a powerful upsurge in farm production, aimed at satisfying as fully as possible the growing material, cultural and intellectual needs of all Soviet citizens.

One characteristic of the 1936 national economic plan was that while agricultural output was to grow quite considerably, the area under crops was to be increased merely by 2.5 million hectares or by 2 per cent. This meant that agriculture was to be developed intensively, through raising yields and labour productivity, and using more machines and advanced cultivation methods. Of course, the high targets set for agriculture required much greater capital investment than before.

The Soviet state was now better able to afford it. Total capital investment in agriculture was increased from 1,730 million rubles in 1935 to 2,175 million in 1936. These funds were channelled into building up power facilities and increasing the amount of machinery available per worker. The latter accounted for as much as 70 per cent of the capital investment allocations. 76,400 tractors, 14,500 lorries, 54,640 combines, and 9,200 finisher threshers were to be supplied in 1936 through the People's Commissariat for Land alone.

In addition to this, one must note that the farm machines were of ever better quality. To quote an example, at the beginning of 1936 the tractor fleet in farming almost trebled that of the beginning of the five-year period, and in the case of the MTS, it more than quadrupled. In 1932, the MTS had mostly wheel tractors, while caterpillar tractors accounted for a mere 7.7 per cent of the tractor fleet. This proportion was to be increased to 33.2 per cent by the end of 1936. With more caterpillar tractors, it was possible to raise the productivity of farming still further, to ensure better cultivation of the soil, and improve techniques. The supply of machinery to the countryside steadily increased, as can be seen from the table below.

Item	1934	1935	1936	1936 in percentage of 1935
Total capacity of the MTS tractor fleet as of the end of the year (thousand hp)	2,754	4,428	6,078	137
Lorries at MTS	19,500	29,300	40,700	139
Combines	15,200	29,800	81,500	273

Developing livestock breeding was still a central problem in the 1936 economic plan. Although the cattle stock had increased noticeably in 1935, livestock breeding was still at a low level. Suffice to say that in January 1936, there were no livestock farms at 43,000 collective farms, 19,100 of which were obliged to keep their animals with the individual farmers for want of appropriate buildings. Many collective farmers owned no cattle as they were supposed to under the Collective-Farm Rules. Although collective farmers had received 3,8 million calves, 8.5 million piglets, and 1.2 million lambs over the preceding four years, 14.5 per cent of collective-farm families, nevertheless, still owned no livestock at the beginning of 1936. The economic plan, therefore, stipulated that the cattle stock should be increased in two ways—through developing the common herd on the one hand, and through providing all the collective farmers with animals of their own on the other.

Under this plan, the number of horses was to be increased by 1,516,000 as compared with 447,800 in 1935, and the number of cattle by 7,026,000 compared with 5,579,000, and so on. The collective farmers were to receive 2,700,000 calves for their personal use in 1936, to be bought with a long-term interest-free loan of 80 million rubles from the government. In this way the Party could provide all the collective farmers with livestock of their own and at the same time increase the common herd. Combining the growth in livestock farming, whether collective or individual, in this way, made it possible to eliminate the lag in animal husbandry and raise the living standards of the collective-farm peasantry.

In 1936, the development of socialist agriculture was accompanied by a further expansion in the innovators' movement and

greater political activity of the collective farmers. Although the weather was far from good, all farm operations were better organised and were carried out more quickly than in the previous years.

The spring sowing of 1936 showed that the force of highly skilled machine operators created by the Party guaranteed an unprecedented growth of labour productivity in agriculture. The innovators overthrew the old, and set up new, output quotas. Giving every support to the widespread innovators' movement in agriculture and fighting backward ideas, the June 1936 Plenum of the Party's Central Committee particularly stressed that "the most important and decisive condition in ensuring a heavy yield is now to spread, among all those working at the collective and state farms and MTS, the experience and achievements of the advanced workers of socialist agriculture, who have mastered sowing and harvesting machinery, overcoming the resistance of some officials to the all-round mechanisation of agriculture".¹

The collective farmers warmly responded to the Party's call. In 1936, a popular movement aimed at obtaining higher yields was launched at the Iskra collective farm in the Altai Territory, on the initiative of Mikhail Yefremov. His section obtained, if on a small area, 60 centners of grain per hectare—a yield unprecedented in Siberia. The Yefremov movement spread throughout the country.

Not only did the collective-farm system breed a huge army of innovators, but it promoted prominent plant breeders from among the peasants, who applied their creative talent in developing the social economy. The innovators' movement paved the way for higher labour productivity and furthered the development of new social relations in the countryside.

Great contributions to the growth of the collective-farm system were made by eminent scientists of the older generation—I. V. Michurin, V. R. Williams, D. N. Pryanishnikov, N. V. Tsitsin and N. M. Tulaikov. The most striking manifestation of the vitality of the collective-farm system was the fact that its development rested on the solid foundation of advanced Soviet science, invigorated by the practical experience of the multi-million-strong collective-farm peasantry.

Although the plan targets for agriculture were not reached completely in 1936 as a result of bad weather, there was still

¹ *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 5, p. 254.

a better showing than in the past. On the whole, the national economic plan was carried out successfully, leading to the second five-year plan being fulfilled ahead of time, by April 1937, i.e. in four years and three months.

4. THE EXPLOITING CLASS RE-EDUCATED THROUGH WORK AND INTRODUCED TO A NEW MODE OF LIFE

Yet another highly important social problem was successfully solved by the Party through bringing in far-reaching reforms. It introduced the once most numerous exploiting class, the kulaks, to a new, social mode of life by reforming them through work. Nothing of the kind had ever happened in history. Bourgeois propagandists talk to this day of "Bolshevik barbarity", alleging that the abolition of the kulaks as a class through hundred per cent collectivisation implied their physical extermination. But the bourgeoisie is accustomed to measure class relations by their own yardstick. After all, the only methods it applies to the masses are violence and terrorism. So it is nothing to wonder at that the exceptionally humane acts of Soviet rule should be regarded by the bourgeois propaganda-mongers from their egoistic, narrow class standpoint, or that they should lie to shamelessly distort the historical facts.

So what did, in fact, happen to the kulaks?

It has been said earlier that absolute majority of them stayed in their villages. Resettled on plots beyond the fields, they were introduced, in one way or another, to the new mode of life and joined the collective farms. The vast expanses of land on the left bank of the Volga in its middle and lower reaches were where the kulaks were resettled. Those of them who were not resettled were gradually introduced to socially useful work at state farms, MTS and collective farms, into building projects and other industrial enterprises.

True enough, this did not always go without a hitch. The former exploiters resented the loss of their private property on the means of production which had been their source of wealth, and for a long time hoped for a restoration of the old way of life. What supported their illusions was that many young collective farms were still weak and not well enough organised at this time. Penetrating these farms, hostile elements tried at first to harm and weaken them.

But the new is invincible—such is the dialectic of life. The growing forces of the collective-farm system not only won over the dwindling forces of the old world, but also drew them into the work stream at the collective and state farms. Much was done in this respect by the MTS political departments which, besides taking coercive measures, skilfully applied tactics of persuasion, education, and training, thus helping to consolidate the new socio-economic system in the countryside and draw all the able-bodied forces of the countryside into socially useful work.

As for the kulaks who were resettled in the North, the Far East and Siberia, they were also given employment, reformed and given an opportunity to take part in socialist economic activities. One of the largest resettlement areas in the North, Narym, is a good illustration of this. By the beginning of 1932, 196,000 new settlers had arrived there. They were kulaks exiled from the central regions of the country.

The development of this rich area started, in fact, during the first five-year period, after a large portion of the new settlers arrived. In May 1932, as Narym was being settled, the West Siberian Territorial Party Committee turned to the Central Committee, asking its permission to set up a northern region in the territory of Narym. Its memorandum stated: "The sharp increase in the population has radically changed the economic picture of the territory and made it crucial to develop, as fast as possible, the wealth of Siberia—fish, furs, timber, to expand agriculture, and so on."¹

In 1932 the Narym Area was established in the West Siberian Territory. Its economic and cultural development advanced rapidly. In the very first year of its existence, 2,300,000 cubic metres of timber and 5,000 tons of fish were obtained in the area. Sixteen million rubles worth of hand-made goods were produced. Thanks to immense material assistance from the state, dwelling-houses and industrial premises were built, plots of land allotted, implements and tools bought. Nearly all the settlers were housed and provided with jobs. The state allocated 5,416,000 rubles towards housing construction, timber production and delivery.

Does this not spotlight the humanity of the Soviet state? Indeed, would it have been possible, without generous government and public aid, to build houses, develop agriculture, acquire

¹ *Novosibirsky partiiny arkhiv* (Novosibirsk Party Archive), f. 3, op. 2, d. 379, l. 75.

animals and launch crafts, hunting and fishing? But this was not all. At the same time the state built establishments providing cultural and everyday services, such as schools, hospitals, first-aid centres, clubs and libraries. In 1932 the state allocated six million rubles for education and health care. It made it possible to set up an extensive network of cultural centres in the district. Suffice it to say that in the very first year all children of school age were able to go to school. Children of needy parents were provided with clothing and at many schools hot lunches were served.

The Party and Komsomol organisations, together with the education authorities, did much to staff schools in Narym with enough teachers. Teacher training courses were opened for settlers in the area. The West Siberian Komsomol Committee sent teachers from among its members to teach at Narym schools. The RSFSR People's Commissariat for Education, together with the Komsomol Central Committee, sent a large group of freshly qualified teachers to Narym from colleges in central cities. Local volunteer workers taught illiterate and semi-literate settlers to read and write.

The development of agriculture was particularly successful. The settlers were given more than 2 million hectares in the fertile valleys of tributaries of the Ob. A special commission, sent by the West Siberian Party and Executive committees to inquire into conditions in the newly settled areas, found that the "climate in these areas is suitable for agriculture, and for crop farming in particular," and it recommended the establishment of state farms in the region.¹

Naturally, it was only possible to develop such vast tracts of land with the help of the government, and that help was given. In 1932 alone, 12,764,000 rubles were granted to the settlers to develop agriculture. It is well worth noting that the amount of aid given to the former kulaks who were resettled far exceeded the value of their confiscated property.

Agronomists, livestock specialists, veterinary surgeons and other experts were sent to Narym to organise agricultural production. Steps were taken to introduce farm machinery, tools, draught animals, dairy cattle and cattle for slaughter. Early in 1932 5,000 draught-horses, and during the year 4,000 cows and heifers,

¹ See: *Iz istorii partiinykh i sovetskikh organizatsii Sibiri* (From the History of Party and Soviet Organisations in Siberia), Novosibirsk, 1962, pp. 154-55 (in Russian).

and about 1,500 sows arrived. Over 1,500 different kinds of farm tools and machines including seeders, reapers, threshers, hay mowers, etc. were also supplied. As early as 1933, more than 50 per cent of the area sown to grain crops was harvested by machines. In subsequent years tractors and combines were also delivered to these districts.

With the increasing material and technical facilities, farming became firmly established in Narym. Over four years, the area sown to crops increased almost 50 times over. Yields also became higher as the following table shows (in centners per hectare):

Year	Winter rye	Wheat	Barley	Oats	Flax	Potatoes
1931	4.3	4.8	3.7	4.2	1.2	45
1932	9.4	6.5	3.8	6.0	3.1	71
1933	11.1	10.9	8.0	11.4	3.5	101

These figures were not very different from those in the old farming districts of Siberia. Summing up the results of the 1933 agricultural year, the West Siberian Party Committee bureau noted that the success achieved in agriculture among the settlers made it possible to satisfy their demand for foodstuffs with the produce they had obtained themselves, which spelled a great change in the development of the North. This once sparsely populated and remote area could now provide enough bread and fodder grain to satisfy local demand.

Livestock breeding also made good progress. In four years the number of cattle owned by the settlers increased 6.6 times over, the number of pigs 3.6 times over, and sheep, 2.2 times over. It is true that at this time only 50 per cent of the settlers had cattle, but towards the end of the 1930s every family owned a cow. Taking into account the abundance of fodder in the area, the West Siberian Party Committee worked out measures for developing socialised livestock breeding by setting up farms, fattening stations, etc.

All these figures demonstrate the colossal constructive work carried out by the Party and the public organisations, work aimed at tapping the wealth of the North. At the same time they indicate that the efforts made to re-educate the exploiters through work had paid off. But introducing the resettled kulaks to socially useful labour was only the first step on the road to a new life. The second step was taken in attempts to involve them

in the building of large-scale collective farming and to make them take the road to socialism.

Collectivisation began in the Narym Area in 1932. By the spring of the following year, more than 50 per cent of the homesteads had joined into co-operatives and associations for joint tilling of land, which had twice as much land as the individual peasants. The following figures describe the co-operative movement in the area.

Date	Co-operatives	Per cent of collectivisation
Feb. 1, 1932	78	5.5
April 1, 1932	146	13.3
Dec. 1, 1932	no figures	39.0
July 1, 1933	386	59.6

Farm co-operatives in the area were particularly large as each settlement contained 300-500 homesteads. It is true that the co-operatives here were subject to special principles and norms of life different from those stipulated in the Collective-Farm Rules. The former kulaks were not allowed to take part in electing Soviet economic bodies and the co-operatives were headed by people authorised by Soviet bodies. But this was only temporary.

Towards the end of the second five-year period, collectivisation was completed in Narym, just as it was everywhere else in the country. The victory of the collective-farm system inaugurated a new stage in the political and economic development of the area. The former exploiters had become active collective farmers. This was a great victory for the Party's Leninist class policy.

A new Soviet Constitution, which recorded the triumph of socialism in the Soviet Union, granted former kulaks full rights as citizens of the Soviet Union. They could elect and be elected to all Soviet bodies. In evaluating this historical fact, M. I. Kalinin wrote in his article "On the Draft Constitution of the USSR": "By granting franchise to our enemies—priests, former kulaks, former top officials ... we are allowing them to take part in public life and at the same time this makes them open to stronger influence by the masses."¹

¹ M. I. Kalinin, *Voprosy sovetskogo stroitelstva. Statji i rechi (1919-1946)* (Problems of Soviet Development. Articles and Speeches (1919-1946)), Moscow, 1958, p. 584 (in Russian).

All this was of particular significance to the younger generation. The new Constitution opened up wide prospects to them. The children of former exploiters were granted equal rights to enter educational establishments and were admitted to the Young Pioneer organisation and Komsomol like everybody else. "Children of parents deprived of political rights," Kalinin said, "who are growing up and are reared in Soviet conditions, are irresistibly infected with the sentiments pervading our political, economic and social life."¹

The triumph of socialism in the Soviet Union ushered in a new period in the development of agriculture in districts settled by former kulaks. All collective farms in these areas were reorganised into ordinary collective farms subject to the Collective-Farm Rules. They were run on democratic principles, none of the rights of these former kulaks being restricted. They were elected to all the bodies of collective-farm management, becoming board members, members of auditing committees, and even collective-farm chairmen. Thus ended the historic period of far-reaching socio-economic changes during which not only the toiling peasantry, but also the kulaks, once the most numerous bourgeois class, embraced the new, social mode of life.

During the second five-year period socialist agriculture took yet another step towards further consolidating the collective-farm system. Collectivisation reached 93 per cent in 1937, and the collective farms accounted for 99.1 per cent of the total area under crops. The number of MTS more than doubled, increasing from 2,446 in 1932 to 5,818. The capacity of the MTS tractor fleet was six times bigger than it had been in 1932, amounting to 6,679,200 hp. The number of combines (in terms of 15-foot combines) increased 50 times, amounting to 111,500 in 1937. The so-called manufactory period, which almost 50 per cent of the collective farms went through during the first five-year period, was over. Almost all the collective farms were served by MTS. The volume of tractor operations increased almost 10 times over during the second five-year period.

The Party's decision to carry wheat-farming further north and to found new large grain producing areas in the non-black earth consumer belt was being successfully carried out. Whereas in 1913 the area under wheat in what was known as the consumer

¹ *ibid.*

belt was merely 321,300 hectares, and in 1928, 344,900 hectares, in 1937 it reached 2,730,000 hectares, thanks to the successful efforts of the collective farms.

In 1937, the weather was very good in most areas of the Soviet Union. Thousands of collective farms brought in harvests such as Russian agriculture had never seen before. All this had a favourable effect on the life of the collective-farm peasantry. The state received 2,000 million poods of marketable grain, 1,800 million poods of it procured and 200 million, purchased.

It must be noted that although the amount of marketable grain was bigger than it had been in 1913, and was especially bigger than it had been in 1932, the grain problem was still one of the most acute in the development of socialist agriculture. Of course, this level of grain production would not be able to meet the people's growing requirements of the future. Therefore the Party continued to exert every effort to deal with this problem.

As for livestock farming, it improved quite considerably in the second five-year period, as compared with the first. There were 105.4 per cent of the horses; 164.6 per cent of the cattle, 204.2 per cent of the sheep and goats, and 252.9 per cent of the pigs. Both the herd in common ownership and the number of animals owned privately by the collective farmers increased. The number of stock farms (on collective farms) increased from 63,600 in 1932 to 406,300 in 1938 or more than 6 times over. More than 92 per cent of the collective farms had livestock farms at this time.

A further 8 million heifers, not to mention other livestock, were turned over to the collective farmers by the collective and state farms in 1933-1939 according to the policy of every farmer owning a cow. Accordingly the share of both socialised cattle and the cattle in the collective farmers' personal ownership increased.

Thus, in the field of agriculture, the second five-year period was marked by the socialist reorganisation of the Soviet countryside being completed and by the new socio-economic system finally being established within it, all of which was a great historic victory of the Party and people.

CHAPTER XVII
**THE TRIUMPH OF SOCIALISM IN THE COUNTRYSIDE,
VIEWED AS THE TRIUMPH
OF LENIN'S CO-OPERATIVE PLAN**

**1. THE COLLECTIVE-FARM SYSTEM
AND ITS INHERENT SOCIALIST FEATURES**

Once the collective-farm system was firmly established in the Soviet countryside, it provided a solid socialist foundation for the development of new social relationships between people in production, everyday life, and in cultural and intellectual life as a whole. The sweeping changes undergone by the economic and social life of the Soviet peasantry during the socialist reorganisation of agriculture graphically demonstrate the great invigorating force of Marxist-Leninist ideas.

In order to form a clear idea of the full significance of these changes, one must compare the basic features characterising the development of a socio-economic system based on a small commodity economy, and those of the collective-farm system based on large-scale collective farming.

Firstly, the individual peasant farms are a type of small commodity production which rests on private ownership of the means of production. Essentially, the individual peasant economy is of the same type as the capitalist economy and is wholly subject to the operation of spontaneous economic laws. In view of this, the small peasant economy inevitably breeds exploitation and exploiters, impoverishment of some and enrichment of others. It is, in Lenin's phrase, the culture medium in which the development of capitalism in agriculture takes place.

Collective farming is entirely different. An agricultural co-operative is a kind of large-scale planned socialist production. It develops on the basis of national and co-operative and collective-farm ownership of the means of production, and, as a socialist form of production, is of the same type as a socialist industrial enterprise, without being identical to it. A collective farm erases

the old social and property divisions that used to split the peasants, giving them an equal right to improve their well-being, and gradually turning the co-operative peasantry into workers in a classless communist society.

Secondly, the small peasant farms, by dint of the private-ownership mentality of their owners and the fact that they are scattered, are unable to apply modern machines and advanced agricultural methods. Backward facilities, preponderantly primitive cultivation by hand or with the help of a horse, agricultural lands overlapping each other, long distances, fragmented fields and their utter dependence on the elements all doomed small peasant farming to an ever-increasing lag and a miserable existence. This kind of farming produces the least marketable surplus and is closest to a subsistence economy. Small peasant farming is not always capable even of simple re-production which barely replaces the labour and material expenditure, and makes it impossible for the farmer to reproduce the assets necessary to make his farm more efficient.

The material and technical basis of a big collective farm is entirely different. A collective farm has unlimited objective opportunities to grow. It develops on a basis of expanded re-production which enables it to increasingly accumulate the funds to extend and improve farm production. Such a farm is characterised by big marketable surpluses and high productivity.

Thirdly, small peasant farming is essentially individualistic and unorganised. It is marked by disunity, insularity and an almost total absence of social relationships in production. This is all reflected in the way the peasant views life in society. "Man is a wolf to man", "I don't care what happens to anyone so long as I am all right myself"—such used to be the philosophy of the peasant. This philosophy was bred by small peasant production itself. Lenin repeatedly pointed out that individual peasant farming was responsible for the farmers' lack of culture, ignorance and poverty. Disunity, extreme individualism and primitive tools made the peasant helpless to bring new land under cultivation—he could not do it single-handed. So he had to go on using depleted soil and complaining of how little of it he had.

Large-scale collective farming, on the other hand, makes it possible to use the land efficiently, as the main source of national wealth. Even the first collective farms which had little machinery and simply combined their members' tools and efforts, showed how much they could do to develop fallow land and raise the productivity of labour by doing so. Co-operative labour put an end

to the peasants' inability to do anything about cultivating new land and to their complaints about having little of it.

Consequently, the very nature of collective farming breeds co-operation in production, mutual assistance, and close association between peasants. They develop a new attitude to work, establish new social relationships, learn to maintain a conscious labour discipline, become good comrades, and are fired with a desire to overcome all the obstacles in their way. The old views on social life give way to new ones—"He who does not work, does not eat", "All for one and one for all", "All for society and society for all". The very nature of the collective farming moulds a new type of man, inculcating socialist standards and principles of community life into him and gradually ridding him of the hangovers and traditions of private ownership.

Fourthly, small peasant farming, which cannot be organised in a planned fashion, develops spontaneously and anarchically, there is no subjecting it to accounting and control. This does not mean, of course, that peasant farms developed independently of the guiding and directing influence exerted by the Soviet state and the Communist Party. On the contrary, the Soviet peasantry and Soviet agriculture set out on the road to socialist development precisely because they were tirelessly directed to that road by the Soviet state and the Party. The point is that the scattered state of agriculture did not permit its inclusion in the overall system of a planned economy.

It is altogether different under the collective-farm system. One of its principal features is its planned character. Now that agriculture was a part of the socialist national economy, and was put on a new, socialist basis, planning became important and even decisive in developing the collective farms. With the triumph of the collective-farm system the guiding influence of the state on the collective farms immensely increased, and the Communist Party was able to extend its organisational and educative role among the peasants and successfully draw them into carrying out government plans.

Fifthly, small peasant farming inevitably breeds poverty, ruin and proletarianisation, and these are its constant fellows. The economic instability and lack of prospects of such farming always threatened the peasant with bankruptcy and destruction. On the one hand, the small producer could do nothing against the spontaneous laws of small commodity production. On the other, he was always threatened with falling into the clutches of the kulaks. All this deprived the small producer of any prospect of financial

or cultural betterment. Meanwhile a small handful of parasitic kulaks grew rich through the ruthless exploitation of the village poor.

The victorious collective-farm system did not just abolish this glaring social and economic inequality but ruled out the very possibility of differentiating the peasants into exploiters and exploited, kulaks and the poor. It was only by joining collective farms that the poor and middle peasants could become prosperous. Once they had received land, tractors, machines and organisational and financial aid from the state, they became fully in control of publicly-owned production. Collective farms put an end to the insecurity of the peasants. They provide, by their very nature, an inexhaustible source from which the living standards and culture of the co-operative peasants can develop.

Sixthly, the collective-farm system created a new basis for economic links and relations between town and country. It is, of course, one of the most acute contradictions of capitalism that under it the towns become isolated and move away from the villages. There is a widening gulf between them which separates the urban population and its economy from the rural population and its economy. The towns appear as the exploiters and oppressors of the countryside. The peasants in turn treat the towns with suspicion, considering them their enslavers. Hence the difficulties involved in forming an alliance between the working class and the toiling peasantry.

The form of ownership of the implements and means of production is all-important. Whereas private ownership separates town from country, broadening the difference between them, public ownership of the means of production brings them together, eroding the differences between them. It created social and economic conditions under which the countryside, reorganised on socialist lines, can confidently follow the socialist towns. The collective farmers saw the towns as a strong support from which they could get increasing numbers of machines, tractors, and trained personnel.

The towns brought advanced socialist culture, science and education to the countryside. With their help, the collective-farm peasantry adopted industrial methods of work involving a system of complex machines and tools. Extensive mechanisation which elevated the farms' economic activities to a higher stage, required more skilled management and higher standards of culture and specialist knowledge.

The collective-farm system radically altered the conditions in which agriculture was developing, and the nature of this develop-

ment. Even at this stage, this major branch of the economy revealed new tendencies attesting to the superiority of the socialist system of farming. It was beyond doubt that these embryonic tendencies would eventually develop into strong factors determining the absolute superiority of socialist agriculture over its capitalist counterpart.

First of all, Soviet agriculture had turned, even at this stage, into the most large-scale in the world, with the highest concentration of the implements and means of production. This was the most characteristic and the most distinctive feature of socialist agriculture. One Soviet farm was now on average dozens of times larger than those in the capitalist countries. In 1937, for instance, a state farm had an average of 3,058 hectares under crops, and a collective farm, 481.5 hectares, while in the USA a farm averaged 22.8 hectares, in Germany, 6.8 hectares, and in pre-revolutionary Russia, 7.8 hectares. The average number of tractors per state farm was 48.8, per collective farm, 24.5, while in the USA the average number of tractors per farm was 1.7, and in Germany it was 0.01. It is safe to say that no capitalist country had farms of such size or with so much machinery.

Secondly, Soviet socialist agriculture was becoming the most mechanised in the world. The number of tractors in agriculture increased from 210,900 in 1933 to 483,500 in 1938, and the combine fleet grew even faster—from 25,400 in 1933 to 153,500 in 1938. The United States had a combine fleet of 75,000, France had 100 and Britain some 50-60. The Soviet Union had more combines than any other country in the world even at this time. If we recall that pre-revolutionary Russia had 10 million wooden ploughs, 18 million wooden harrows, 4 million horse-drawn ploughs, and 99.3 per cent of the total area was cultivated with the help of draught animals, it is easy to see what great strides were made by Soviet agriculture once it had been reorganised on the basis of the collective-farm system. In terms of the power made available to it, socialist agriculture cannot even be compared to that of pre-revolutionary Russia.

Thirdly, Soviet socialist agriculture was diversifying, developing towards a further upsurge in the production of grain, fruit and vegetables, and industrial and forage crops. Ending the lop-sided development of farming was a major achievement of socialist agriculture. Thus, if the area under grain crops amounted in 1938 to 108.5 per cent of that of 1913, the corresponding figures for industrial crops, vegetables and melons, root crops and grass were respectively 244.4, 247.4 and 671.4 per cent. The planning

of farm operations made for a balanced development in the different branches and facilitated the specialisation of individual areas according to their climate, soil and other natural features.

Fourthly, socialist agriculture was characterised by a high marketable surplus. Whereas the marketable grain surplus amounted to 26 per cent of the gross output in 1913 and to 13 per cent in 1928, in 1938 it reached a sum as high as 40 per cent. In other words, the proportion of marketable surplus greatly exceeded its pre-revolutionary level. Soviet agriculture became one of the first in the world in that respect.

Fifthly, it was indisputably an advantage for socialist agriculture that it was becoming the most skilled, and that it was developing on a basis of unity of science and advanced experience of the collective farmers themselves. And science, when it lights up the road to practice, and when it is the property of the masses, becomes a powerful material force. Soviet agriculture boasted, even at this time, a vast number of trained specialists who, together with the excellent innovators in collective-farm production, were tirelessly paving the way towards a growth in the output of farm produce.

Sixthly, Soviet agriculture became the most advanced in the world in its degree of social organisation and in the extent to which its publicly-owned product was distributed. Developing on a basis of free work and conscious discipline, the socialist system of agriculture objectively opened up unlimited opportunities for the collective farmers' material, cultural and intellectual requirements to grow. With the collective-farm system, the Communist Party and Soviet power effected a more intelligent distribution of farm crops over the territory of the Soviet Union, set up a large grain growing area in the consumer belt, and provided for the spread of wheat and other marketable crops into the northern districts of the country. The correct distribution of the productive forces of agriculture made it possible to raise the standards of agriculture, ensure a rational use of the country's natural resources, end the old division of districts into producer and consumer, industrial and agrarian, and wipe out the problem of so-called rural surplus population.

All this showed that socialist agriculture had embarked on an intensive development and had made confident initial steps in this direction. The distinctive features of this sweeping, economically effective process, characterising a qualitatively new stage in the development of Soviet agriculture, were: first, a high degree of mechanisation and the presence of skilled machine operators and

qualified agronomists; second, capital investments in farming and animal husbandry, that grew larger each year; third, an overall increase in labour productivity, especially among the innovators and advanced collective farmers; fourth, better structuring of crop areas and a more rational distribution of crops to which the many-field rotation system was applied; fifth, higher standards of farm management and better management techniques, and sixth, a gradual increase in the output of farm produce.

Thus, Soviet socialist agriculture commanded by this time not only large material and technical resources, but also a force of millions of Soviet men and women, equipped with science and culture, ardently devoted to their country, and capable of making nature serve socialist society. Foreseeing the brilliant prospects that lay in store for the collective-farm system, the great Russian scientist Ivan Michurin wrote: "I can see that the collective farms, through which the Communist Party is launching a great movement to regenerate the land will make it possible for toiling mankind to gain real control over the forces of nature."¹

The triumph of the collective farms in the Soviet countryside is a brilliant practical demonstration of the truth of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine on the superiority of large-scale collective farming over both large-scale capitalist and small individual farming. That millions of peasants should switch to socialist development is an inexorable historical necessity and is economically necessary for the development of society's productive forces.

2. THE ELIMINATION OF ESSENTIAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE WORKERS AND THE PEASANTRY— A MAJOR ACHIEVEMENT OF SOCIALISM

The starting-point of Marxism-Leninism is its doctrine on the hegemony of the proletariat in the struggle for power, on the dictatorship of the proletariat in the struggle for socialism. The essential condition under which the proletariat can win and consolidate a revolutionary government and socialism, and under which socialism and communism can be built, is an alliance between

¹ Ivan Michurin, *Works*, Vol. 1, Moscow, Leningrad, 1939, p. 477 (in Russian).

the working class and the toiling peasants led by the working class and its vanguard, the Communist Party.

Only relying on this alliance, organising and rallying the mass of the peasantry round itself, can the working class carry out its world-historic mission of liberating not just itself, but also the working peasants and all mankind from capitalist oppression. Today this scientific Marxist proposition is no abstract theoretical doctrine, but a reality confirmed by the history of the international working-class movement, by the vast revolutionary practice the Soviet Union has had, and by the great social changes in other socialist countries.

The working class of Russia fully deserves its place in the tremendously rich arsenal of theory and practice that the international working-class movement commands. It was the first to break the fetters of capitalist and landlord slavery and proclaim a new era to oppressed mankind, one of freedom, peace and socialism. The working class of Russia had the great honour of taking a place in the front ranks of the international working-class movement and of being the first to carry out its liberating mission. Only dishonest politicians styling themselves "Marxists" can overlook or deliberately skip over this great historic feat of the heroic Russian working class.

The Russian proletariat entered the historical arena of revolutionary struggle later than that of the West European countries. That, however, did not hinder it from moving to the forefront of the international working-class movement. Moreover, this fact was undoubtedly an asset for it allowed the working class of Russia and its Communist Party to learn from the experience of the international working-class movement and, in the shortest possible time, and with a minimum of sacrifices and mistakes, to bring about three revolutions which ultimately ended in the victory of the proletariat.

This historic victory was helped above all by the fact that the Russian working class was able, from the very start of its revolutionary struggle, to win over to its side the mass of the toiling peasantry and thus ensure its victory in the struggle for power and socialism. Russia was the first country in the history of the international working-class movement where the working class was the hegemon of the revolution, the leader of the peasantry, and where the Marxist-Leninist idea of an alliance between the working class and the peasantry was first put into practice.

The proletariat, as the most advanced revolutionary class, won power and established its dictatorship first of all in order to direct this powerful weapon at mercilessly suppressing the exploiting classes and at carrying the revolution through to the complete and final victory of socialism. To solve this great historic task, the working class had to carry out immense organisational, economic, cultural and educational work under the guidance of the Communist Party in order to build up, and still further consolidate the new social system, rally the bulk of the peasantry round itself and draw the peasants into the struggle for building socialism.

Lenin ridiculed and disproved the bourgeois reformists who claimed that socialism could not be built in a backward agrarian country like Russia with its preponderantly uncultured peasant population. These erroneous assertions were disproved by an example of revolutionary tactics of the Bolshevik Party which had begun to solve the task of building socialism with the conquest of political power and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat.

The Communist Party must take credit for defining the scientific laws of the class struggle in the countryside, basing them on Lenin's analysis of the development of society, for working out a correct policy for the relations between the working class and each section of the peasantry, and applying it with excellent consistency at all stages of the development of the revolution. In addition to this, the Party was well aware of the complexity and subtlety of the relations between these two classes, as it was "an alliance between economically, politically, socially, and spiritually different classes".¹

Naturally therefore, neither the forms nor the content of the alliance between the workers and peasants could be immutable or immovable. At different stages in the struggle for power, in consolidating it and building socialism, there occurred serious changes in the position of and relationships between the workers and peasants, changes which required that the proletariat should in turn alter the way it led the peasantry. This was expressed in

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Foreword to the Published Speech 'Deception of the People with Slogans of Freedom and Equality'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 381.

the three well-known consecutive slogans on the agrarian question, which reflected the Party's policy and tactics in the attitude of the working class to the peasantry. In Russia, the alliance between the workers and peasants was the most vital issue at every stage of the revolution.

This was why Lenin and the Communist Party attached exceptional significance to it. The most difficult task after the proletariat had seized power was the socialist reorganisation of agriculture and the introduction of the toiling peasants into the building of socialism. As it was a complex task, the Party had to go about it in a roundabout way and constantly alter the way it conducted economic development and mass-scale organisational work in the countryside. The proletariat sometimes made concessions to the middle peasants in terms of the choice of land-use forms and in other matters of economic policy. But this was all done to build up the Soviet state, consolidate the alliance between the working class and the mass of working peasants, lay the economic foundations of socialism and build a socialist society.

The socialist system in the countryside did not merely reveal new objective laws governing the development of agriculture but eventually made it possible to abolish the essential differences between the working class and the class of peasants. This meant that the Soviet Union had entered the stage of completing the building of socialist society. Lenin's article "A Great Beginning", which contains a wealth of ideas directly bearing on the socialist stage of social development, makes it possible to better understand this historical process.

Lenin wrote: "And what does the 'abolition of classes' mean? All those who call themselves socialists recognise this as the ultimate goal of socialism, but by no means all give thought to its significance. Classes are large groups of people differing from each other by the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production, by their relation (in most cases fixed and formulated in law) to the means of production, by their role in the social organisation of labour, and, consequently, by the dimensions of share of social wealth of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it."¹

If one looks at the situation of the working class and the peasantry from the standpoint of Lenin's definition of classes, one

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Great Beginning", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 421.

can see that with the triumph of socialism in the Soviet Union essential distinctions between these classes disappeared. These classes became entirely different and so did the very content of the alliance between them. The most outstanding result of what they have undergone is that the collective-farm peasantry has become equal to the working class in its social position and has become a homogeneous socialist class.

First of all, as the socialist economic system developed and became stronger, the essential difference between the workers and peasants *in the place they occupy in a historically determined system of social production* was removed. It has been said that the working class was connected, before the revolution as well, with large-scale social production, highly concentrated and centralised even at that time. In this production, the working class of Russia took shape as the advanced revolutionary class, taking its place at the head of the emancipation movement of all the toilers in the country. After the October Revolution, the Soviet workers were not just emancipated participants in this large-scale social production, but had full power over it.

However the peasants, unlike the workers, continued even under Soviet power within the framework of the old system of small commodity production, as small property owners and private entrepreneurs. Only after the triumph of the collective farms did the Soviet peasants begin to occupy an equal place with the workers in the system of social production, beginning, like the workers, to work at socialist enterprises within the framework of the socialist organisation of social production. Of course the differences between these classes still remained, but they were secondary rather than essential ones.

On the basis of the socialist reorganisation of agriculture, the second essential difference between the workers and peasants—*by their relation to the means of production*—was also eliminated. Marxism-Leninism has proved that private ownership of the means of production is what underlies the division of society into classes, the exploitation of man by man and the class struggle. As private ownership of the means of production is abolished, not only is the ground knocked from under the feet of the exploiting classes but a radical change occurs in the situation of the toiling classes of workers and peasants. Frederick Engels wrote in his *Anti-Dühring*: “*The proletariat seizes political power and turns the means of production in the first instance into state property. ...But*

in doing this, it abolishes itself as proletariat..."¹

In the USSR, the working class has long ceased to be the proletariat in the old sense; it has turned into the ruling class. Under its guidance, the situation of the peasantry has also changed fundamentally. On the basis of industrialisation and collectivisation, it has turned from a class of small property owners into a new, socialist class, resting on public means of production. What these classes have in common is that there is no private ownership of the implements and means of production which, before collectivisation, was the main thing distinguishing the workers and peasants as two socially dissimilar classes. Now both workers and peasants work using commonly-owned, socialist implements and means of production. Naturally, some differences between these classes still exist, but there are no fundamental differences between them any more.

Over the years of building socialism, yet a third essential difference between workers and peasants was removed – *the difference by their role in the social organisation of labour*. The most remarkable achievement is that on the basis of the socialist economic system there occurred both in the working class and especially among the peasants a cardinal change in their attitude to work. They now know full well that they are not working for the capitalists and landlords but for themselves, for their own socialist state which safeguards the interests of its people. It would be no exaggeration to say that today such new, truly socialist, forms of the social organisation of labour as the socialist emulation and the shock-workers', inventors' and innovators' movements have become a nationwide phenomenon spreading on a broad scale.

This, in a nutshell, is the secret of the colossal achievements that the Soviet state boasts in economic and cultural development on every front. But all the same one still cannot talk of complete similarity between these classes. Inasmuch as the working class is linked with a more advanced mode of production, giving rise to the most progressive forms of social labour organisation, its role in the development of new relations of production moves forward to the foremost positions in society. Thus with regard to this the same thing has also happened – the fundamental difference has disappeared but secondary differences still remain.

Finally, the last essential difference between the workers and peasants – *the difference by the dimensions of share of social wealth*

¹ Frederick Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, p. 332.

of which they dispose and the mode of acquiring it—has also disappeared. From the very beginning of Soviet power the workers of course received remuneration from a public, socialist fund, from a public, socialist income, derived from nationalised industry and trade. And the workers receive this remuneration, as they have always received it under Soviet power, on a socialist principle, i.e., according to the amount and quality of their work.

It was entirely different with the peasants before collectivisation, when they were outside the social economic system. As a small property owner, a peasant could rely on nothing but his individual farm, from which he derived his share of income. When industry and agriculture were integrated into a single socialist national economy, the peasants, just as the workers, began to receive their share of income from the public, socialist fund, from public, socialist income. The point is that the peasants were in the same position as the workers, receiving an equal right to their share of income from the socialist economy. Although some secondary differences between them still remain, the fundamental difference has disappeared.

In analysing the four characteristics which Lenin enumerates in his definition of classes, we can say that in the USSR decisive steps were taken to abolish classes and turn the Soviet people into the workers of a socialist society. This means that socialism, the first phase of communism, had on the whole been built in the Soviet Union.

The next task of the Party was to continue to improve the socialist mode of production, develop the new relations of production and to gradually and steadily transfer them to communist lines. The Party proceeded from the premise that this far-reaching and complex process, that of transferring to the most perfect, communist, social relations, would comprise a whole historical epoch during which complex problems were to be solved, such as eliminating the difference between the two forms of public property and combining them into the undivided communist property of the whole people, and eliminating all the differences between the working class and the peasantry. This is of course a long span of historical development, and nobody had any right to speed up this process.

Socialism undoubtedly abolished the essential differences between the working class and the peasantry. But even if there were no longer any essential differences between the working class and the peasantry, this did not in any way mean that all the dif-

ferences between them had disappeared and that there was no need to further strengthen the alliance between the working class and the peasantry. The differences that remained, although inessential, were still there. Therefore it would have been a grave mistake to ignore them or gloss over them, for, in the last analysis, the final abolition of these differences and contradictions is crucially dependent on the constructive efforts of the working class and the peasantry, on correct guidance being given to these classes by the Communist Party, and on a correct evaluation of the role of the socialist state.

Speaking of the remaining class differences between the workers and peasants, one must bear in mind that the source of these differences lies in the economic basis of Soviet society. The point is that the Soviet social system rests on two forms of socialist property—state property (belonging to all the people), and collective-farm and co-operative property. From this fundamental characteristic follow all other characteristics so far differentiating the working class from the collective-farm peasantry. This is a very important thing, not to be left out when analysing the economic development of Soviet society. But it goes without saying that it is not what makes these two friendly classes different but what unites them in their common struggle to build a communist society that is important. This unifying force is to be found not merely in the advanced socio-economic system, but also in the scientific Marxist-Leninist world outlook with which both the Party and the people are equipped.

The presence of two forms of socialist property is not something artificial or just thought up by people. These forms emerged historically, as a result of the development of the socialist revolution and the common struggle of the working class and peasantry for socialism. Therefore, in guiding socialist construction and further enhancing the alliance between the workers and peasants, the Communist Party proceeds from the presence of these two forms of public property, bearing in mind not only what they have in common, but also the essential differences between them.

State property, with its key position in the economy has, ever since the emergence of the Soviet state, been the leading element in its development. The Soviet country grew, became stronger and flourished on the basis of state property. Factories, plants, mines, transport, land and all that the working class took away from the bourgeoisie immediately after seizing power—all this became national property, the property of the people. And this

property, created by the working class led by its vanguard, the Communist Party, is the guiding force of the Soviet state, it is the property of all the people, sacred and inviolable.

Here the monopoly owner is the state itself, which acts in the interests of all the working people, in the interests of building communism. The Soviet state, which acts on behalf of the working class and all working people, is the full owner of all material values, state-run enterprises and all their assets, current and otherwise. Through its departments the state draws up plans and work programmes for every enterprise which must be fulfilled as the assignments of the people. It is perfectly clear that this property, comprising the main, principal part of the national economy, is the key force, the decisive lever, in the development of the national economy as a whole. Naturally, the working class too, at the head of this property, is and will be the leader of all the working people of the Soviet Union as long as these two forms of public property continue to exist.

Co-operative and collective-farm property is also socialist, public property, though at the same time it is different from state property. The two kinds of property are different, but at the same time they are united by a common characteristic, namely, their public, socialist nature. Co-operative and collective-farm property is not identical with state property and is the less-developed kind of property. This is not just due to economic but to its historical conditions of development. It has been said that state ownership of the means of production is considerably older than co-operative and collective-farm property. Naturally socialist production relations have long emerged and taken root here while the producers themselves have amassed immense production experience over the years at enterprises of a thoroughly socialist type.

Co-operative and collective-farm property emerged much later, becoming predominant in farming during the second five-year period. This is why the production relations at collective farms have not yet reached the level they have at state-run socialist enterprises, and thus the producers at collective farms have not yet accumulated enough production experience in running socialist enterprises.

In addition to this one must bear in mind that in industry there was already an economic base of large-scale production on which new production relations could develop, and in agriculture a small production basis predominated thus making it necessary to set up a large-scale production basis from scratch, by uniting small producers and dispossessing the big capitalist producers. And

only on the basis of newly established socialist production did the new, socialist relations of production begin to develop. Naturally, private-owner, petty bourgeois survivals still hang on here, and to overcome them is one of the major tasks the Communist Party has set itself.

The next distinctive feature is that both the enterprises of a consistently socialist type, and their output, belong to the state, to all the people. This is not so at the collective farms. Developing on a basis of national, state property, the collective farms are at the same time full owners of a range of means of production and their entire output. It is from this that the difference ensues, both in the forms in which labour is organised and in the distribution of the products of social production.

The workers of course received fixed guaranteed wages from the state, while the collective farmers were paid in terms of workday units which depended on the strength and might of each individual collective farm. Besides, every collective farmer, in accordance with the Collective-Farm Rules, has his own individual holding and some livestock to supplement his income. It should also be remembered that both the collective farm and its members sell their surplus in the markets, and thus also derive some income from this. All this, of course, corresponds to the nature and spirit of a peasants' co-operative association and is a stimulus towards building up co-operative and collective-farm property.

Lastly, there is one more distinctive feature to be mentioned, the difference in forms of management. State-run enterprises follow the principle of one-man management while collective farms are managed by boards which are periodically elected and which are accountable for all operations to general meetings, i. e., they are managed collectively.

Historical experience has shown that new production relations at collective farms can develop successfully only with the aid of socialist industry, given the growing leading role of the working class, and only on an expanding material and technical base. This is crucial to the growth of the productive forces and the improvement of production relations at the collective farms, furthering the socialist nature of collective-farm production and making it similar to industrial enterprises.

These effective factors will develop year after year, making it possible in future to deal with such major problems of social development as the elimination of essential differences between town and country, between mental work and physical labour, and of all differences between workers and peasants. In the long run, it

will induce the new qualitative changes in Soviet society necessary to bring it to communism.

It is the great merit of the Communist Party that it was the first in the history of the international working-class movement to creatively develop and practically accomplish the cardinal problem of Marxism-Leninism—the problem of building socialism in one country, a country predominantly populated by peasants and lagging behind economically and most of all industrially. In the course of great socio-economic reforms the important and difficult problems of social development which Lenin put to the Party early under Soviet power, were solved for the first time.

Firstly, the Party solved the complex and difficult problem of finding internal funds for the capital construction of heavy industry, without which industrialisation and collectivisation could not have been carried out. Thanks to the immense efforts of the Party and people, this problem was successfully solved before the end of the twelfth year of the revolution. This was a factor which enabled the Soviet people to build, quickly and on their own account, the material and technical base of socialism, and to turn the Soviet Union from a backward agrarian country into an advanced industrial-collective farm power.

Secondly, on the basis of industrialisation and collectivisation, the plural economic pattern was eliminated. Agriculture, industry and trade were linked into a single, integral, socialist economy and the socialist mode of production became predominant. The historic question, "Who will get the upper hand?" put by Lenin just before the introduction of the New Economic Policy, was answered finally and irrevocably in favour of socialism.

Thirdly, the relation of class forces, in the country underwent a radical change. Right back at the 11th Party Congress, Lenin set the task of carrying out a re-grouping of class forces such as would ensure the complete triumph of the socialist mode of production over all other economic patterns. At the same time, he set the second task—of finding the correct moment for launching a socialist offensive against capitalist elements, above all the kulaks, the last and most numerous exploiting class.

The Party skilfully dealt with both these tasks. As early as the latter half of 1929, the re-grouping of class forces was completed

in favour of an alliance between the workers and peasants and socialist development. This allowed the Party to determine the decisive moment for an all-out offensive, all along the line, and to go over, early in 1930, to a policy of liquidating kulaks as a class through hundred per cent collectivisation. As a result, towards the end of the first five-year economic period the socialist offensive triumphed decisively in economic and cultural development on every front. Especially important were the following results of this offensive: the disintegration of the small commodity peasant economy, the destruction of the last capitalist class—the kulaks—and the triumph of the new socio-economic system in the countryside—the collective-farm system.

Fourthly, on the basis of the victory of the collective-farm system, the position of the toiling peasants radically changed, all its sections—farm labourers, poor peasants and middle peasants—disappearing for good. The whole toiling peasantry, united by the public socialist ownership of the implements and means of production, turned into a new socially homogeneous class and a firm support of Soviet power, while the alliance between the workers and toiling peasants was cemented by an unshakable friendship between these classes. This meant that the third slogan on the peasant question, put forward by Lenin at the Eighth Party Congress, was no longer relevant.

Fifthly, the immense historic significance of the early five-year plans lies not just in the far-reaching socio-economic changes that took place in the Soviet Union, but also in the fact that these plans marked the beginning of the scientific elaboration of principles of socialist planning. Therefore it is safe to say that both the first and the subsequent five-year plans were the greatest creative advancement of Marxist-Leninist science. Today, the Soviet method of national economic planning has been accorded extensive international recognition and has been applied in all the socialist countries. Furthermore, the idea of a five-year plan reached many countries liberated from the colonial yoke. Thus, five-year plans have become a motto calling for industrialisation and for the economic upsurge and national independence of formerly oppressed nations.

Sixth, the entire history of socialist construction in the Soviet Union graphically demonstrates the great ideological strength of the Communist Party, its tireless organisational and guiding role in every area of political, economic, cultural and ideological life. At the helm of the Soviet state, the Party not only led the nationwide struggle for building a new society, but also directed the

great socialist reforms along the Leninist path. Following an unexplored and untrodden path, it managed to overcome many difficulties and obstacles, to rout its ideological opponents and bring the Soviet people to signal achievements. Having put socialism on a solid economic foundation, the Soviet people, led by the Communist Party, built the very edifice of socialism during the second five-year period, recording this magnificent victory in the new Soviet Constitution.

Part Four

THE INSUPERABLE
POWER
OF THE SOCIALIST SYSTEM
AND ITS MAKERS,
THE PEOPLE

CHAPTER XVIII

THE BUILDING OF SOCIALIST SOCIETY IN THE USSR—THE MOST IMPORTANT RESULT OF THE SECOND FIVE-YEAR PLAN

1. THE SOVIET UNION, BIRTH-PLACE OF SOCIALISM

The second decade of Soviet power was coloured by success of world historical importance. Socialism, the dream of the greatest intellects of mankind, had triumphed over one-sixth of the earth's surface, in the first workers' and peasants' state. The Soviet Union, the birth-place of socialism, showed the way to a new world, and the way to this new world was paved by the Great October Socialist Revolution which brought the working masses to an understanding of the concepts of socialism. Back in the first years of Soviet power Lenin had written: "It may now be said, and it would be no exaggeration at all to do so, of course, that nowhere, in no other country, have the working people displayed such keen interest in the question of transforming capitalism into socialism as the working people of our country today. Our people are giving more thought to this than the people of any other country. Is the Party not to give a reply to this question? We must demonstrate scientifically how this communist revolution will progress."¹

The Party honoured Lenin's solemn instruction and did not just give a scientifically based answer to the problem in question, but gave a practical demonstration of the great constructive power of scientific socialism, embodying it in life both materially and in men's minds. For the first time a society appeared on earth without private ownership of the means of production, without exploiters or exploited. The pinnacle of this achievement was the new Soviet Constitution which gave every citizen of the country equal rights to work, education, rest and security in old age. This was a

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Eighth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 188.

declaration of the true equality of Soviet people in all spheres of society. *One only has to think of how the creative powers of the Soviet people have grown, of how their hearts were infused with fresh spirit and cheer. One only has to think of the high ideological level reached by the Leninist Party, of the mighty organisational and ideological power that it commands.*

The success of the second five-year plan led to the transformation of the USSR into a mighty industrial and agricultural power. In production machinery and its rate of industrial growth the USSR has outstripped many European capitalist countries, thus demonstrating the greatness of the socialist country and the advantages of its socio-economic system.

During the period covered by the two five-year plans the working class, in an alliance with the peasantry and led by the Communist Party, built a massive heavy industry—the basis on which the economy of the country would be reconstructed under socialism. The entire industrial output increased by more than 9 times as compared to that of tsarist Russia. These figures demonstrate how powerfully the home industry was developing and are evidence of the fact that Russia's age-old backwardness was now a thing of the past. Through the heroic efforts of all the peoples of the Soviet Union the country was transformed from an agrarian to a first-class industrial land, capable of producing all possible kinds of machines, equipment and products on a huge scale at its own enterprises, without running for help to the capitalist states.

Tsarist Russia held the fifth place in the world, and the fourth place in European industrial production. What did this mean in real terms? In 1913 Russia mined only 3.8 per cent of the coal mined in the USA, 3.2 per cent of that mined in England and 6.6 per cent of that mined in Germany; per head of the population there was 5.4 per cent of the electric power produced in the USA and 20 per cent of that in Germany; and per head of the population there was 9.1 per cent of the cast iron smelted then in the USA, 12.5 per cent of that in Britain and Germany. Referring to this catastrophic backwardness, Lenin wrote: "...Russia still remains an unbelievably, unprecedentedly backward country, poverty-stricken and half-savage, four times worse-off than Britain, five times worse-off than Germany and ten times worse-off than America in terms of modern means of production".¹

Indeed during the two five-year plans the country made a tremen-

¹ V. I. Lenin, "How Can Per Capita Consumption in Russia Be Increased?", *Collected Works*, Vol. 19, 1973, p. 292.

dous leap from backwardness to progress. At the end of the second five-year plan the country came out top in Europe and second in the world in industrial production and was first in the world in a number of branches of industry, in particular in agricultural machinery construction. This clearly indicates that the socialist system of production, free from crisis and exploitation, has great advantages over the capitalist system of production.

On the basis of fast-growing socialist industry, the Communist Party carried out an almost complete technical reconstruction of agriculture, which in the past had been the biggest and most backward branch of the national economy. As a result there was a boom in farming, just as there was right through industry. It is true that this upsurge was expressed not so much in the growth of agricultural production as in the development and consolidation of the collective farm system. Ninety-three per cent of all peasant holdings were combined to form collective farms at this time; the area under crops of these collective farms grew from 75 million hectares in 1933 to 92 million hectares in 1938, while that of the individual peasant farmers dropped during the same period from 15.7 million hectares to 600,000 hectares, and in all made up just 0.6 per cent of the sown area.

As a result, thus, of the second five-year plan being carried out, the socialist reconstruction of industry and agriculture on a modern, new, technical basis was completed; *the main political problem of the second five-year plan had been solved, all the exploiter classes in the country had finally been eliminated, as, for ever, had the possible breeding grounds for the exploitation of man by man and for a division of society into exploiters and exploited.* The socialist economy made up 99.3 per cent of the national revenue, 99.9 per cent of the gross industrial output, 98.7 per cent of the gross agricultural output and 100 per cent of commodity turnover. 94 per cent of the entire population of the country was occupied in the socialist economy. All this goes to show that Lenin's view that it was possible to build socialism in one country had been practically embodied in life.

As a result of the root changes taking place in the economic and socio-political development of the country, the socialist system became the prevailing one in all spheres of the national economy of the USSR. Agriculture and industry were brought together in a single socialist economy, and this economy became a single-structured, uniform, planned economy. Public ownership of the means of production was asserted, as the unshakable foundation of Soviet society. The class structure of Soviet society also changed,

in tune with this change in the country's economy. The table below gives a clear idea of the changes in the social structure of the population of the USSR.

Social groups	1913	1937
	percentage of total	
Workers and office workers	16.7	34.7
Collective-farm workers (together with artisans organised in co-operatives)	—	55.5
Individual peasant farmers and artisans not organised in co-operatives	65.1	5.6
Capitalist elements (landowners, the bourgeoisie, petty bourgeoisie, traders and kulaks)	15.9	—
Others (students, servicemen, pensioners, etc.)	2.3	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0

All this gives us grounds to assert that fundamental changes, both quantitative and qualitative, took place in the social structure of the country. While discussing this one should point out one particular characteristic—the sharp change in the ratio of town and country populations. The figures with regard to this are as follows:

	Entire population	Town population	Country population	Town population	Country population
				percentage of the entire population	
Census taken 17.12.1926	147,027,915	26,314,114	120,713,801	17.9	82.1
Census taken 17.1.1939	170,467,186	55,909,908	114,557,278	32.8	67.2
Population according to the census of 1939 expressed as a percentage of the population as stated in the census of 1926.	115.9	212.5	94.9	—	—

With the elimination of the exploiter classes, socialist society linked the two friendly classes of workers and peasants. Moreover, during the period of socialist construction these classes themselves underwent enormous changes. The common interests and goals uniting all strata of Soviet society and all the peoples of the USSR into one family of working people provided a basis for the moral and political unity of the Soviet people and became a source of life-sustaining Soviet patriotism and firm friendship.

The victory of socialism in the Soviet Union was consolidated in law in the new Constitution of the USSR passed at the Eighth Congress of Soviets in 1936. This historic document summed up the fundamental socio-economic transformations of the previous two decades, begun by the Great October Socialist Revolution. Following Lenin's policy the Communist Party successfully resolved complex problems of socio-economic growth.

Firstly, one of the most difficult problems of socialist construction was solved on a scientific Marxist-Leninist basis, the so-called agrarian and peasants' question. It is to the eternal credit of the Party that it not only produced an original analysis of the major problem of Marxist-Leninist science—that of bringing the small peasant producers into the process of building socialism—but also came up with a practical solution to it. Discarding the anti-Leninist ideas held by the followers of Trotsky and Bukharin, ideas which cast doubt on whether the working class would be able to lead the working peasantry behind them, the Party stood firm and put the Marxist-Leninist theory of the socialist co-operation of the countryside into practice. Never deviating from this theory it worked out a genuinely scientific basis for the economic relationship between the working class and the peasantry, broadening the basis for co-operation and friendship between them.

Bourgeois prejudices maintaining that the peasantry would, as it were, be alien to socialist development, that it would inevitably come into conflict with the working class over the fundamental question of building socialism in the country, were thrown to the winds. The facts upset these reactionary prejudices held by anti-Marxist theoreticians. The Soviet peasantry proved by their deeds that in the alliance with the working class, taking their cue from the workers, they too could advance along the socialist path and become a powerful force in the struggle against capitalism. Everyday life bore out the truth of the Marxist-Leninist position concerning the unity of the fundamental interests of the working class and the working peasantry in their struggle

for political, economic and spiritual freedom from capitalist slavery.

On the basis of the development of socialist industry and the success of the collective farm system, the Party raised the alliance between workers and peasants to unprecedented heights, converting it into an invincible friendship and a manifestation of the fraternal unity of the Soviet people. The 18th Party Congress of 1939 stated that socialist society in the Soviet Union consisted of two fraternal classes, the workers and the peasants. As it says in the Congress resolution, "the victory of socialism in the USSR secured the previously unheard of intrinsic moral and political unity of the people, a moral and political alliance of workers under the leadership of the Communist Party and the Soviet state, capable not just of doing away with the remnants of enemy classes and their alien influence and repulsing all hostile attempts from outside, but also of being the best guarantee of the future development and prosperity of our country, a guarantee of the victory of Communism in the Soviet Union".¹

Secondly, it was on a socialist basis that such a difficult problem as the nationalities question was solved. The Communist Party did not deviate in implementing Lenin's policy on the nationalities, making it possible for the economic and cultural life of the national republics to thrive. This upsurge in the economic, political and cultural life of the peoples of the USSR was grounded on the greatest possible development of socialist industry and on the victory of the collective farm system. The Marxist-Leninist tenet which states that it is possible for a people to advance directly to socialism bypassing the capitalist stage of development was proved true on the example of many of the nationalities of the USSR.

In the period covered by the first five-year plans, industry grew at a higher rate in the national republics than it did in the old industrial regions. Thus, for example, the industrial production of the national republics increased at the following rates in the period between 1928 and 1937:

In the RSFSR	5.7 times over
In the Ukrainian SSR	5.7 " "
In the Byelorussian SSR	8.5 " "
In the Azerbaijanian SSR	4.5 " "
In the Georgian SSR	12.5 " "

¹ CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions..., Vol. 15, p. 336.

In the Armenian SSR	12 times over
In the Turkmen SSR	6.5 " "
In the Uzbek SSR	5.7 " "
In the Tadjik SSR	26 " "
In the Kazakh SSR	12 " "
In the Kirghiz SSR	14 " "

Such rapid growth in the building of industry in the national republics, and the development of a vast army of skilled industrial workers and engineers drawn from the indigenous population made complete nonsense of bourgeois and social-democratic "theories" on the inability of backward, colonial countries to take on new technology and master its tremendous powers. The experience of socialist construction in the multi-national Soviet state was a convincing demonstration for the whole world that nationalities liberated from imperialist and colonial oppression can advance to the technological age and can cope with the most up-to-date machinery.

Also consigned to the dustbin were bourgeois theories according to which it would be impossible to integrate the backward nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples of Asia in large collective farms. Taking their cue from the development in industry, the working people of the national republics successfully rebuilt their backward farming economies. The experience of building collective farms in the USSR has shown that the collectivisation of agriculture in the national republics responded to the vital interests of the working people, eager to overcome age-old backwardness and to improve the productive forces of their republics. By the end of the second five-year plan the collective farm system in all the national republics, regions, and districts, was definitely firmly established.

Thus the socialist way of organising the economy created the greatest possible opportunities for developing the productive forces and raising the material and cultural level of the workers of the national republics. It was on this firm socialist basis that the moral and political unity of Soviet society came into being. The former ethnic dissensions and enmities became a thing of the past, fundamental changes took place among all the peoples of the USSR; a feeling of mutual friendship grew up to replace distrust, and genuine fraternal co-operation between all peoples evolved in the framework of the multi-national Soviet state.

Thirdly, socialist construction helped the Communist Party to solve even the very difficult problem of the cultural revolution. One should point out that the struggle over this was extraordi-

narily bitter. Two opposite anachronistic ideological tendencies appeared immediately after the October Socialist Revolution. On the one hand, echoes of an old ideology, of "Russian originality" and "Slavophile inviolability" were bandied about, and on the other, the ill wind of "left-wing" revolutionism began to be felt, a movement out "to destroy everything", "to raze all to the ground", and then create a "new" feeble culture, devoid of ideas and lacking the best traditions and continuity of generations.

With his extraordinary capacity for advanced social thought, Lenin came out against these extremely dangerous errors in thinking. The leader of the international proletariat saw the need for mastering the valuable legacy of previous generations, for making it the property of the present and future generations. His earnest appeal to the working masses to master the spiritual wealth of culture and knowledge went straight to their hearts. The Party did not for a moment deviate from Lenin's bidding. *It made every possible effort to ensure that the Soviet working man would become the worthy successor to all the best things accumulated by mankind, that he would become not just a grateful recipient but an impassioned bearer, and custodian of the great heritage of the culture of mankind and would work tirelessly to bring it to the people. This is not just to the merit of the Communists but is also the embodiment in life of Marxist-Leninist dialectics, its revolutionary fulfilment.*

The party spared no effort in its pains to quickly eliminate illiteracy and semi-literacy, to bring in universal primary education, and then to get down to bringing in universal secondary education, and to make it a real and inalienable right for every citizen of the USSR to receive higher education. But the greatest achievement of the cultural revolution lay in the way the Party managed to train ideologically-hardened skilled personnel from the working class and working peasantry, capable of resolving major problems of Party and state construction; to arm them with a knowledge of the laws of social development, and with a deep understanding of the substance of the new socialist system.

On the basis of Marxist-Leninist science the Communist Party discovered new laws governing the development of the socialist economy and socialist culture, and inflicted a grave defeat on its enemies, the supporters of "ascetic" socialism who maintained that socialism should somehow be built in a materially and spiritually depleted society, and on the supporters of a consumer-orientated,

vulgar socialism, who asserted the petty-bourgeois principles of egalitarianism, spontaneity and lack of control in the building of the new society.

As the material well-being of the collective farm peasant increased, so also did his cultural level. The USSR state budget expenditure on socio-cultural measures increased from 20,172 million rubles in the first five-year plan to 93,662 million rubles in the second. In 1938 there were 153,209 primary, secondary and seven-year schools in the countryside, attended by 22,087,800 children and employing 715,300 teachers. There were 803,000 students at secondary and higher agricultural schools. Further branches were added to the network of political and educational establishments: there were 61,636 public libraries in the country containing 49.2 million books, 95,274 clubs, 265 state and collective farm theatres, 18,802 film projectors and 742 broadcasting centres.

A clear example of the difference between the skilled workers produced in the pre-revolutionary and in the Soviet countryside is as follows. The village of Turléma in the Chuvash Autonomous Republic produced, during the fifty years before the Revolution, 9 priests, 3 postal workers, 3 telegraphists, 1 doctor's assistant, 1 road-builder and 3 army ensigns. During twenty years of Soviet power the same village produced more than 400 specialists, including 22 teachers, 11 engineers, 3 agronomists, 30 Soviet Army officers, 4 forestry officers, 15 mechanics, 5 land-surveyors, 3 business directors, and 50 electricians.

Having raised the cultural level of the collective farm workers, the Party was able to train a vast army of qualified workers to serve socialist agriculture. In 1938 there were 943,000 tractor-drivers, 247,000 combine operators, 214,000 drivers, 120,000 tractor team-leaders, and 40,000 mechanics. On top of this there were 529,000 people in charge of the field-crop cultivation teams working on the collective farms, and 250,000 people in charge of cattle-breeding farms. There were thus 1.7 million tractor-drivers, combine-operators, drivers and other workers employed in Soviet agriculture along with more than 1.3 million organisers and directors of collective farm production and 300,000 agronomists, livestock and other specialists.¹

The 18th Party Congress summed up the results of the development of the Soviet state, drew generalisations about the

¹ See: *Selskokhozyaistvennaya vystavka* (Exhibition of Agriculture), Moscow, 1939, p. 34 (in Russian).

historic experience of the Communist Party in directing the building of socialism and demonstrated the all-conquering strength of Marxist-Leninist theory. Summarising the progress made in the struggle of the Party for socialism, the Congress ratified the third five-year plan for the development of the national economy of the Soviet Union.

The victory of socialism in the USSR ushered in a new stage in the life of the Soviet people. Far-reaching social and political changes took place in the country on the basis of fundamental economic transformations. Industry and agriculture took on a different look. The working class became the sole master of the wealth they produced, the peasantry became a socialist class, the working intelligentsia grew in size and strength. The nationalities question was resolved on the whole, and to the political and legal equality proclaimed by the October Revolution was now added real economic equality.

The entry of the Soviet Union into a new phase of development made it necessary for the Communist Party to provide an all-round analysis, both of the economic basis, and of its political superstructure, and to define more advanced new tasks for the Soviet people. With the victory of socialism the USSR entered the stage during which the building of socialism would be completed and the gradual transfer to communism would take place. It was at the 18th Congress, as has already been pointed out, that these and other theoretical and political conclusions were drawn. As established by the Congress, the most important result to come out of all the work previously done by the Party was that "the most difficult problem of the socialist revolution has been resolved: the collectivisation of agriculture has been completed, the collective farm system has decisively shown its strength".¹

The third five-year plan of the development of the national economy provided for priority development of heavy industry, emphasising new branches of mechanical engineering, machine-tool construction and particularly the chemical industry. In showing the development prospects for the various branches of the national economy the Congress proceeded from a detailed appraisal of the increasingly strained international situation. Congress directives allocated a significantly larger volume of production to the war industry in the third five-year plan. Plans were made to set up new industrial bases in the Urals, in

¹ *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 5, p. 335.

Western Siberia and in the Soviet Far East. *Such far-sighted planning of the national economy helped the subsequent organisation of reliable rear services during the Great Patriotic War.*

Having achieved a victory of world-wide historical importance in building socialism, the Soviet Union entered a new phase of development, the phase when the building of socialism would be completed and the gradual transition from socialism to communism brought about. This new historical stage in the development of the Soviet state required cultural and economic development on an even greater scale and further growth of the country's economic power. Now that the USSR was the first in the world in its rate of industrial development, and had moved to the forefront in industrial production, it set the task of catching up with and overtaking the major capitalist countries in economic terms in the following 10-15 years, i.e. in the volume of industrial production per head of the population. The prospect of this inspired an undying belief in the victory of communism in the minds of the Soviet people.

Looking back now at the course followed by the Soviet people, one can say that the sacrifices made by the working class and the working peasantry of Russia for the liberation of mankind were not in vain. The heroic feats of the country's workers during the Socialist Revolution, the Civil War, the industrialisation of the country and the collectivisation of agriculture, will live for ever in history. It would be impossible to forget the colossal hardships which the working class and working peasantry had to overcome in the struggle for the socialist transformation of the country. All these efforts repaid a hundred-fold during the Great Patriotic War.

The great victories won in the years of the second five-year plan made the USSR a powerful world power. The workers of the Soviet Union were indebted to the Communist Party for these victories, for it was the Party that had awakened great strength and energy in the Soviet people and had directed them to accomplish their goal, the building of socialism. It was the Communist Party, convinced of the power of the Soviet people, unhesitating in its loyalty to the Leninist standpoint, that got down to work on carrying out the programme set by the third five-year plan.

2. THE PUBLIC ECONOMY OF COLLECTIVE FARMS ON AN UPWARD TREND

Politically speaking, and in economic terms, the collective farms entered the third five-year plan period in a far stronger position. Bearing in mind the higher standard of technical equipment in agriculture and the experience accumulated in running the public economy on a large scale, the Communist Party stipulated more demanding tasks to be carried out in agricultural production. The gross output (at 1926/27 prices) was to increase from 20.1 billion rubles in 1937 to 30.5 billion rubles in 1942, that is, by 52 per cent. During this five-year plan the task was set of reaching an annual grain harvest of 7-8 billion poods with an average crop yield of 13 centners per hectare.

Such prospects fully met the vital requirements of the Soviet people, and they inspired confidence that the Party plan would be carried out. To accomplish such an important task the Party took into account the need for an enormous effort of strength, for an increase in the capital invested in the further mechanisation of agricultural processes, for the production of mineral fertilizers, for an improvement in the land-tenure regulations in the collective farms and for a general increase in the standard of farming. A very pressing practical task was set in this connection—that of bringing about the overall mechanisation of agriculture. All these measures were, objectively speaking, realisable, and could be implemented in full in favourable conditions. At that time the country had at its disposal sufficient strength and the means to put the tasks of the third five-year plan into practice.

Despite the extremely unfavourable international situation, the Party continued to implement its programme for further development in socialist agriculture, considering this one of the most urgent areas of the economy. The measures intended to consolidate the organisation of the economy in the collective farms (see above) are first of all evidence of this. The Party continued the urgent search for new ways and means to stimulate growth in labour productivity in the collective farms and to promote the greatest possible use of the reserves and resources coming to light within the socialist economic system. It is true that everything did not always go smoothly and well, but nevertheless the work in studying and introducing advanced techniques continued unabated. In connection with this one must

mention two important Party and government resolutions which served as a stimulus in raising the labour productivity of the collective farms.

The first resolution concerned a procedural change in the planning of collective farm production, allowing the collective farms themselves to show more initiative and independence in fixing their production plans. In December 1939 the Soviet government passed a decree giving the collective farms themselves the right to set sowing targets for each cereal for 1940 within the framework of the general plan. The totals for this year demonstrated that on the whole the collective farms made correct use of this right, sowing larger amounts of the more valuable high-yield crops at the expense of less productive ones and at the same time creating opportunities for increasing the gross yield of corn.

The second resolution is linked to the use of a more progressive way of paying the collective farm workers for their labour. In December 1940 a decree was passed "Concerning extra payments to be made to collective farm workers for an increase in agricultural crop yields and stock-raising productivity in the Ukraine". During the early months of 1941 similar resolutions were passed in each republic, region and district, local differences being taken into account. The introduction of extra labour payments increased the material incentives of the collective farm workers to exceed agricultural production plans. This method of increasing growth in collective farm production by means of a material stimulus justified itself in practice.

All these measures taken by the Party had very positive significance for consolidation of the economic organisation of the collective farms and for a further upsurge in socialist agriculture. Undoubtedly, had it not been for the war, the collective farms would have been sufficiently ready to develop their potential to its full extent. Evidence of this is the fact that in 1941 an unprecedentedly good crop was cultivated in the state and collective farm fields, but because of the wartime circumstances a large part of this national wealth did not find its way into the collective farm and state granaries.

The first indicator of growth in the public economy of the collective farms is a steady increase in their indivisible funds: from 1937 to 1940 they grew from 12.3 billion to 27.7 billion rubles and amounted to 92.3 per cent of collective farm property, as the proportion of share credits then made up only

7.7 per cent in all.¹ What this meant was that the collective farms were developing on an extended reproduction basis. Suffice it to say that in 1940, 92 per cent of all the collective farms in the country were transferring revenue to the indivisible funds within the limits of the established norms. As a result the average percentage of revenue transferred to replenish the indivisible funds grew from year to year.

The yield of fields in the socialised economy gradually increased, as did the gross yield of grain and the marketable output of cereals. Serious improvements in corn production took place in the grain-producing regions of the North Caucasus, the Volga country and the Ukraine. Although grain growing agriculture as a whole grew at a slow rate, the level of corn production undoubtedly exceeded the level set in 1913 and 1928. The real gross harvest of 1940 amounted to no less than 6 billion poods, while the marketable harvest came to 2.3 billion.²

Of course these figures cannot be considered satisfactory for they still did not correspond to a power base in agriculture, or to the colossal material investments injected into it during the period of the five-year plans. The figures relating to the gross yield of cereals in the pre-war years require more precise definition. This is the job of economists. Of course the earlier occurring figure of 7.2 billion poods evidently seems too high, but the contrasting figure introduced at one time of 4,756 million poods does not correspond to the facts.

Thus if one accepts this figure as valid the question naturally arises as to how it could happen that in 1928, with such a volume of gross corn output, the country had to regulate the supply of bread and introduce rationing? And how exactly, drawing the logical conclusion from the accepted figures, was it possible to end rationing in 1934 with a significant decrease in the gross yield of cereals, bearing in mind that according to several sources the yearly average grain yield only came to 4,400 million poods?

Can one believe in all seriousness that large-scale socialist agriculture, equipped with advanced machinery, produced less

¹ See: *Narodnoye khozyaistvo SSSR v 1938 g.* (The National Economy of the USSR in 1938), Moscow, 1939, p. 459 (in Russian).

² See: *Dostizheniya Sovetskoi vlasti za 40 let v tsifrakh* (The Achievements of 40 Years of Soviet Power in Figures). A Collection of Statistics, Moscow, 1957, p. 154 (in Russian).

grain than the three-field system and wooden ploughs of tsarist Russia? If this is so it means that one must consider the gigantic efforts of the Party in transforming the countryside on socialist lines as all in vain, the money spent on introducing new machinery into the country simply frittered away, the heroic work of collective farm labourers, machine operators and agricultural specialists a pure bluff. Surely there cannot be a grain of logic in this, it is simply a hostile invention.

Would it have been possible, given such a low gross yield of corn, to set up such reserves of grain as might guarantee a more or less normal supply to the population and army of many millions during a hard and long drawn-out war, and then two years after it had finished to end rationing and restrictions on the sale of bread? At the same time one must bear it in mind that during the pre-war five-year plans the Soviet Union exported a significant amount of grain abroad, receiving industrial equipment in return.¹

It goes without saying that there is very good reason for looking at this question. Bourgeois propagandists continue to this day to maintain that Lenin's co-operative plan was not well-grounded, claiming that during the pre-war years the collective farms led to decline in the economic life of the countryside

¹ The author is firmly convinced that the real yield of all cereals came to no less than 6 billion poods in the pre-war years. There are two ways of demonstrating this:

1. If one considers that the marketability level was growing at 40 per cent in the pre-war years, while state procurements and purchases came to 2.3 billion poods (these are not in question) then even a simplified calculation shows that the gross yield comes to no less than 6 billion poods. But apart from the state purchases a large part of the marketable grain came on to the open market. This grain was not just supplied by the collective farms but by collective farm labourers with a large amount of workday units (the unit of payment on collective farms), as well as by a great army of machine operators and stock-raising workers who had received a guaranteed minimum.

2. 2.3 billion poods were received by the state; 1 billion poods was allocated to sowing 109 million hectares (in accordance with sowing norms); 1 billion poods went to provide food-stuffs for the rural population of 115 million people (according to figures provided by the Central Statistical Board, standard peasant consumption came to 10 poods per head in 1913, during the three years 1927-1929 it averaged out at 13.5 poods per head and then increased to 15 poods per head, while in 1937, judging from the same source, it stood at 15-20 poods per head); 1 billion poods went to maintain cattle (according to People's Commissariat for Agriculture and Central Statistical Board calculations for 1929, 1930 and 1931, 1.2 billion poods was used up each year in maintaining cattle. Slightly less grain was used as fodder during the years that followed).

and almost to famine. Was it not on these false premises that the Nazis based their action, counting on the support of the collective farm peasantry? But calculating on this, as is only too well known, turned out to be a most fateful error on their part. For how could the peasants have fought for a system they hated? Quite on the contrary, it was precisely the collective farm system, having provided the peasantry with great material and spiritual wealth, that was the mighty source of the unwavering patriotism and heroism of all the Soviet peasantry.

One very gratifying fact was that a raw material supply for the food and light industries began to be established on the basis of the growing public economy: in 1940 cotton production was 3.5 times the size it had been in 1913, the production of flax fibre had nearly doubled, as had that of sugar beet, pure and semi-pure wool production had more than tripled, and sunflower seeds production was 4.5 times the size of its 1913 figure.

The situation as regards stock-raising in the collective farms had noticeably improved. During 1939-40 the number of productive livestock in the collective farms increased at the following rates: from 15.6 million to 20.1 million head of cattle (including 4.6 million to 5.7 million cows), from 6.6 million to 8.2 million pigs, from 27.2 million to 41.9 million sheep and goats. Thus the total number of publicly owned livestock in the collective farms grew by 20.8 million head during two years.¹

It is significant that during the pre-war years of the third five-year plan there was an increase in the proportion of publicly owned stock to the general amount of livestock. Thus from 1 January 1938 till 1 January 1941 the proportion of publicly owned cattle in the collective farms grew from 37 per cent to 57 per cent, of pigs from 33 per cent to 49 per cent, of sheep from 42 per cent to 57 per cent. This made it possible to broaden the basis for providing the population with food products and industry with raw materials. However, despite the achievements reached in the development of stock-raising, the increase in the number of publicly owned livestock in the collective farms still did not reach the amount which had been stipulated by the stock-raising development plan set by the state.

¹ See: *Sotsialisticheskoye Selskoye Khozyaistvo* (Socialist Agriculture), 1941, No. 1, p. 30; *Vazhneishiye resheniya po selskomu khozyaistvu za 1938-1941 gody* (The Most Important Resolutions on Agriculture for 1938-41), Moscow, 1942, p. 320; *Narodnoye khozyaistvo SSSR* (The National Economy of the USSR). A Collection of Statistics, Moscow, 1956, p. 128 (in Russian).

Thus the 1940 plan was 91.7 per cent fulfilled as regards the increase in cattle, 80.6 per cent in pigs and 92.9 per cent in sheep and goats.

Serious improvements were made in the way labour was organised in the collective farms. The annual average amount of work-days put in by one able-bodied collective farm labourer rose during this time from 194 to 254. This is the best possible illustration of the significance of the measures taken by the Party to consolidate the collective farms in terms of economic organisation, and of the truly great work done by the rural Party organisations in training the masses to do the work.

With the consolidation of the collective farms went an increase in the material standard of living of their workers. In 1937 the revenue of the collective farms came to 14,180,100 thousand rubles, while at the same time in 1933 it had equalled 5,661,900 thousand rubles; approximately 10,000 collective farms had an income of from 240,000 to 1 million rubles each. The average issue of grain to each collective farm homestead, without counting seeds and other collective farm stocks, rose in the principal cereal-producing regions from 61 poods in 1933 to 144 poods in 1937. More than 23,000 collective farms issued each of their workers with from 7 to 20 kilograms of grain as remuneration per workday unit. It is true that in the meanwhile collective farm wages still remained low, but to be frank, the possibilities for providing the country with industrial goods were themselves also limited.

As a result of the increase in the material standard of living, there began to be a demand on the part of the population for industrial goods and provision. The turn-over in state, co-operative and collective farm trade tripled during the second five-year plan and in 1937 reached 143.7 billion rubles as opposed to 47.8 billion rubles in 1933. This is evidence of the marked changes that took place in the standard of living of the collective farm peasantry.

Steady consolidation of the material and technical basis on which the public economy rested was a decisive condition of growth in the collective farm system. Although the Party did not succeed in carrying out the overall mechanisation of agriculture at this time, the standard of machine equipment in socialist farms was already quite high. In 1940 there were 684,000 tractors (15 horse power), 182,000 combines and 228,000 lorries at work in agriculture. Nearly all the collective farms were serviced by machine and tractor stations, more than three-quarters of the work

done on arable land was done by tractors and approximately half the sowing area was harvested by combines. The number of machine and tractor stations grew in three years before the war from 5,818 in 1937 to 7,069 in January 1941.

Workers skilled in machine operation were the pride of collective farm villages; in 1940 there were about 1,300,000 of them in the machine and tractor stations and collective farms. Great significance, not just for the national economy but even more so for the state defence, attached to the grand scale of work done in the pre-war years in training specialists in mechanisation. The Party made a sharp departure in this in training women collective farmers as mechanisation specialists. The patriotic appeal of the famous woman tractor driver Pasha Angelina provoked a great response from the girl collective-farm workers. The vast army of women trained as tractor drivers, expanding from the spring of 1939 onwards, significantly increased the army of rural machine operators. At the beginning of 1941 there was a total number of 100,000 women machine operators in agriculture.

Thus, thanks to the enormous efforts on the part of the Party and the people in the pre-war years, the collective farms made appreciable advances in their economic growth, their economic and production indices were significantly higher; and the material and spiritual life of the collective farm peasantry had gone up to a higher level.

3. OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE FACTORS THAT HELD BACK THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE COLLECTIVE FARMS

In analysing the development of socialist agriculture in the period leading up to the war it would be absolutely impossible to forget *the first and most important objective factor*, which made itself felt at all stages of the building of socialism in the country. Under discussion is the isolated position of the Soviet Union, surrounded by enemy capitalist states, and constantly under threat of attack. Thus while discussing difficulties and slips one is fully justified in laying a good part of the blame at the foot of the imperialists.

The extreme instability of the international situation never ceased, both visibly and invisibly, to influence the progress of the national economic plans, in turn causing a certain unevenness of development between separate areas. The Party was forced

to keep manoeuvring the material resources, to strengthen or weaken this or that branch of industry, submitting them exclusively to the interests of defence. Thus in discussing the certain unevenness of development in the Soviet economy one must first of all have the political situation of the Soviet Union in mind, surrounded by enemy capitalist countries.

The circumstances turned out particularly unfavourably during the period of the third five-year plan, when the storm-clouds of the Second World War were amassing close to the frontiers of the USSR. Naturally, the Party was forced to make an urgent revision of the scheduled figures, and to alter the targets planned, laying special stress on the need to broaden war industry. It was in relation to this that agricultural investments were significantly cut back in 1939, along with supplies of machinery, equipment and spare parts, and fuel quotas were also limited. Thus a number of important tasks linked to the way the economic organisation of the collective farm system was to be consolidated, were shelved for the future.

Let us take the overall mechanisation of agriculture as an example. In order to achieve this a large amount of tractors, combines and other agricultural vehicles were needed, and in the meanwhile the supply of these to agriculture had dwindled appreciably, as part of the metal earmarked for these vehicles had had to be directed to the country's defence needs. The upshot of this was that the average yearly production of tractors dropped nearly twice over between the years of the second and third five-year plans. The plan for dispatching combines was only 63 per cent fulfilled in 1939 and 78 per cent in 1940, the plan for tractor-drawn ploughs was fulfilled at respectively 94 and 64 per cent, for sowing-machines at 47 and 29 per cent and for harvesters at 44 and 67 per cent, and so on.

At the same time as agricultural investments were being cut back, steady reserves of provisions, raw materials and technical equipment were being set up, mobilisation measures of various kinds were put into action, and so on. Then the emphasis switched to human resources, and most important of all, to machine operators. To illustrate this, during the two years 1938-39 more than 110,000 tractor-drivers and 29,000 combine-operators left the machine and tractor stations.¹ A proportion of them went into education institutes, into industry and to other jobs, it is true, but a significant amount of these machine

¹ See: *Sotsialisticheskoye Zemledeliye* (Socialist Farming), 18 July 1940.

operators left to be mobilised into the army. And moreover, the world situation made Party and Soviet organs spend more time on problems of mobilisation, which naturally meant that their organisational efforts were diverted from the vital tasks involved in strengthening the organisation of the collective farms.

The second factor was closely linked with the historical conditions that have characterised the agriculture of the Soviet Union. One must bear it in mind that tsarist Russia was the most backward in agricultural terms of all major European capitalist countries, it lagged a whole century behind them. The whole point is that Russia was locked for too long in the grip of feudalism, serfdom and patriarchal isolationism, and had entered on the path of capitalist development too late. In essence Russia had never seen genuinely advanced forms of capitalist agricultural management as the remnants of feudalism survived right up to the October Socialist Revolution.

Neither, in turn, had the Russian peasants gone through the school of life of developed society, they had none of the essential economic training and had no proper knowledge of advanced methods of controlling the economy. The peasantry lived in conditions of the most primitive forms of management, bearing the brunt of medieval bondage and lacking all culture. One cannot escape the fact that during all of a quarter of a century three major socio-economic revolutions took place in the way the land was owned and each of these made an imprint on the way the land was managed and on the level of the agricultural economy.

Firstly, Stolypin's agrarian reform directed the attention of the peasants to establishing a system of small farmholdings, by gradually merging the farms of landowners and capitalists. The failure of this system is common knowledge, and it was swept away during the agrarian revolution of 1917.

Secondly, the October Revolution, having put an end to large-scale landowner and capitalist agriculture, established a new economic order, relying on the system of small-scale peasant production. However this system was also temporary, a transitional phase before bringing in a more advanced system—that of a large-scale public economy.

Thirdly, a far-reaching socialist revolution, brought about in the countryside at the beginning of the thirties, established the new system with a large-scale public economy holding sway over agriculture. But time was needed for the agricultural producers to get used to this new type of economy and learn to master it.

Thus the swift succession of different forms of landownership deprived the producers of an opportunity to accumulate the appropriate managerial and production experience. And one must make further allowance for the fact that each of these reorganisations were accompanied by major economic expenses. The sharp slump in the economy provoked by Stolypin's reform, and the significant decline that set in after the agrarian revolution of 1917 and afterwards in the period of socialist reorganisation of 1930-32, have already been pointed out in the first volume.

With regard to this it does not do to forget that all three of these socio-economic revolutions in the way the land was owned in Russia took place in extremely unfavourable military and political circumstances. After the first agrarian reform, when agriculture had on the whole got over the effects of Stolypin's reorganisation, the First World War inflicted serious casualties on the productive forces. After the second agrarian reform, when Soviet power handed the land over to the peasants who enthusiastically got down to developing agriculture, the Civil War and foreign military intervention again held it back. The same thing happened even after the third reorganisation: hardly had they started work on strengthening the collective farm system when the Second World War brought terrible devastation to the agriculture of the Soviet Union.

One should not dismiss any of these important factors in analysing the development of Soviet agriculture. Though the USSR was able to catch up with and overtake Europe industrially in the space of 5-10 years, it was impossible for this to be done so quickly in agriculture, even with the advanced system that the socialist collective farm system turned out to be, because of the particular conditions in which it developed. It was still too young to reveal its advantages to the full in such a short space of time. To have done this it would have been necessary for the producers to have had the appropriate experience and an appropriate period of time to accumulate it.

The third factor concerns the basic directions taken by the theory and practice of collectivisation. There can be no doubt that the theory of scientific communism was enriched by the invaluable experience of the CPSU in the socialist transformation of agriculture in the Soviet Union. The Communist Party made a significant contribution to Marxist-Leninist agrarian theory. All the same, to be objective, a number of measures were carried out that went against the objective laws of the development of society and naturally were not accepted by it.

The fourth factor. Marxist-Leninist teaching on the nature of co-operation has not been given full enough consideration in the theoretical studies of collectivisation. One must examine this problem in essence. The collective farm system is a co-operative system, based on the voluntary unification of small-scale peasant producers, on the socialisation of their implements and means of production. It is on this fundamental principle that all the inner life of the co-operative farm is built. One must bear it in mind that a striving for unification from the bottom to the top is in the very nature of co-operation. This tendency is characteristic of co-operation not just at the beginning stage, when individual farms are being united in particular production collectives, but also at the next stage, when the unco-ordinated co-operatives that have arisen seek to combine into bigger units on the basis of districts, regions, and the whole country. When this happens the combined strength, not just of the individual collectives, but of the entire co-operative system as a whole, comes into being. Such is the objective law of the development of co-operation.

Classics of Marxism-Leninism, with a high opinion of the role of co-operative unions in agriculture, recommended that the victorious proletariat of the country concerned turn this experience to all the people of the socialist state to good account. This is why Lenin, after the victory of the October Revolution, treated the co-operative associations of old Russia so carefully and considerately. He entered into a bold compromise with the bourgeois co-operative members, foreseeing that it was essential to preserve intact the entire organisational structure of the co-operative associations from the bottom to the top. And it was only through the fault of the bourgeois co-operative members themselves that this organisational structure was to a certain extent broken down during the Civil War.

However, as soon as the country returned to peaceful work Lenin went straight back to the question of organising the co-operative system and first of all to the most important area of it, that of the agricultural co-operatives. It was on his initiative that a well-planned organisational system for administering the co-operative associations was set up, based on democratic roots and the creative initiative of the population brought in to the associations. It was precisely at this time that, referring to economic relations with the peasants, Lenin warned against attempts to dominate them. The All-Russia Union of Agricultural Co-operatives (Selskosoyuz) was set

up at his suggestion in 1921 uniting all the co-operative farms in the country; and co-operative unions were set up in the gubernias and uyezds to run the co-operative movement.

As the co-operative movement developed in the country, it became necessary to broaden and strengthen the democratic basis of the co-operative farming system. The Collective Farm Centre of the USSR and provincial collective farm unions were set up for this purpose. In 1928, when mass collectivisation was taking place, the All-Union Council of Collective Farms was established, members of which included, alongside the organisers of the collective farm movement, scientists, agricultural specialists, and Party and government leaders. All these organs were extremely popular and held great authority among the peasant masses, for they were all built on democratic foundations and were genuine organs of the collective farm workers themselves. In guiding the co-operative movement the Party proceeded from a principal Marxist tenet. At the end of his life Engels again recalled, on Marx's behalf as well as his own, that in the transfer to communism one must apply large-scale co-operative production as an interim stage.

Socialist co-operation differs from its bourgeois counterpart in that it appears not just as a form of public economy but as a mass socio-political organisation of the peasants, cultivating their socialist outlook. It was precisely this function of socialist co-operation that Lenin particularly emphasised. But unfortunately these unshakable principles of the development of co-operatives, the principles of a collective management, democratic administration and public control, were not always consistently put into practice in the organisation of the collective farms. On top of this, a tendency began to be apparent by the thirties whereby the organisational structure of the administration of the co-operative/collective-farm system was being reduced.

One should point out one more detail that played an essential part in the organisation of the collective farms. Practically, there was not one Party activists' meeting, one conference or assembly, where someone did not suggest the unification of the collective farm system from the bottom to the top, in keeping with the very nature of co-operation. It is not difficult to understand this attitude, for many of the collective farm activists had been more than once in the past at district, regional and even all-Union conferences of collective farming unions and were aware of the benefits to be reaped from creative collective work. But attempts to bring about these aspirations,

dictated by life itself, did not succeed.

The important problem of the relationship between the machine and tractor stations and the collective farms can serve as an example, for even then serious conflicts were becoming apparent between them. Obviously at this time the collective farms could not buy their own machinery, but naturally without it they were unable to develop their holdings. But what the collective farms were unable to do alone they could do in full together. There is no doubt that with the help of the unified collective farm system, and with the material assistance afforded it by the state, the machine and tractor stations, as state enterprises, could have been fully converted into co-operative enterprises, whose operation came under the direct guidance of the collective farm centres, and thus the conflict that arose could have been painlessly solved. Most importantly, the foundations would have been laid in the structure of the farm administration, organised democratically from top to bottom, preventing unwarranted intervention into their work.

The fifth factor is connected with violations of the Leninist principles in appointing managerial personnel and other administration. In discussing the positive aspects in the development of socialist agriculture it is necessary to point out the difficulties that arose at the end of the second five-year plan. These difficulties were provoked not so much by objective as by subjective factors. What happened was that a great deal of the older, experienced administrative personnel, who had grown up in the course of practical work of organising the collective farms, were replaced in the pre-war years in nearly all the rural Party organisations. This did not just happen in the major regional and territorial Party and Soviet organs, but also in district ones and also in many machine and tractor stations, collective and state farms. As a result the collective farm villages were deprived even of the experienced, skilled political workers that were left in the countryside, and who had done so much to consolidate the collective farm system. All this made future huge efforts on the part of the Party necessary, in making the right choice of immense number of new personnel, and in training and promoting them. And in the meanwhile the international situation was becoming more and more complex.

Such a massive and unjustifiable replacement of the leading executives in the countryside had a serious effect on the level of Party work and on the entire economic activity of the collective and state farms and machine and tractor stations. The

new people brought in as substitutes for the trained and experienced personnel were naturally unable to make up these serious losses. What it comes down to is that these new workers had had little experience, and were insufficiently prepared theoretically and politically, whereas previously skilled workers had prevailed who did not just have vast work experience but had also received solid theoretical training in the Communist and Marxist Universities. Of course, in characterising this situation the author in no way wants to cast a shadow on these new workers. Undoubtedly the overwhelming majority of them were honest and devoted to the Party, but nevertheless they did not have the same qualities as their predecessors, primed with a rich experience of life.

Thus in discussing all these difficulties, caused by objective and subjective factors, one should stress that although they affected the onward march of agricultural growth, they were all the same unable to stop vital processes from taking place. Despite all these obstacles, the development of the public economy of the collective farms continued to advance, and moreover, practice forced the Party organisations, together with the collective farm masses, to surmount the difficulties that had arisen and, using their combined efforts, to search out inner resources and ways of improving the public economy. In this lay the great vital strength of the collective farm system.

4. THE COLLECTIVE FARM SYSTEM AT A NEW HISTORICAL FRONTIER

The problem involved in consolidating and developing the collective farm system continued to occupy the prime attention of the Party. Especially significant work was done in this direction after the 18th Congress. It was pointed out in the Congress resolutions that "the tasks to be dealt with in organising the collective farm system lie in the further possible strengthening of the economic organisation of the farm co-operative, in developing and consolidating the socialised property of the collective farms, and in expanding their stock-raising farms, public buildings, public insurance funds and other kinds of collective farm property. These are the basis for future agricultural growth and for an increase in the material and cultural standards of the collective farm peasantry."¹ In accordance with these needs

¹ *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 5, p. 364.

the Communist Party worked out and implemented a number of measures to do with consolidating the economic organisation of the collective farms, the most important of which follow below.

The first large-scale measure, directed at consolidating the economic organisation of the collective farms, was the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition which opened on 1 August 1939 in Moscow. The second session of the first Supreme Soviet passed the "Law Concerning the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition" on 21 August 1938, in which it was pointed out that the Exhibition was an important achievement in the struggle of the Party and the people for the victory of the collective farm system in the USSR. "The All-Union Agricultural Exhibition, which is being held to provide a worthy demonstration of the great achievements of socialist agriculture in the USSR, to display the best examples of all branches of agriculture, and to present in all its diversity the strength and riches of agriculture in the republics, territories and regions of the Soviet Union, should serve as a powerful spur to the socialist emulation of collective farms, their workers and indeed all workers in agriculture, to multiply the achievements of agriculture, and will further the upward haul of all the state and collective farms to reach the level of the vanguard, so that they can secure a further steady rise in agriculture, an increase in the abundance of agricultural products, and can make provision for the collective farm masses to prosper and become cultured".¹

The Exhibition was an important national event that stimulated an increase in socialist emulation for the right to take part in it. More than 2,500 districts, about 4,000 machine and tractor stations, more than 100,000 collective farms, about 52,000 stock-raising farms, 562,000 teams and sections, and about 700,000 exemplary workers and specialists took part in the contest. 15,059 collective farms, 11,004 husbandry units, 268 machine and tractor stations, 795 state farms and 155,821 exemplary workers in socialist agriculture won the right to take part in the Exhibition, at which the very best was on show.

¹ *Vtoraya sessiya Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR* (The Second Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR). A Shorthand Report, [Moscow], 1938, p. 804. The Exhibition took up an area of 136 hectares, on which 250 buildings, both large and small, were built. These included 32 pavilions, each of which displayed the achievements of a particular branch of agriculture—grain, mechanisation, cotton production, stock-raising, agrarian afforestation improvement, etc. 20 of the largest buildings were assigned to exhibitions of the regions, where the achievements of socialist agriculture brought about in the union republics were on show.

The opening of the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition took the form of a grand ceremony with all the peoples of the Soviet Union participating. It was a wonderful culmination of the splendid achievements amassed during the building of socialism.

The second large-scale measure, intended to consolidate the commonly owned property of the collective farms, was the setting to rights of the situation as regards how the collective farms held their land, and the elimination of the leanings of a backward part of the collective farm workers towards private property. One of the most complex problems for the rural Party organisations, that became apparent in the practical work of organising the collective farms, was ensuring that the collective farm workers had the right combination of public and personal interests. One should not forget that proprietary psychology still survived among the peasants, and often gained the upper hand over their public interests.

Setting out the many facts concerning the violations of collective farm land tenure, the May 1939 Plenum of the Party Central Committee examined the question of what measures should be taken to protect the public lands of the collective farms from being squandered. The Party pointed out that the policy distortions that had taken place in the organisation of the collective farms had come about as a result of many local leaders being unaware of a fundamental principle, that of the right combination of public and personal interests in the collective farms. It was disregard for this principle, and even at times downright violation of it, that signified the break from theory in the organisation of the collective farms and a haphazard approach in solving the most important problems of collective farm life.¹

The Central Committee of the Party and the Soviet government demanded that the Party and Soviet organisations establish order in the land tenure of the collective farms, set up the strictest control over the inviolability of the commonly owned lands of the collective farms and take a strong line in curbing self-seeking and speculative elements. It was decided that a census should be taken of all the personal plots of land belonging to collective farmers, and also to the workers and office workers, living in country areas. All excessive lands were liable for return to the collective farms. Lands for the personal use of collective farm workers which were situated in commonly owned fields were liable to be joined to the latter. Collective farm workers living in

¹ See: *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 5, p. 400.

small farmsteads were offered to move to a certain residence area and provided with personal plots according to the established norms. Special resources were allotted for resettlement.

In administering the Plenum decisions, the Party and Soviet organs, along with the collective farms, succeeded in implementing this, the most important state measure, directed at protecting the collective farm lands from being squandered, and at setting their land tenure arrangements to rights. State commissions, specially set up for the purpose, carried out an all-round census of the collective farm lands, and also of the personal plots belonging to collective farmers, workers and office workers, living in country areas. As a result of this census of personal plots it came to light that 2.5 million hectares more land than there should have been was being put to personal use by collective farm workers, individual farmers and other people. These lands, seized without authority, were joined to the public lands of the collective farms. Great work was also accomplished in delimiting the personal plots of land from the lands registered as commonly owned. Land record books were introduced into 230,000 collective farms, and state ledgers for land registration were introduced into the district land departments. During 1939-40, 816,000 collective-farm families living on small farmsteads were resettled in the village. The resettlement of these farmsteads helped to set the land tenure of the collective farms to rights.

The measures linked with putting land tenure in order furthered the consolidation of the economic organisation of the collective farms. On the one hand, they led to a consolidation of the commonly owned property of the collective farms, and on the other, to an increase in work discipline therein. To meet the requirements of the advanced collective farm workers, the Central Committee of the Communist Party and the Council of People's Commissars, in a resolution "Concerning the Measures to Protect the Commonly Owned Lands of the Collective Farms from Being Squandered", established a compulsory minimum output of workday units for each collective farm worker—this was set at 100 workday units for the cotton-producing districts and at 60-80 in the others.

The third large-scale measure, closely connected with setting the land tenure of the collective farms to rights, was the removal of the major shortcomings apparent in the use of the indivisible funds of the collective farms. Naturally it is the commonly owned land and the indivisible funds of the collective farms that go to make up the basis of development in the collective farm system. In

the resolution of 4 December 1938 "Concerning the Allocation of Revenue in the Collective Farms", it was laid down that each year the collective farms would deduct from 12 to 15 per cent of their revenue in the grain-producing areas and 15 to 20 per cent in stock-raising and industrial crop areas, in order to replenish their indivisible funds. However the facts are that many collective farms, in a number of regions and republics, transferred no revenue at all to the indivisible funds, or transferred less than was stipulated in the Collective-Farm Rules.

A number of measures were taken during 1939 and 1940 to tighten up financial discipline in the collective farms and to clear debts. A proportion of the loans were extended and a proportion written off, and measures taken for collective farm debts to be cleared by the economic organisations. The task was set of restoring the indivisible funds of the collective farms in the following three years (1939-41). These measures made a significant improvement possible in financial discipline and in building up the indivisible funds. Suffice it to say that in 1940 an overwhelming majority of the collective farms in the country had transferred revenue to the indivisible funds within the limits of the established norms, and 5 per cent of the collective farms had transferred revenue over and above their norms. The amount of revenue transferred to replenish the indivisible funds grew in all the collective farms from 1.8 billion rubles in 1937 to 3.3 billion rubles in 1940, while the total revenue increased during this period from 14.2 billion rubles to 20.7 billion rubles. Thus the average amount transferred to the indivisible funds grew from 12.7 per cent in 1937 to 15.9 per cent in 1940¹.

The Communist Party, tirelessly studying the experience of organising the collective farms and drawing theoretical conclusions therefrom, also worked out such principles and forms for the inner structure of the collective farms as would lighten the struggle of the collective farm masses to consolidate the collective economy and as would speed up the process of socialist education among the collective farm workers. The policy of the Party as regards the organisation of the collective farms was directed at raising collective farm production, expanding the productivity of collective farm labour and increasing the interest of the collective farm peasantry in the development of all branches of the collective economy. The Party took such measures as would best meet the tasks that had arisen in developing the collective farms, and as

¹ See: *Narodnoye khozyaistvo SSSR v 1958 godu* (The National Economy of the USSR in 1958). A Statistical Yearbook, Moscow, 1959, p. 494 (in Russian).

would serve the mutual interests of both the state and the collective farms.

The fourth large-scale measure was to do with working out a new policy on state procurements which would establish more correct economic interrelations between the state and the collective farms. Thus at the end of the period of reorganisation it became quite clear that state grain procurements carried out on a contracting basis were inadequate both for the state and for the collective farms. Though at an earlier stage in the organisation of the collective farms contracting had played an exceptional part in uniting the peasant masses into the collective farms, and seemed the best way of organising the economic relations between peasants, collective farms and the state, with the victory of the collective farm system in the principal agricultural regions, contracting ceased to justify itself as a system of state procurements.

Thus it was essential to replace the old system of state procurements with a new one, which would rely on a fixed plan for the grain deliveries made by each collective and individual peasant farm to the state. Proceeding from the new conditions which had arisen in agriculture with the victory of the collective farms, the Soviet government passed a resolution, in January 1933, which cancelled the previously agreed contractual system and established a fixed plan for the collective and individual peasant farms, whereby they had to deliver grain to the state at a rate worked out according to the amount of hectares of land sown. The establishment of this fixed state plan, valid in law, strengthened the collective farm economy. There is no doubt that for its time this system of state procurements played an exceptional role. On top of this it prepared the conditions for a transfer to a new and more up-to-date system of state procurements to ensure the all-round development of the public economy of the collective farms.

Having discussed the changes to be made in the policy of procurements and purchases of agricultural products, the March 1940 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party passed a special resolution. It was on the basis of this that the Soviet government established a single system for procuring all the different kinds of agricultural products, calculated per hectare of land in use in the collective farms. This was the fairest principle for calculating the procurements on, for land is the main source of collective farm wealth and consequently the most important criterion in assessing their income. Thus it began that state supplies of grain, industrial crops and vegetables were measured per

hectare of land in use, rather than by a planned amount of crops in each hectare. Exactly the same criterion was used with state supplies of stock-raising production; instead of calculating on the head of collective farm cattle they worked on the amount of hectares of land each collective farm held.

The new state procurements policy made for more productive use of the land. In this policy the Party discovered a way that the state and the collective farms and their workers could relate, in which their mutual interests were most fully reflected. From their experience of this procurements policy the collective farm workers became convinced that a steady improvement in their well-being was wholly dependent on the extent to which they consolidated the socialist state and the extent to which they increased the economic power of the collective farm system.

Thus the new large-scale measures worked out by the Party in the pre-war years to consolidate the economic organisation of the collective farms led the socialist collective farm system to a new historical frontier of advanced development. In turn the standard of political work in rural areas in important matters of practice went up immeasurably, and the network of collective farm Party organisations grew significantly broader and stronger. A sharp increase began in the number of people joining the Communist Party in the countryside after the 18th Party Congress. In just the first six months of 1939, as a whole across the Soviet Union, 41,500 collective farm workers joined the Party as members and 117,000 as candidate members, whereas during more than the two preceding years 24,800 collective farm workers had joined as members and 52,000 as candidate members. About half of the new Party members were leading personnel in collective farm production—collective farm chairmen, team-leaders, stock-raising farm directors, and tractor and combine drivers.

This significant increase in the rural Party ranks made it possible to set up thousands of new Party organisations. Whereas at the 18th Party Congress, for 243,000 collective farms there were only 12,000 primary Party organisations comprising 153,000 Party members and candidate members, at the beginning of 1941 there were already 30,000, comprising more than 350,000 communists. Furthermore there were 27,600 area Party organisations in the countryside, in which the number of communists amounted to about 260,000. Thus, relying on the most active members in the collective farms, the Party organisations were able to ensure that many crucial tasks to do with consolidating the economic organisation of the collective farms were carried out.

CHAPTER XIX

THE VITAL TEST OF THE STABILITY OF THE COLLECTIVE-FARM SYSTEM AT A TIME OF GRUELLING ORDEALS FOR THE SOVIET UNION

1. THE COLLECTIVE FARMS AND COLLECTIVE-FARM PEASANTRY DURING THE PATRIOTIC WAR

During the pre-war five-year plans the collective-farm system grew in size and strength, becoming a serious economic, moral and political force in the Soviet state. But the treacherous invasion of Hitler's troops into the Soviet Union in June 1941 broke off the peaceful and constructive work of the Soviet people and halted the onward development of the productive forces of the socialist economy. The Great Patriotic War against the reactionary world forces of imperialism, with Nazi Germany at the forefront had begun. A war that was to end in the victory of the Soviet state.

It was a victory of the socialist system, of the indestructible union of workers and peasants, of the moral and political unity of the Soviet people; it was a victory of the Leninist line taken by the Communist Party, which had provided for the industrialisation of the country, the collectivisation of agriculture, and a genuine cultural revolution to be brought about. The success of this policy had made the Soviet Union a powerful industrial and collective-farm power, able without help from outside to crush any aggressor that dared to infringe its honour, freedom and independence.

But the great vitality inherent in the socialist system was not recognised and was even scorned, not just by Hitler's leaders but by all the reactionary forces of the bourgeois world. For even before the war the reactionary bourgeois press had painted the most sombre picture of life inside the Soviet Union, defaming the Soviet social system on all accounts and "proving" the instability and weakness of its political and economic foundations. The collective-farm system and collective-farm peasantry had a special place in this malicious propaganda. They were considered the weakest and most vulnerable links in the system of the Soviet socialist state. It is not thus surprising that during the very first days of

the war many minstrels of bourgeois propaganda gloatingly predicted the inevitable defeat of the Soviet state in six months at the most, if not in two or three.

Thus even before the war began, world public opinion was being shaped under the influence of anti-Soviet propaganda which never let up. In invading the Soviet Union Hitler was taken in primarily by the same fabrications that had been spread for many years, day in day out, by reactionary propaganda, the intelligence and diplomatic services, and by informants. There is plenty of literature nowadays as regards this, in the form of memoirs, diaries and documents. Brief mention should be made of the calculations on which the leaders of Nazi Germany relied.

Firstly, in invading the Soviet Union, Hitler was convinced of the instability of its socialist system, and its political and economic structure. He was counting on a belief that the Soviet socialist state, and the collective-farm system first of all, would collapse like a house of cards at the very first military attack. Following from these false assumptions, Hitler and his leaders convinced themselves that Soviet socialist society was a myth of communist idealism, with what seemed to them to be no real foundation to it.

Secondly, in invading the USSR, Hitler was convinced that the workers and peasants of the country had already long been waiting for him to liberate them from their "Bolshevik fetters", and that one attack from outside would be enough for the workers and peasants themselves to take up arms against the Bolsheviks. Although they were not entirely sure of this with regard to the working class, renowned for their outstanding revolutionary traditions, with regard to the peasantry they not only expressed complete confidence in their support, but even expected to be given a triumphant welcome with the traditional bread and salt.

Thirdly, in planning a lightning victory over the USSR, Hitler was also banking on what he assumed was an unstable alliance between the different nationalities. He viewed the relations between the peoples of the USSR with the eyes of a full-grown imperialist, considering that it would be enough to intimidate, bribe and set one nationality against another, for the unity of the peoples of the USSR to collapse in an instant, and for the gates to open to the Ukraine and the Caucasus, to Byelorussia and the Baltic republics, and to the Urals and Central Asia.

All these calculations turned out to be fatal errors, leading to the collapse of Hitler's sinister plans. Events proved that the Soviet socialist state was not a myth but an iron fortress; the Soviet

socialist system not only did not collapse, but did not even flicker before the superior forces of the enemy. Had the Soviet Union had to go to war against Nazi Germany alone, it would not have taken long to have beaten her, but as is well known, the united forces of all occupied Europe were directed against the USSR and European military and economic potential was used to the full. Nevertheless, as one might expect, the superior economic might and insuperable moral and political unity of the Soviet people, along with the indestructible power of the socialist state, prevailed in this fateful combat.

The Nazi invaders made a gross miscalculation with regard to the collective-farm peasantry. This was brought home to them when they found themselves the butt of all the searing hatred felt by the population towards the foreign enslavers. The collective-farm peasantry throughout the war years showed a great patriotic devotion to the socialist country and fought the fascist hordes tooth and nail, with courage and tenacity. Though during the Civil War the working class had had to urge on and carry the peasants with them in the struggle with their enemies inside and outside the Soviet Union, in the Patriotic War it was difficult to distinguish the heroic feats of the peasants from those of the workers. And in creating this monolithic force an enormous role was played by the Party and the socialist social system, clamped together by the insuperable alliance of the working class and the collective-farm peasantry.

The remarkable phenomenon applied equally to all the peoples of the Soviet Union. Such patriotism, international friendship and monolithic unity as were manifested by all the nationalities during this time of gruelling ordeals have never been known before. Of decisive importance here was the strength of the socialist system and the correct course taken by the Party in following Lenin's policy on the nationalities. All this goes to show that the multinational state had been built on firm socio-economic, political and ideological foundations, and had developed and gained strength through going in the right, purposeful direction.

Attention should now be paid to specific facts with regard to the alignment of the forces in struggle. The Communist Party did not of course make out that the struggle against a powerful and insidious enemy would be an easy one. From the very beginning of the war it was quite frank in telling the people the bitter truth about the mortal danger hanging over the Soviet Union. One must bear in mind that at the beginning of the war with the USSR all Europe was under the thumb of Hitler's Germany with

its economic, technical and human resources. Apart from her own economy, fully switched over to a war footing, Germany was exploiting the productive forces of enslaved Western Europe. Nazi Germany had seized 8.8 million tons of oil products in France, Holland and Belgium and had the oil refineries of Rumania, with an output of 5.5 million tons of oil products a year, completely at her disposal. On top of this Germany had seized France's strategic reserves—42,000 tons of copper, 27,000 tons of zinc and 19,000 tons of lead¹.

All the occupied countries of Europe greatly added to the powerful war industry of Nazi Germany. The war production of just the Skoda works in Czechoslovakia was enough to equip 40-45 German divisions with many kinds of armaments. Germany had the automobile industry of Italy and other European countries, capable of producing 600,000 vehicles a year, at her disposal, along with a vast quantity of transport equipment and railway rolling-stock. The Nazis removed 5,000 engines and 250,000 railway carriages from France alone in the first two years of the occupation.

The richest supplies of industrial raw materials and food-stocks from occupied Europe were in Germany's hands, and were used to the full in the war against the USSR. The total sum of material resources seized by Hitler's troops from the occupied countries of Europe in the years leading up to 1941 came to 9 billion pounds sterling, twice as much as the annual national income of Germany before the war. To this one must add that the Nazis made large-scale use of human resources; they mobilised 12 million foreign workers into their war enterprises, thus freeing a vast army of their own workers for military service and the formation of new divisions.

This is the military economic power that the Soviet state was up against. Moreover the occupation of the Soviet territory seriously weakened her own military economic potential. Suffice it to say that about 40 per cent of the entire population of the country lived on the territory occupied by the Germans, 63 per cent of the pre-war coal and 60 per cent of the aluminium was produced there, as was 68 per cent of all the cast iron and 58 per cent of all the steel of the Soviet Union. The occupied areas were at that time the main economic basis of agriculture. Thirty-eight per cent of pre-war grain production and 84 per cent of

¹ See: N. Voznesensky, *Voennaya ekonomika SSSR v period Otechestvennoi voiny* (The war economy of the USSR during the Great Patriotic War), Moscow, 1949, p. 171 (in Russian).

all sugar production took place here, and 38 per cent of all cattle and 60 per cent of all swine were located here.¹

Intoxicated by temporary but palpable success, Hitler and his imperialist accomplices were convinced that they would emerge victorious. But this was in turn a serious miscalculation, a complete disregard for the special nature of the socialist system and a misunderstanding of the fact that the Soviet state was no place for the fascists to saunter into as they had into capitalist Europe. Of course the country's position was a very dangerous one, but it was far from being hopeless. The people had boundless faith in the strong will and good sense of the Party, and were adamant in their loyalty to the Leninist headquarters of the Central Committee of the Party.

In these highly difficult conditions the Party Central Committee made such gigantic efforts as will always serve as an example of unbending will, courage and Leninist wisdom of revolutionary strategic action. On 16 August 1941 the Party Central Committee and the Soviet government, in accordance with a task set by Joseph Stalin, the chairman of the State Defence Council, passed an eventful resolution ratifying a plan to establish a war-time economy. This plan concerned the relocation of industry in the eastern areas of the USSR and the formation in these areas of war production needed to defend the country. This daring step was indeed evidence of the wisdom and foresight of the Party, and of its confidence in the ultimate victory of the Soviet people. It is not essential to go into the details of this plan, but it can be taken for granted that it was an extremely wise, courageous and strong-willed move.

In accordance with this plan to establish a military economy, 1,360 large-scale, mainly military-production enterprises were shifted to the eastern areas of the country over three months. 455 of these went to the Urals, 210 to Western Siberia and 250 to Central Asia and Kazakhstan. Thus during the last three months of 1941, a great many industrial enterprises were in transit. But the evacuated industry was already in operation at the end of 1941 and production increased from 3.1 billion rubles in the first six months of 1941 to 5.1 billion in the second.

During the war years that followed, socialist industry provided such a volume of production as was sufficient to cover the needs of defence and which in the final analysis guaranteed victory over the enemy. Despite enormous losses, socialist industry soon rose

¹ N. Voznesensky, *op. cit.*, p. 42.

on its feet. In 1944 the gross industrial output in the eastern regions of the USSR was 2.8 times larger than it had been in 1940, while the industrial output of the war enterprises was 6.6 times larger. All this was achieved as the vitality of the war economy of the USSR was based on a socialist mode of production.

The situation was exactly the same in socialist agricultural production. The evacuation into the heart of the country of commonly-owned property, primarily that of cattle, vehicles and grain stores, was sufficiently well-organised; very nearly everything arriving intact. The collective and state farms in the rear were able to rebuild their production in a short time, in accordance with war-time demands, and to provide for the needs of the front and rear by producing an uninterrupted supply of provisions, raw materials and food-stuffs. Despite the serious weakening in the supplies of materials and technology and the reduction in the work force, the areas under crops in the unoccupied regions of the USSR—the Centre, the Volga area, the Urals, Siberia, the Trans-Caucasus, Central Asia, Kazakhstan, the Far East and the North—saw a significant increase in the collective and state farms.

The highest rate of increase in the sowing of cereals took place in the Far East and Central Asia. The area under cereals also increased significantly in Siberia and Kazakhstan. There was a sharp increase in the proportion of cereals especially of millet and industrial crops in the area sown.

The collective and state farms in the eastern areas of the USSR managed to significantly increase productive livestock in the difficult wartime conditions: cattle went up from 11.4 million head at the beginning of 1941 to 12.5 million head at the beginning of 1943, and the number of sheep and goats grew during this time from 28.1 million to 34.2 million. There was a sudden change in the position of agriculture in 1944.

Agricultural resources began to increase fairly appreciably in connection with the liberation of the Soviet territory temporarily occupied by the enemy. In 1944 the Soviet Union produced 1.1 million more poods of bread than it had in 1943. Livestock had risen by the beginning of 1945, by 15.8 million head of cattle, 8.4 million sheep and goats and 2.8 million swine. Of course the pre-war level of livestock was not restored, but the volume of agricultural production increased as the Soviet Army made further advances in liberating the country.

It was thanks to the fact that the collective farms had amassed vast political, moral and economic strength in the pre-war years

that they were able to honour the tasks set them during the Great Patriotic War. The world bourgeoisie and those in its sway cursed the collective farms and the collective-farm peasantry, while the German fascists viewed them, as has already been pointed out, as the weak chain of the Soviet state, even hoping that their invasion would be supported by the peasantry. All these hopes, nurtured by the enemy, were smashed to smithereens.

The collective farms came out in the Great Patriotic War as a powerful political and economic force of the Soviet state, while the collective-farm peasantry, raised by the Communist Party, demonstrated its deep patriotic loyalty to the country and presented a formidable force to the Nazi invaders. The collective-farm peasantry initiated many patriotic deeds during the years of the war. The collective-farm workers of Tambov started a powerful movement throughout the country to collect the means to build tank columns and aviation squadrons. Men and women working in the collective farms used their savings to buy tanks, aeroplanes and arms from factories for whole military units. It speaks for itself that in the four years of the war village workers joined all the other Soviet patriots in contributing voluntary payments amounting to 94.5 billion rubles for the defence of the country.

There are many similar facts which bear witness to the deep loyalty of the collective-farm peasantry to their country and Soviet power, and to the self-sacrificing labour wrought to bring speedy victory. These years were the first time that such a broad patriotic movement of peasants had ever arisen drawing in all the collective farms in the country and millions of their workers. The collective and state farms supplied the army and the country with provisions without ever having a serious break in production. Of course, without the collective-farm system and the selfless work put in by the men and women incorporated within it, it would have been impossible to have solved this, the most difficult of tasks. The fact that throughout the entire war the army did not experience a shortage of provisions, the population was supplied with foodstuffs and industry with raw materials, demonstrates the strength and vitality of the collective-farm system and the patriotism of the collective-farm peasantry.

The historic role played by the collective farms during the Great Patriotic War emphasises once more the tremendous wisdom, intuition and foresight of the Party, which tirelessly appealed to the Soviet nation to carry out the policies of industrialisation and collectivisation, a basis on which the country would be able to defend itself and preserve its independence of the capitalist world.

To talk about the collective-farm system in the years of the war is to talk about a system that stood up brilliantly to a historic trial, a trial in which it showed itself to be an invincible force. The collective farms came out of the war even stronger in moral and political terms than they were when they entered it, although economically they were exhausted to the utmost.

It is now necessary to answer the question as to where the strength and invincible power of the socialist Soviet state lay, for it must be quite apparent that its economic foundations were incomparably more efficient and stable than the economy of Hitler's Germany, which had, moreover, been significantly added to by the economic power appropriated from Europe. The explanation for this lies once again in the nature of the socialist system, which underwent a gruelling test in the dark years of the war. One should indicate at this point the most important factors predetermining the victory of the socialist system.

Firstly, the Soviet socialist system, engendered by the October Socialist Revolution, is based on the strongest possible substructure, that of the public ownership of the means of production. It was on the basis of this substructure that socialist society arose and gained strength, along with a socialist economic system based on the laws of planned economic growth. It was precisely this above all that made it possible to mobilise all the resources of the national economy towards the war against Hitler's Germany.

Secondly, the Soviet socialist system rests on a healthy social foundation excluding exploiter classes. This made it possible to cement and unite the different nationalities and working people. The elimination of private ownership of the means of production and of the exploiter classes was the basis on which the moral and political unity of all the Soviet peoples arose, a solid unity unparalleled in the history of human society.

Thirdly, the socialist system engendered an unprecedentedly high consciousness of the need for constructive work among workers, peasants and intelligentsia, demonstrating heroic self-sacrifice in defending the great socialist gains of previous generations. It was precisely this circumstance that united the soldiers at the front and the workers in the rear into one indestructible alliance. Indeed the country of socialism was turned into a single camp capable of crushing any foe.

Fourthly, a remarkable feature of the socialist system was that it was independent of the capitalist countries in economic and technological terms. The Communist Party had concerned itself even in the pre-war years with making the sole country of social-

ism not just economically independent but also able, at a critical moment, to put all its economic might and moral and political strength at the service of socialism, thereby ensuring victory.

Fifthly, the immortal achievement of the Soviet Union was possible because the heroic people of the country were led by the Leninist Party, which had brought up millions of soldiers in the spirit of Marxism-Leninism: soldiers who carried the banner of their forerunners, unwavering in their struggle for communism. The victory of the USSR hinged not just on the material might of the country, on the force and skill that characterised the war operations of the Soviet Army, but on the power of its ideological weapon, and the determination and unflinching loyalty shown by the people to Marxism-Leninism.

2. THE EFFORTS OF THE PARTY AND THE PEOPLE TO RESTORE THE NATIONAL ECONOMY OF THE COUNTRY

Gruelling ordeals fell to the lot of the Soviet people, but at the same time this fate was lightened by the fact that the people had, in the form of the Leninist Communist Party, a powerful force that took it valiantly from victory to victory. The Party led the people through the hurdles of the war and through heroic years of constructive work. Thus the Soviet people did not just experience deprivation and adversity, but also the happiness that comes from victory and constructing a beautiful new world. The Soviet people can rightly be proud of both past and present heroic revolutionary feats of labour.

After the war, the Soviet people achieved wonders of heroism under the direction of the Party. A large part of the country lay in ruins, covered with the ash of devastation. It seemed as if the scorched earth would lie for many years as a lifeless desert. It would not be exaggeration to say that no other system would have stood this ordeal, it seemed as if the job of restoring economic and cultural life would stretch out for many decades. That the Soviet people were quick to restore the national economy, shattered by the war, could only be due to the confidence of the people in the rightness of their cause. As in the previous difficult period, the people made enormous efforts to put their country back on the world stage, to make it even finer and mightier than before.

In order to fully appreciate just how great the achievement of the Soviet people was, it is necessary to recall the grim picture that rose in front of them in the post-war years. Looted and destroyed on the territory of the USSR, temporarily occupied by the enemy, were 31,850 large factories, works and other industrial enterprises, 1,876 state farms, 2,890 machine-and-tractor stations, 98,000 collective farms, 216,700 shops, canteens, restaurants and other commercial enterprises, 4,100 railway stations, 36,000 post offices, telephone exchanges and broadcasting stations, 6,000 hospitals, 33,000 clinics, health centres and surgeries, 976 sanatoria and 656 rest-homes, 82,000 primary and secondary schools, 1,520 special educational institutions and technical colleges, 334 higher education institutions, 605 research and other scientific institutions, 427 museums, 43,000 libraries and 167 theatres. During the Patriotic War the loss in material terms came to 1,890 billion rubles at pre-war government prices, or to put it another way, to 357 billion American dollars.¹

Let us examine the state agriculture was in, bearing in mind that the most economically developed farming areas were under enemy occupation. Seven million out of a total of 11.6 million horses were destroyed or purloined; 17 million head of cattle out of a total of 31 million were destroyed, as were 20 million swine out of a total of 23.6 million, and 27 million sheep and goats out of a total of 43 million.

The technology on which the large-scale collective economy depended underwent monstrous destruction; wrecked in the occupied areas were 137,000 tractors, 49,000 combines, 46,000 tractorised sowing-machines for grain, 35,000 mechanised and semi-mechanised threshing-machines, 285,000 stock-raising buildings belonging to collective farms, 505,000 hectares of fruit plantations and 153,000 hectares of vineyards. The fascists destroyed 3.5 million dwelling houses in the occupied country areas of the USSR, out of a total of 12 million. This is how the picture looked in the occupied areas of the country.

In the regions of the RSFSR temporarily occupied by the Germans, only 13 per cent of the pre-war number of industrial enterprises were left. There was a great reduction in the number of livestock: there was 23 per cent of the pre-war number of horses, 40 per cent of the pre-war head of cattle, 30 per cent of the sheep and goats and 10 per cent of the pigs. As regards agri-

¹ See: N. Voznesensky. *The War Economy of the USSR during the Great Patriotic War*, pp. 159, 162.

cultural machinery, it was completely wiped out and even the most primitive of agricultural tools were plundered.

In the occupied areas of the Ukraine only 19 per cent of the pre-war number of industrial enterprises were left. Stock-raising bore very heavy losses: only 30 per cent of the pre-war number of horses were left, only 45 per cent of cattle, 25 per cent of sheep and goats and 11 per cent of swine. The Ukrainian countryside presented a horrifying picture of complete devastation.

Colossal damage was also inflicted by the fascist occupation on the national economy of Byelorussia. In all only 15 per cent of the industrial enterprises in operation before the war were left standing. Only 39 per cent of the pre-war total of horses were left, 31 per cent of the cattle, 22 per cent of the sheep and goats and 12 per cent of the swine. Only 10 per cent of the tractors were left, and only 5 per cent of the combines were left of the ones in existence before the war.

There is no doubt as to the historical fact that the collective-farm system was sufficiently strong economically and organisationally in the pre-war years to be able to develop its advantages in full. However the collective farms did not all have the same level of economic growth. Suffice it to say that about 20 per cent of the country's collective farms were set up only three or four years before the outbreak of war and naturally were not fully established. Moreover, among the older collective farms there were some, in each region and republic, which did not cope with the economic problems confronting them and did not fulfil the tasks set by the state. It goes without saying that the backwardness of these collective farms got still worse during the war.

Problems the Party had grappled with 25 years before arose once more in these conditions of terrible destruction and devastation. How should they start to restore the national economy? Where should they look for new sources of funds and how should they make the most rational use of them in giving the productive forces of the country a new start?

It was clear to everyone that the economy had to be restored. However, how should this work be started, where should the efforts and resources be directed in the first instance, what was the most important link to pull in dragging out the chain of economic revival? These were difficult questions with no easy solution. And on top of this one must bear in mind that even then there were many subjective impracticable schemes.

Some of the people putting forward these schemes suggested that restoring the productive forces of the country be begun by reviv-

ing agriculture and building farming towns; they considered this to be the most important and decisive link in the chain. *Others*, though they suggested starting with industry, considered it possible to restore it using an oversimplified means, i. e. by bringing back the evacuated industries to where they had been before the war. *A third group suggested* that all the links in the chain of the national economy should be restored at the same time, a preferential place being allotted to small-scale and light industry, and so on.

The Party could not accept any of these variations as they did not meet the needs of the time. The general line taken by the Party was formulated clearly and precisely in the post-war five-year plan drawn up for the development of the national economy of the USSR. It was necessary to begin by restoring and developing heavy industry, for this was the most important link in the national economic chain, and it was on this link in particular that fundamental efforts and resources had to be concentrated if the funds essential for the development of all the other branches of the national economy were to be attained in a short time. This was indisputably the only correct line to take, scientifically based in the real sense of the term.

The Party understood full well that mankind was on the threshold of a great scientific and technological revolution. The discovery and application of atomic energy entailed an enormous change in all spheres of life. It was therefore imperative not to lose time, to dawdle in the course of events without paying attention to the great scientific and technical achievements that were impending. Besides, the Party was correct in judging that the shortest path to restoring the national economy and accumulating funds lay only through the utmost development of heavy industry, before everything else. This gigantic job was to develop in two directions: firstly in extending the production of factories already in operation, including the ones evacuated to the East; and secondly in restoring old and building new factories in the former occupied areas. It is worth pointing out how far-sighted and judicious this economic policy turned out to be.

Thus in the first years of Soviet power, after two wars, the Party began by restoring agriculture, correctly considering that at that time it was the most important link in the economic chain, whereas after the Patriotic War it seemed so much wiser to concentrate on restoring heavy industry. Looking at the facts from a theoretical angle, this signifies what is termed a *creative approach* to Marxism-Leninism, a skilful way of applying the method of materialist dialectics. Actual practice is the best criterion in deter-

mining the correctness of the economic policy put into effect at these two stages of historical development, and it was practice that directly dictated these aspects of policy.

With all the paucity of resources and extremely limited opportunities, the Party made enormous efforts to conduct unremitting work on restoring agriculture as well. One should point out that this work developed on a broad scale even during the war years, as territory was liberated from the fascist occupation. The historic Party and government resolution passed in 1943, "Concerning Urgent Measures to Be Taken to Restore the Economy in Areas Liberated from the Fascist Occupation", was a great inspiration and organising force with regard to this. This was the first detailed programme on the work to be done in restoring the occupied areas to be put into effect.

The designated construction programme was successfully carried out. The reconstruction of the economy of the state and collective farms and the machine and tractor stations was of decisive importance in this. The enemy's hopes that these holdings would never again see the light of day were in vain; quite the reverse, as Soviet territory was liberated the peasants threw themselves into the job of restoring it, working primarily on their own initiative. For example, the number of machine and tractor stations in the liberated areas increased in the one year of 1943 from 394 to 1,702, while the network of machine and tractor stations was restored in full in all the liberated areas. The collective farms were restored even more speedily. In 1943 in the liberated areas of the RSFSR they received 744,000 head of cattle, 818,000 sheep and goats, 55,000 swine, 65,000 horses and 417,000 poultry from the unoccupied areas. During 1943 and 1944, 839,000 rural houses were restored and built anew.

In accordance with a resolution passed by the Central Committee of the Party and Soviet Government, many thousands of tractors and other agricultural vehicles were delivered to the areas liberated from the enemy. Enormous financial help was given to the collective farms to allow them to build lodgings for the collective-farm workers and farm premises, and they were given large quantities of horses, productive cattle, seeds, fodder and provisions. This help increased particularly once the war was over. By 1947 the collective farms had re-established three-quarters of their pre-war area under crops and had half restored their number of livestock.

Measures worked out by the February 1947 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party constituted a serious programme for future agricultural development. In a resolution "Concerning the

Measures to Be Taken to Raise Agriculture in the Post-war Period" the Party set the urgent task of restoring the pre-war level of grain production in three years (1947-1949), and of overtaking it significantly by the end of the five-year plan. The pre-war level of cotton, long-fibred flax, and sugar-beet production was also to be restored and overtaken during these three years, and there was to be a significant increase in potato, vegetable, oil-yielding and other crop production.

At the same time the task was set of restoring and overtaking the pre-war level of livestock in the same time-span. The Central Committee of the Party Plenum laid especial stress on the fact that "now, after the transition to peaceful construction, the most pressing task that confronts the Party and the Government is that of ensuring such an upsurge in agriculture as will allow us to create, in the shortest possible time, an abundance of food-stuffs for the population, of raw materials for light industry, and an accumulation of essential state food and raw-material reserves".¹

The Central Committee of the Party and the Government took measures to increase the production of tractors, combines, agricultural vehicles and implements, in order to ensure that the basic processes of agricultural production would be mechanised as far as was possible in the years immediately to come. Whereas after the First World and Civil Wars the country needed 10 years to restore agriculture to its 1913 level, now, resting on its socialist economic system, the country was given the opportunity of restoring agriculture to its pre-war level in just four or five years.

It was established at the February Plenum of the Party Central Committee, that the main task of the Party in building up the collective-farm system was to consolidate their economic organisation as far as was possible and to increase their property owned in common. For this task to be brought about, a root change was necessary in the way the collective farms were led by the Party. The Plenum instructed the regional and area committees and the Central Committees of the Communist Party in the republics "...to improve the guidance given by the Party to the rural district committees and to strive to make the district Party committees completely responsible for the state and development of the collective farms and to make them delve deep into all the details of collective-farm life and take measures to strengthen each collective farm individually".²

¹ *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 6, 1971, p. 212.

² *ibid.*, p. 259.

In order to put an end to superficial and formalistic management of collective farms, Party organisations had to constantly increase their managerial know-how and expertise, to devote constant study to the economics and productive activity of the collective farms, to strengthen their links with the collective-farm masses and raise the standard of all the mass political work carried out among the collective-farm peasantry. The experience of organising the collective farms shows that a weakening in Party influence on the collective farms and a weakening in the political work carried out among the masses inevitably led either to their muddling through in their work, or to armchair administering and too much ordering about, which in both cases results in the disorganisation of the collective-farm mass. The Plenum of the Party Central Committee instituted deputy directors to manage the political work in all the machine-and-tractor stations, aiming to improve the mass political work and strengthen the role of the collective-farm Party organisations in production activity.

The resolutions passed by the February Plenum of the Party Central Committee armed the Party and the collective-farm peasantry with an urgent programme for the future development of agriculture now that the war was over. As a result the harvests even of 1947 and 1948 were almost equivalent to the harvest reaped in the best pre-war year. Despite the significant reduction in the size of area sown and in the technical equipment of agricultural production, the state received about as much grain as it had in the years before the war. This in turn allowed the government, as early as the second year of post-war work, to remove the restrictions on food products and end rationing in the country.

Aiming to increase stock-breeding the Central Committee of the Party and the USSR Council of Ministers passed the "Three-year Plan for Developing the Productive Livestock Publicly Owned in the Collective and State Farms (1949-1951)". It was essential to bring to an end the lag in publicly run stock-raising, as quickly as was possible, and to ensure such an increase in production as would promote a significant future rise in the material standards of the collective farms and as would satisfy the growing needs of the population in meat, fats, milk and milk products, as well as the growing needs of light industry in wool, leather and other animal products.

Thus the Communist Party, gradually and confidently, branch after branch, rehabilitated agriculture and consolidated the collective-farm system.

3. LARGE-SCALE MEASURES TO STRENGTHEN THE MATERIAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES OF AGRICULTURE

In the hardest of conditions that characterised the post-war period, the Communist Party made gigantic efforts to hunt out material resources and mobilise the masses into reviving the national economy so badly ruined and exhausted by the war. As the production activity of industry improved, so did the steady process of boosting the agricultural economy. A very positive aspect of Party activity at this time was that it found such levers as would raise the masses up and spur them on to ever new, creative and constructive feats. *The indomitable optimism and energetic spirit, fostered by Lenin, always have been and always will be the strongest, most attractive factor in the activity of the Communist Party.*

A reflection of this great spirit was provided by the state plan for the transformation of the natural environment, passed in 1948, in which provision was made over a number of years for forest areas to be planted to protect fields, and for the construction of ponds and reservoirs to ensure stable harvests in the steppe and forest-steppe areas of the European part of the USSR. According to this plan vast stretches of the steppe and forest-steppe regions of the central black-earth zone of the Ukraine, Volga area and North Caucasus—areas famous for their highly fertile black soil—were to be covered by huge forest plantations to protect their fields.

These districts are known as the granary of the Soviet Union. In 1940 the sown area of collective farms in this zone made up more than half of the sown area of the collective farms of the USSR. The major stock-raising base of the country is also concentrated here. And thus it was that on the broad territory of these regions provision was made over the following two or three five-year plans to set up large-scale state belts of protective forest, the total length of which would be 5,320 kilometres. Plans were made to establish forest plantations to protect state and collective-farm fields, amounting to an area of 5,709,000 hectares.

This plan to transform the countryside was an important stage in the development of socialist agriculture. Such examples of transforming the natural environment, of overcoming the elements, are unknown in the history of agriculture. Bringing about such a programme became possible in the conditions established by the social-

ist state, which provided not just vast material and technical resources but also the giant strength of the Soviet people.

The plan for the transformation of the natural environment was a manifesto for the peasantry in their struggle to overcome drought and ensure stable harvests. By 1949 the collective and state farms had already fulfilled their plan for that year's forest planting nearly twice over. More than three decades have passed since the work on carrying out this plan was first begun; many of the protective forest belts have become powerful forces in preventing drought and other incursions by the elements, they have adorned previously deserted steppe-lands and have brought rural workers great benefits during the hard work at harvest-time.

The building of the biggest hydro-electric power stations and canals in the world was a brilliant new reflection of the power of the Soviet state and of its success in building communism in the Soviet Union. These are bound to raise the productive forces of the country, and of socialist agriculture in particular, higher still. In 1950 the Central Committee of the Party and the USSR Council of Ministers published resolutions one after the other on gigantic building projects: the Kuibyshev and Stalingrad hydro-electric power stations on the Volga, the Main Turkmen Canal from Amu Darya to Krasnovodsk, the Kakhovka hydro-electric power station on the Dnieper, the South-Ukrainian and North-Crimean Canals, the Volga-Don Shipping Canal and the irrigation systems for lands in the Volga, Rostov and Stalingrad regions. These great building projects, designed by prominent scientists and specialists, were a giant step forward in constructing a material and technological base for communist society.

The great construction on the Volga, Dnieper and Amu Darya made it possible to irrigate a huge area, approximately 26 million hectares. The vast force of electric power came to socialist agriculture, making the mechanisation of agricultural production possible on a broad scale. Today these constructions are in operation and are working for communism.

The onward development of the productive forces of the country took place on a powerful industrial base, making it possible to strengthen the mechanisation of agricultural production and to introduce into it more and more highly improved technology. 150,000 tractors (fifteen horse-power), 29,000 combines (12,000 of which were self-propelled), 64,000 lorries and more than 1,600,000 tractor-drawn implements and other agricultural machines were introduced into socialist agriculture in 1949. In all, this is 3-4 times the amount of automobiles and agricultural machines introduced into

agriculture in pre-war 1940. Tractor and agricultural machine factories put out four times as many tractors in 1950 as they had in 1940, 3.8 times as many combines, 4 times as many tractorised ploughs, more than 3 times as many cultivators and nearly 6 times as many sowing-machines.

It is characteristic that the broad mechanisation of labour now took place in all branches of agriculture, embracing all the agricultural processes unlike in the pre-war period. The collective-farm fields were worked by motor harvesters, sugar-beet combines, flax combines, potato-planting and harvesting machines, cotton-picking and hemp-harvesting machines, motorised mowers and other tools of modern agricultural machine technology. The use of electric power increased in the collective farms. The amount of electrified collective farms was three times that of the pre-war period.

Whole districts and regions with complete electrification emerged. Now it was a matter of bringing about full electrification in the countryside, producing a complete change in production and everyday life, and raising the material and cultural level of the collective-farm peasantry. Thus Lenin's programme of mechanising and electrifying agricultural production was gradually realised in practice.

During the period of building socialism in the countryside the Party did a tremendous amount of work in consolidating the collective farms and accumulated a great deal of experience in organising complex and many-sided socialist production in agriculture.

The many years of experience accumulated in organising the collective farms has shown that large collective farms have enormous advantages over small ones. Only with large collective farms it is possible to make full use of modern machinery in agriculture, to introduce higher forms of socialist-organised labour into agricultural production, to significantly increase the standard of farming and to make agriculture varied and highly productive.

As a result of the gradual restoration of the productive forces, the collective farms grew significantly stronger; a generation of qualified skilled workers grew up in the collective farms and many people became agronomists, livestock and machine technology specialists. Agricultural production began to churn out innovators and exemplary workers. The collective farms were equipped with increasingly modern machinery which made it possible to mechanise all the basic agricultural processes for cereals and most of the ones for cultivating and harvesting such crops as need tilling between the rows.

In these conditions, characterised by a fast development of mechanisation, it became even more pressing a task to amalgamate the collective farms, as the small collective farms, with limited opportunities for using the achievements of modern machine technology and agricultural science, were beginning to hold back further growth in socialist agriculture. In 1950 the Party and Government, in full agreement with the collective-farm peasantry, brought in a most important measure all through the country—the amalgamation of the collective farms, which resulted in a larger scale of co-operation in agriculture.

As a result the 250,000 small collective farms were replaced by 93,000 amalgamated ones. The larger collective farms were enhanced by the introduction of the most qualified and experienced skilled workers. With the amalgamation of the collective farms went the setting up of conditions for the organisation of the right rotation of crops and for the allocation of crops in the fields under rotation. The production-team became more important and the area given over to arable farming was increased. The stock-raising sub-farms became stronger. The amalgamation of the collective farms made it possible to improve the work of the machine and tractor stations, to distribute the forces of the machine-and-tractor pools correctly and to reshape the work done by tractor-teams on a higher organisational and technical basis.

One should note that several politicians, coming up against the difficulties involved in strengthening the economic organisation of the collective farms, proposed the reorganisation of the collective and state farms and the construction of agricultural towns. Quite frankly, this would have been a fatal line to take in these conditions. Firstly, it would have deviated from the Leninist co-operative path for developing the countryside: secondly, it would have weakened the transition that was just beginning of the collective-farm masses of the new socialist states to the path of co-operative development. Naturally the Party decided against this erroneous line.

The amalgamation of the collective farms marked a new stage in their development. All the many years of work done beforehand by the Party in strengthening the economic organisation of the collective farms and creating a base of machine technology for them to rest on, prepared the conditions for setting up even larger agricultural production enterprises in the countryside, capable of developing their productive forces still more quickly, increasing the output of agricultural products and raising public wealth.

4. THE FIRST POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC RESULTS OF THE POST-WAR YEARS

One cannot overestimate the determination and enthusiasm shown by the Soviet people in the post-war years; they will be heralded as heroes for many centuries for their work. The Soviet Union rose up once more, as a giant of progress and civilisation, just five years after the war was over. It became even more powerful and influential, its international and internal position became more favourable and stable than it had ever been in the past, and its authority among the countries of the world grew immeasurably. There were of course good grounds for this.

Firstly, it was impossible not to admire the unparalleled courage and steadfastness for which the Soviet people are famous, both during the war and after it. It fell to the lot of the Soviet people, not just to liberate their own country, the first socialist state in the world, but also to save world civilisation from fascist obscurantism. The main result of this was that socialism extended beyond the frontiers of one country and became a factor of magnetic force on an international level. The hostile iron ring of capitalist countries encircling the Soviet Union for long years, which pinned down the sole socialist country, was broken. A united new system was formed, bringing together the socialist states both in the west and in the east. As a counterbalance to the world capitalist economic system, a new, hitherto unseen world socialist system began to take shape and develop.

Secondly, the international communist movement came to the forefront in a blaze of glory. The communist parties of Europe and Asia, heading the patriotic forces during the war, came out of it even more hardened, united and ready for battle, with tremendous influence over the masses in their countries. They became better represented in a number of countries in parliaments, and trade unions and other mass democratic organisations. Such major European communist parties as the French and the Italian were represented in government and occupied important positions in it. The forces of socialism and revolutionary democracy became extremely strong in the world.

Thirdly, influenced by the socialist and revolutionary democratic forces the national liberation movement attained a hitherto unseen scale, colonial empires disintegrated and the century-old oppression of imperialist supremacy was smashed. This was a great victory for the peoples concerned, won under the influence of socialist ideas.

That the imperialist parts of the world had diminished, that at the same time those under socialism had grown, as had the liberation movements of different nations, was obvious to all. One can only admire the way the world revolutionary process developed, and continues to develop, according to the laws discovered by the founders of scientific communism.

Insofar as the internal situation of the USSR is concerned, as a result of the post-war five-year plan for the development of its national economy being successfully carried out, the country not only restored its pre-war economic potential but even overtook it considerably in all its branches. It now really seemed possible to return to the task set by the Eighteenth Party Congress, that of gradually transferring from socialism to communism, and the Party got down to giving serious consideration to measures for putting this aim into practice.

The 19th Party Congress assembled in October 1952. This was an important event in the life of the Party and the people. The Congress passed the fifth five-year plan for the development of the national economy of the USSR, changed the name of the Party from 'The All-Union Communist Party (of Bolsheviks)' to 'The Communist Party of the Soviet Union', and passed new Rules of the CPSU.

The 19th Congress summed up the results of the post-war five-year plan, and examined and approved the five-year plan for the development of the national economy of the USSR that was to follow. Like the pre-war plans, the post-war ones were determined first of all by the requirements involved in the utmost development of the productive forces of the country, in satisfying the constantly growing material and cultural needs of Soviet society, in closely co-ordinating industry and agriculture and in ensuring their planned, proportional development.

One of the most remarkable results of socialist construction was that during 1949-1952 the working peasantry of the youngest socialist republics in the Soviet Union - Moldavia (Bessarabia), Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia - started out firmly on the collective-farm path of development, breaking decisively and for ever with their previous small individual-peasant farming economy. Soviet power established in these republics in 1940 put an end to capitalist and colonial oppression and opened up the broad road to economic and cultural upsurge for the people. The young Soviet republics were quick to develop along socialist lines, thanks to the enormous help afforded them by the Soviet Government, the Communist Party and their sister republics.

Soviet land law came into force in these republics, ending for ever the age-old injustice that characterised the previous system of land-tenure. Peasants who had previously owned little or no land were now given the right to use it, while the big landowners were dispossessed. Thus for example in Latvia, 51,000 landless peasants and 23,000 with small amounts of land were given more than 600,000 hectares of land; in Moldavia 140,000 peasants with little or no land had 245,000 hectares of land made over to them. Once they had been given the land and vast material support from the Soviet Government, the peasantry of these republics began to transfer to new, socialist ways of running agriculture, using the advanced techniques piloted by the collective farms of the USSR. Even before the war more than 500 collective farms and 22 machine and tractor stations had been organised in Bessarabia, while 50 machine and tractor stations and 518 machine and horse hire centres had been set up in Latvia, helping the peasantry to work the land and unite in production co-operatives. The peasants of Lithuania and Estonia followed a similar, socialist course of development.

Once the war had been won the newly liberated Soviet republics of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Moldavia, with the enormous assistance afforded them by the Soviet government and their sister union republics, were very quick to transform their agriculture on a new, socialist basis. The collectivisation of their agriculture was on the whole completed throughout by mid-1949, under the guidance of the Party organisations.

Approximately 4,000 collective farms were established in Latvia, uniting 82 per cent of all peasant households. The collective farms had in socialised use 2,304,730 hectares of land, 3,875 units breeding cattle, 1,579 pig-breeding, 1,612 sheep-breeding and 949 poultry units. In Lithuania 4,100 collective farms were organised, uniting 130,308 peasant households; 3,352 of these collective farms had a total of 5,713 animal-husbandry units. In Estonia more than 70 per cent of peasant households were united into collectives. Collectivisation was completed in the western districts of Moldavia (Bessarabia). By November 1949, 366,400 peasant households (more than 80 per cent) there were united in 1,743 collective farms.

The victory gained by socialism in the agriculture of these republics led to the elimination in them, in the person of the kulaks, of the last remnants of capitalist elements. The peasantry of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Moldavia liberated themselves for ever from kulak enslavement, poverty and ruin and took the victorious

collective-farm path, which opens up broad prospects for developing the productive forces in agriculture and for a truly civilised and prosperous life.

The experience of collective-farm construction in the USSR showed the working peasantry in other countries that they could gain true liberation only from the hands of the working class led by the Communist Party, by struggling for liberation in close alliance with the working class. The land reforms carried out in the people's democracies aroused great enthusiasm among the peasant masses, who were given the opportunity to build their lives anew. In these countries a mass co-operative movement was launched among the peasantry, associations for joint cultivation of the land were established and state farms, machine and tractor stations and tractor columns were organised. As well as the most simple forms of agricultural co-operation, consumer co-operation in the field of trade was extensively developed. The development of simple co-operative associations into collective-farm production amalgamations was gradually implemented, promoted in large measure by a study of the experience of collective-farm construction in the Soviet Union.

The desire to study Soviet experience of building large collective farms more closely drew numerous delegations of peasants from the people's democracies to the USSR. They had the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the work of the collective farms, the machine and tractor stations, the state farms, experimental stations and other agricultural research institutions. On leaving the Soviet Union, delegations of peasants declared their determination to rebuild their agriculture on new, socialist lines.

The peasants of the people's democracies found in the experience of collective-farm construction in the USSR the answer to the question of how they were to build a new life for the free peasant, how to build socialism in the countryside.

CHAPTER XX

THE EMERGENCE OF SOCIALISM BEYOND THE FRAMEWORK OF A SINGLE COUNTRY AND ITS TRANSFORMATION INTO A WORLD SYSTEM

1. THE FINAL AND COMPLETE VICTORY OF SOCIALISM IN THE SOVIET UNION

Substantiation of the possibility of achieving the victory of socialism initially in one or several countries which have emancipated themselves from the rule of capital forms the main thesis in Lenin's theory of socialist revolution. Because of historical circumstances it fell to the Soviet Union, which blazed a trail for mankind into the new world, to build socialism alone for a quarter of a century. Solidly ringed on all sides by hostile capitalist countries, it had to create for the first time a social system which would surpass in all respects all those that had previously existed. Without this main condition, the existence and defence of the country against enemies could not be counted upon. There were many prophets who indefatigably repeated the same words: "The Soviet Union will not endure, it will not build socialism". And on every occasion the following argument was invariably advanced in proof of this claim: "there are no absolute guarantees against the restoration of capitalism".

We have already noted that this argument was first advanced by Plekhanov at the Fourth Congress of the RSDLP in 1906 when he came out against Lenin's theory of the development of bourgeois-democratic revolution into socialist revolution. However, history has shown that Russia's development proceeded not according to Plekhanov's prediction but according to Lenin's blueprint. Eleven years later, socialist revolution won a brilliant victory in Russia. Now, armed with Lenin's theory of the possibility of building socialism in one country, the Party could embark upon the practical implementation of this theory of genius. However, it was precisely at this decisive stage that Plekhanov's followers again advanced and tried to prove his former argument concerning the

inevitability of the restoration of capitalism, against which, supposedly, no obstacles existed.

This argument was, in fact, not so simple to refute. It demanded profound analysis and correct scientific conclusions. Naturally, no Marxist could give a guarantee against the restoration of capitalism which was serious and real danger. But, at the same time, no capitalist state could guarantee that it could withstand the pressure of the revolutionary forces of the working class and the entire working people. Consequently, the possibility of the restoration of capitalism was more than matched by the possibility of decisive action by the popular masses. True revolutionaries are marked off from reformists by their unbounded faith in the inexhaustible revolutionary energy of the working class and all working people, the real creators of socialism.

Let us examine this question on its merits, in terms of the actual situation in the land of Soviets after the victorious revolution. Lenin pointed out that, initially, the overthrown exploiting classes were stronger than the toiling classes which had attained power; exactly the same way, the old economic relations that survived, especially the prevailing small commodity peasant production, were more favourable to the re-establishment of capitalism than to the development of socialism. Moreover, imperialism could not reconcile itself with the existence of the only workers' and peasants' state in the world and was missing no opportunity to attempt to crush it by military force.

Restoration of capitalism in one country building socialism was therefore a real danger, the most immediate one facing the country. This was potentially possible in two ways: *on the one hand*, by means of internal evolutionary processes, the gradual strengthening of the private sector and its coming to prevail over the socialist sector that was just taking shape; *on the other hand*, by means of foreign military intervention by the united forces of the imperialist states, relying on the survivals of the overthrown classes and elements hostile to Soviet power. *In the general discussion that began in the Party after Lenin's death the possibility of building socialism in one country was the central issue and approaches to achieving it differed. Consequently, the entire problem consisted in whether or not the restoration of capitalism could be prevented.*

The Trotskyites asserted that these two groups of contradictions, i.e., internal and external contradictions, could be resolved only on an international scale, on condition of the world proletarian revolution. Otherwise, the restoration of capitalism was inevitable and the defeat of socialism could not be prevented. This concep-

tion would have disarmed the Party and the working class and doomed them to inactivity. Indeed, how could socialism be built if it were known in advance that to build it was impossible?

The Leninist Bolsheviks advanced counter-arguments. Basing themselves on dialectical analysis of internal and external contradictions, they upheld the Leninist idea that existing contradictions, internal and external, could be fully overcome, that these contradictions were far from uniform and would certainly not be resolved by uniform methods. Hence, the victory of socialism had to be regarded in terms of these two differing groups of contradictions: *complete* victory and *final* victory.

The first group of contradictions related to the sphere of internal socio-economic relations. It was resolved by means of profound transforming processes, by an entire complex of political and economic measures and, in particular, by industrialisation of the country, collectivisation of agriculture and cultural development of the people. The alliance of the working class and the peasantry was the principal motive force in solving the tasks facing the Soviet state. Consequently, the Leninists stated, there were sufficient forces and means within the country to preclude the possibility of capitalism's restoration. This was, in fact, what happened. Twenty years of creative work were required of the Soviet people to ensure the complete victory of socialism in the USSR. In the Marxist understanding, this meant implementing the first phase of communism.

The second group of contradictions concerned mutual relations between the country of socialism and the capitalist world. This area was incomparably more complex and difficult than the former. Nevertheless, here, too, there were sufficient levers to defend the land of socialism and make its victory final. The strongest and firmest guarantee, attracting all honest people in the world, was the proclamation of a policy of peace and co-operation among peoples which the Soviet government consistently pursued from the first days of its existence; then came the mighty strength of the international working class, which stood up in defence of the Soviet socialist state, the true homeland of all working people in the world.

It is not surprising, therefore, that whenever the imperialists raised their bloody hands against the land of Soviets, the working class of the capitalist countries built a bastion against the tyrants and oppressors. "Hands off the USSR!", "Defend the cradle of the revolution!"—these slogans of the world proletariat are fresh in the memories of all. Moreover, there were also deep contradic-

tions between the capitalist countries themselves, which were skillfully exploited by the land of Soviets. The second contradiction, therefore, was also resolved in favour of building socialism in one country.

World War II was a serious test of the vitality of the land of socialism. The war showed both the internal strength of the socialist system in the USSR and the strength of international solidarity among the international working class, which rose up to its full height in defence of the USSR. This was the decisive factor in the victory of socialist revolutions in a number of West European and Asian countries. In defeating the world forces of reaction and breaking the ring of capitalist encirclement, the Party gained the unassailable right to state that the victory of socialism in the USSR was not only complete but also final. The Soviet Union had now received a strong support in the shape of the socialist states of both the West and the East. Lenin's brilliant theory of the possibility of building socialism initially in one country and the inevitability of a gradual transition towards socialism by other countries had been tested by life and proved to be far-sighted and fully substantiated. This process was now irreversible.

Thus the first and main outcome of the path traversed by the USSR since the October Revolution is the full and final victory of socialism in one country. The second, equally important outcome is that socialism has emerged from the framework of one country to become a world system. The collapse of capitalism and the growth of socialism have become a global factor. The danger that capitalism might be restored in the Soviet Union has, therefore, evaporated.

All these factors, which constitute the principal mechanisms in the contemporary world process of social development, were sufficiently fully analysed in the historic documents of the 19th, 20th and 22nd congresses of the CPSU. Relying on the concrete factor of the full and final victory achieved by socialism in the USSR, the Party drew the correct and thoroughly substantiated conclusion that the basic content of the modern age is the transition from capitalism to socialism on a world-wide scale. This conclusion proceeded from profound theoretical analysis of the international situation and will remain an example of the creative approach in resolving the urgent issues of major policy.

What were the practical reasons for such far-reaching conclusions?

Firstly, the triumphs in building socialism in the USSR, which turned the scientific ideas of socialism into material strength and

the motive force of the world revolutionary process. The emergence of socialism beyond the framework of one country and its transformation into a factor of world scale have fundamentally changed the balance of social and material forces and ensured that the socialist system has an invulnerable position on a world-wide scale. By 1956 the socialist countries accounted for more than a quarter of the world's area and over a third of its population. Almost one thousand million people have liberated themselves for ever from enslavement to capitalists and landowners, stepping out determinedly on the path of socialism. The manufactured products of the socialist countries constituted almost one-third of world industrial output. The socialist system accounted for almost 38 per cent of all coal mined in the world, 26 per cent of world pig-iron production, 25 per cent of the world output of steel, approximately 40 per cent of the world grain harvest and over 30 per cent of the world cotton crop. The point at issue was no longer the restoration of capitalism in one or other socialist country: it was to hasten the collapse of capitalism throughout the world by the joint efforts of the socialist countries and in close union with all revolutionary and progressive forces.

Secondly, influenced by the victory of socialism in the USSR and the brilliant successes of the new countries of Europe and Asia that have taken the path of socialism, the national liberation movement in colonial and dependent countries developed with unprecedented force and on an unprecedented scale. Mankind entered the era of the decay and collapse of the shameful colonial system of imperialism. During 10-12 post-war years 25 new independent states appeared on the map of the world, having cast off the centuries-old yoke of imperialism. The result of the establishment of the world socialist system and the collapse of the colonial empires was not only a sharp reduction in the sphere of capitalist relations and imperialist exploitation, but also a general enfeeblement of imperialism. Immense masses of people and enormous territories containing inexhaustible natural resources ceased to be the reserves of imperialism.

Thirdly, the tremendous growth of communist forces throughout the world. Having arisen as an organised movement on the crest of the Great October Socialist Revolution, international communism, steadily spreading and taking deep roots throughout the world, has developed in an historically short period of time into the greatest progressive force of the modern age, which exercises a powerful influence on the development of society and the future of the peoples of the world. The communist movement grew es-

pecially rapidly during the war years and the post-war period. While there were Communist parties in 43 countries before the war, mainly in Europe, numbering approximately 4.2 million members, organised detachments of Communists existed in 74 countries after the end of the war. Over the same period their total membership increased eight-fold to exceed 33 million people.

We have adduced only three factors, but even they are sufficient to show how the world has changed and how favourable the conditions for world socialism are. Is it possible seriously to talk of the danger of a restoration of capitalism in the socialist countries, given such an objective balance of economic and material and technical factors in the world? Similarly, is it possible seriously to talk of the restoration of capitalism, given such a favourable balance of social and political forces in the world, when subjective factors, too, have taken shape sufficiently clearly in favour of world socialism? It may be stated boldly that conditions for the growth both of the democratic and of the socialist movements have never been as favourable as they are now.

All these internal and international circumstances made it imperative for the Party to elaborate a new strategy and tactics applicable to the new conditions. This task, which was of immense theoretical and political importance, was accomplished by the 20th Congress of the CPSU. Among the other supremely important measures taken by the Party congress, it subjected to critical analysis the consequences of the personality cult, which emerged at a certain stage of socialist construction and did clear damage to the great cause.

Historical experience testifies that the strategy of the Marxist-Leninist parties, elaborated on the basis of theoretical analysis of the principal social laws, corresponds most fully and precisely to the requirements of the basic trends of world development. This is a long-term course and is less liable to possible errors. Tactics—the forms and methods of the Party's activity at different stages of the revolutionary struggle—are extremely fluid and less secure against errors and shortcomings. This is quite understandable, since in its activity directed towards transforming the old world the Party is called upon to take into account an immense number of the highly varied factors: the balance of political forces, the level of class-consciousness and the mood of the masses, rapidly changing external political circumstances, etc. Errors and shortcomings result from the overcoming of complex contradictions, difficulties and obstacles on the path of development of social forces.

The strength of the Party, its maturity and militancy, lie in the fact that it is not afraid to acknowledge its mistakes and to proceed boldly to correct them.

2. THE PARTY'S POLICY FOR A RAPID ADVANCE IN SOCIALIST AGRICULTURE

As we have already noted, the post-war five-year economic development plan was successfully fulfilled. This was a source of pleasure to Soviet people, inspiring them with a feeling of confidence that the destruction and devastation of war would soon be overcome. However, weak spots, hampering the successful advance of the country along the path of rebirth, also emerged in the course of implementing the post-war fifth five-year plan. These consisted, principally, in the imbalance in the development of the economy, namely, the backwardness of agriculture, whose growth rates were far behind those of industry.

How appreciable this imbalance was can be seen from the fact that industrial output in the USSR increased by 130 per cent by comparison with the pre-war period, while gross agricultural output (in comparable prices) increased by only 10 per cent. Although agricultural production also exceeded its pre-war level, the growth in agricultural output was nevertheless so insignificant that it could not satisfy the increasing needs of the people for food or of industry for raw materials.

The Central Committee of the Communist Party conducted a profound and comprehensive analysis of agricultural growth during the post-war years and revealed the reasons hampering its further advance. Despite substantial injections of new technology into agriculture, agricultural output on the whole grew slowly. Many valuable measures to develop agriculture elaborated in the resolution of the February Plenary Meeting of the Party Central Committee in 1947 were not fully implemented. The agricultural machinery that arrived in the countryside was not satisfactorily utilised, with the result that agricultural productivity remained low.

What were the reasons for the slow growth of agriculture and its low productivity?

There were a number of reasons, both objective and subjective. We may point above all to the extremely great material difficulties which confronted the Soviet state in the post-war period. Even given the most fervent desire of the Party and the government to help socialist agriculture, opportunities to do so were extremely limited. The interests of immediate, priority development of heavy

industry required the switching of enormous resources to this sector in order to implement to the letter the policy laid down by the Party.

But this was only one of the reasons for the slow growth of agriculture. The main reason was that the internal resources inherent in the very system of collective-farm production were not fully utilised. Moreover, serious shortcomings emerged in labour organisation and the system of payment and in implementing the basic Leninist principle of increasing the material incentives of collective farmers to develop the social economy, which led to a substantial syphoning-off of labour from the collective farms to the towns. These and other negative factors had an adverse effect not only on the development of the social economy of the collective farms but also on the condition of the personal plots of collective farmers, which are an important means of improving their well-being.

To this must be added the fact that the former tax and procurement policies did not promote the development of the productive forces in agriculture. Increased and sometimes burdensome taxes on collective farms and collective farmers, combined with relatively low procurement and purchase prices for agricultural products, undermined the material incentive of the collective-farm peasantry to develop collective farming. It is true that state retail prices for agricultural products were also extremely low, but the benefit from this accrued chiefly to the urban population.

Proceeding from existing conditions, the Central Committee of the Party adopted urgent measures to eliminate the backwardness of agriculture and correct shortcomings in agricultural management. A sharp improvement in all branches of agricultural production had to be achieved in a very short period of time by mobilising all the forces of the people, decisively changing methods of Party direction of collective and state farms and by turning these into highly productive enterprises. The state now had better conditions and opportunities for achieving this goal, including a rapidly-growing large-scale socialist industry, which had accumulated funds not only for its own internal development but also for more rapid development of all other sectors of the economy; the great strength of the alliance between the working class and the collective-farm peasantry; the monolithic solidarity of the entire Soviet people, which was ready to fulfil any task set by the Party and the government.

The September 1953 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU reviewed the state of agriculture and elaborated an entire

system of measures to ensure the further growth of agricultural production and improve its management by Party and Soviet bodies. Implementation of the measures set forth by the Party and the government eliminated the imbalance between the growth rates of large-scale socialist industry and those of agricultural production and ensured their further advance and correct proportions in the economy of the country.

Increased mechanisation of labour-intensive work, the introduction of a new planning procedure in agriculture and the granting to collective farms of the right to make changes to the Collective-Farm Rules in accordance with local conditions, the broad practical application of achievements in science and advanced working methods, massive assistance to the collective farms by qualified personnel and measures to improve political and organisational work in the countryside—all this enabled the Party to create conditions for a sharp upturn in agricultural production ensuring an increase in the output of food and raw materials for industry.

Measures by the Party and the government to regulate the tax and procurement policy and to increase the material incentive of collective farmers to develop the social economy had great importance in consolidating the alliance of the working class and the peasantry. The Central Committee of the Party and the government reduced the norms set for compulsory deliveries by collective farms to the state of a number of agricultural products and substantially raised prices for products supplied by way of state procurements and purchases. In addition, important measures were implemented relating to improvement of the personal subsidiary husbandry of collective farmers: norms for compulsory deliveries of animal products were substantially reduced and the system of taxation applied to collective farmers was changed. Monetary taxes paid by collective farmers' households were initially almost halved; then, from 1958 onwards, the plots of collective farmers, industrial and office workers were completely exempted from compulsory deliveries of agricultural products.

The resolution of the September Plenum of the CPSU Central Committee and subsequent decisions of the Party and the government directed at achieving a decisive advance in socialist agriculture and an improvement in the material and cultural levels of working people aroused a feeling of profound satisfaction in the entire Soviet people. The Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU in February-March 1954 discussed the question of further increases in grain production in the country and the open-

ing up of virgin and disused lands. After rating grain farming as the basis of all agricultural production, the Plenum adopted the decision rapidly to increase grain production both by means of substantially raising grain yields and by opening up new virgin and disused lands in Kazakhstan, Siberia, the Urals, the Volga region and, in part, in areas of the North Caucasus.

Understandably, only the joint efforts of urban and rural working people could produce a rapid advance in all branches of agriculture. Thousands of highly qualified workers, engineers, agronomists, zootechnicians, veterinarians and other specialists responded to the call of the Party, leaving to work permanently in rural areas. The Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU approved the initiative of the Central Committee of the Young Communist League and local Young Communist organisations in the organised dispatch of 100,000 volunteer machine-operators from the ranks of Young Communists and young people to work at machine and tractor stations and on state farms opening up the virgin lands.

A patriotic movement of working men and women in town and country aimed at opening up the virgin and disused lands and boosting agriculture was launched throughout the country. As early as 1954, the first step had been taken towards a sharp increase in agricultural production. This had enormous political as well as economic importance. Wide-spread and effective assistance by the towns and industrial centres to agriculture in the form of machinery and qualified personnel and the joint struggle by the working people of town and country to boost agricultural production constituted a splendid means of further consolidating the alliance of the working class and the collective-farm peasantry.

The measures adopted by the Central Committee of the Party and the government to ensure increased grain farming and the resulting improvement in this area enabled the Party to raise the issue of a decisive advance in the development of animal husbandry on collective and state farms. The Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU in January 1955 specially reviewed the problem of increasing the output of animal products and set forth practical measures to ensure both an increase in the size of herds and a rise in productivity. It pointed to the need for establishing a strong fodder base on collective and state farms, achieving the maximum degree of mechanisation of this branch of farming and increasing material incentives for workers engaged in cattle-breeding. These objectives faced the collective and state farms with the important task of expanding the area sown in maize, a highly valuable grain and fodder crop.

The year 1956 saw marked increases in the gross and marketable output of all branches of agricultural production. The productive forces of society in the country had now been raised to their proper height and given broad scope for development; the Soviet people under the leadership of the Communist Party, directed its will and energy towards mastering the elemental forces of nature on an enormous scale and subordinating them to the interests of socialist society. This was manifested especially vividly in the struggle of Soviet people to subdue the immense expanses of the virgin lands in the east, untouched for centuries.

It may be said without exaggeration that, during the five years following the September 1953 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, truly sweeping measures were implemented to develop the economy of the collective farms, the machine and tractor stations and the state farms and strengthen their management. The measures worked out by the Party were so timely and corresponded so well to the vital interests of the entire people that they evoked in the people an immense upsurge of creative energy and in a short time produced remarkable results in increasing the output of grain, animal products and industrial crops and improving standards of well-being for the people.

The 20th Congress critically analysed the Party's leadership of all aspects of state, economic and cultural work. It gave full approval to the important measures taken by the September and subsequent plenary meetings to strengthen the management of collective and state farms and machine and tractor stations and achieve a sharp improvement in the economy of agricultural production. In its resolution the Central Committee of the CPSU pledged itself to continue with unflagging energy the task of advancing agriculture, mobilising the Party and the entire Soviet people to create an abundance of food for the population and of raw materials for light industry.

3. THE WIDER FRONTIERS OF SOCIALIST AGRICULTURE IN THE SOVIET UNION

The economic advance of Soviet society is most graphically traced in the socialist system of agriculture. Having successfully overcome the serious consequences of the war, Soviet agriculture entered upon a period marked by a significant upsurge in its productive forces following measures adopted by the Party.

What were the beneficial forces that advanced socialist agriculture? What was the secret of the major economic changes that occurred in the countryside?

This was made possible above all by the fact that Soviet agriculture, like the entire economy of the USSR, relies on the most progressive, planned socialist system of economy as well as on the collective-farm system, which contains truly limitless reserves and opportunities for rapid advance of the productive forces. However, this is not all. Experience has shown that even the most advanced, the most progressive socio-economic system, such as the Soviet collective-farm system, is not yet capable of solving by itself all problems. An important and, we would say, a decisive role is played here by such factors as correct organisational forms and methods of Party leadership and skilful application of the economic levers of state regulation in developing the social economy. The effectiveness of these factors has been tested by time and confirmed by many years of practical direction of collective-farm construction.

In the course of its comparatively short history the new system of farming has overcome many difficulties and obstacles, withstood severe tests and proved its great vital force. It is sufficient to recall the years of mass collectivisation, when the foundations of the collective-farm system were being laid. Numerous class enemies and their accomplices tried by all means to prevent the socialist reform of agriculture and to destroy its basis. The enemy mercilessly destroyed the productive forces of the young collective farms through sabotage and wrecking, causing them enormous economic losses. Alternatively, one may take an important stage in collective-farm construction—the years of organisational consolidation of the collective farms. This stage was also associated with large material expenditure.

In the course of collective-farm construction correct forms of managing collective farms had to be discovered, tested and introduced, appropriate principles of organising, taking account of and remunerating labour had to be worked out, public ownership had to be strengthened and all elements of the collective farms' economic activity had to be put in working order. This represented a new and extremely difficult undertaking. It has already been stated that, as a result of great organisational work by the Party, the Soviet collective-farm system had become sufficiently established in the pre-war years to be able to make full use of its advantages. Moreover, Party organisations had accumulated wide and varied experience of work in the countryside. However, a hard and prolonged war halted its development and agriculture, as we

have shown, sustained enormous losses. Five years of intense work were required to restore the pre-war level of the agricultural economy. It should not be forgotten here that during this period the Party and the state had limited opportunities for simultaneously developing both industry and agriculture at a rapid rate.

All these unfavourable circumstances were, unquestionably, reflected both in the development of the collective-farm system and at the level of agricultural production. Moreover, earlier organisational forms and methods of directing collective and state farms did not correspond to the changed conditions of socio-economic development. That was why the Central Committee of the Party, in drawing up a programme for a sharp increase in agricultural production, subjected the former agrarian policy to detailed analysis. The organisational forms and methods of Party leadership of the collective and state farms also came under the microscope.

In this respect an important historical role was played by the September 1953 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU, which made a fresh approach to the problems of managing socialist agriculture. In putting forward the aim of a sharp increase in agricultural production, the Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee directed principal attention towards solving the major theoretical and practical problem of full utilisation of the socialist principle of labour payment, combination of state and personal interests in building socialism, full utilisation of the material interest of the peasants in developing the social economy and wide-spread introduction of this principle into all elements of collective-farm production.

Historical experience of economic construction has shown that the socialist principle of the material interest of people in social production, closely combined with the factor of moral incentives, is a key condition for increasing labour productivity and expanding the social economy. Accordingly, the Party drew up and implemented an entire system of large-scale economic, political and organisational measures directed at strengthening the socialist system of farming and further advancing agricultural production.

These measures left a deep mark, not only in raising the practical activity of the Party and the people to their proper level, but also in enabling the further development of theoretical thinking and its enrichment with new experience of communist construction. In this respect, important results have been obtained, especially in strengthening and developing the socialist collective-farm system of agriculture. The Central Committee of the CPSU took into account the vital requirements of reality in placing great-

est importance on comprehensive development of the socialist economy as the most immediate practical issue of the modern age.

In this connection achievement of such major economic objectives as increasing the marketable surplus produced by socialist farming and developing commodity-money relations further, strict combination of public and personal interests, a speedy rise in labour productivity and reduction of the prime cost of the output produced by collective farms became pressing. Even partial implementation of these measures made it possible to effect a marked change in the direction the economy of agricultural production was developing. In turn, it also became possible to address in a new way such practical issues as the organisation, rate setting and remuneration of labour on collective farms. Instead of the former system of paying for the work of collective farmers in kind, monetary payment began to be introduced increasingly extensively. This meant that the work-day as a measure of labour expended per unit of output began to lose its importance.

These and other changes in the development of the agricultural economy required a fundamental improvement in the selection and placing of trained personnel. The trained personnel of today must above all have a profound knowledge of these new conditions and requirements in managing collective farming, a knowledge of the economy of agricultural production; they must be zealous managers and make better use of each farm's reserves and opportunities with the object of reducing the prime cost of output. All these factors are evidence that the new course in agrarian policy pursued by the Party has brought about a fundamental change in the development of the economy of socialist agriculture. It may be stated firmly that the collective-farm system has entered upon a new historical stage in its development.

A truly national struggle to open up the new virgin and disused lands, untouched for centuries, was launched in the country. In only three years 36 million hectares instead of the planned 13 million hectares of new lands were opened up in the eastern areas of the country. Soviet people were enthusiastic about the results achieved in 1956. The collective and state farms recorded a gross grain harvest of 7,800 million poods, delivering over 3,300 million poods of marketable grain to the state. The marked change in the development of grain farming brought in its wake an upsurge in animal husbandry, where tangible changes also occurred.

The co-operative property of collective farms grew and became firmly established in a comparatively brief period of time. This is vividly illustrated by the growth of the collective farms' indivi-

sible funds: in 1932 they amounted to 4,700 million rubles, in 1940 to 27,700 million rubles, in 1953 to 69,800 million rubles and in 1957 to 102,000 million rubles. A clear picture of the profound qualitative changes that have taken place in the development of the collective-farm system is given by the following indicators¹:

	1932	1940	1945	1952	1956	1957
Overall monetary income of collective farms (thousand million rubles)	4.6	20.7	20.6	42.8	94.6	95.2
Including:						
from plant growing	2.2	11.4	11.1	28.6	57.9	54.8
from animal husbandry	1.0	5.1	6.4	10.6	31.0	34.5
Total average monetary income per collective farm (thousand rubles)	22	88	94	455	1,145	1,250
per collective-farmer's household (rubles)	311	1,107	1,144	2,154	4,763	5,053

As can be seen from the table, the monetary income of collective farms rose by 120 per cent between 1952 and 1957, the contribution from animal husbandry rising by 230 per cent. As a result of the increase in marketable output, as well as of higher procurement and purchase prices, collective farms and collective farmers received 33,000 million rubles more for agricultural products in 1955 than they had received in 1952. Their receipts for agricultural products in 1956 and 1957 were respectively 57,000 million and 65,000 million rubles more than in 1952. The system of monthly monetary labour payments was introduced on 40 per cent of all Soviet collective farms. Monetary payments for workday units more than quadrupled between 1952 and 1956.

After reviewing the results of agricultural development over a five-year period and setting the target of further increasing the output of agricultural products, the December 1958 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU stated with satisfaction that "the period since the September Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU has historic importance in the life of

¹ See: *SSSR v tsifrah (1958)* (The USSR in Figures), p. 200 (in Russian).

the l'arty and the country, in the life of our people. During this period important measures were drawn up and elaborated to ensure a sharp upturn in all branches of agriculture, marking a new stage in the development and consolidation of the collective-farm system and our entire socialist system".¹

The concrete facts and figures cited in the documents of the Central Committee's Plenary Meeting showed the fundamental changes that had occurred in the development of all branches of agriculture and the colossal reserves and possibilities inherent in the Soviet Union's socialist system of agriculture. Above all, important changes had taken place in the development of grain farming, that principal and leading branch of agriculture, which plays the same leading role in agricultural production as does iron and steel making in industry. The gross grain harvest totalled 8,500 million poods in 1958; state procurement and purchases accounted for 3,500 million poods. This enabled the state fully to meet the needs of the population for grain and substantially to increase the allocation of grain for intra-farm purposes.

Successes in the development of grain farming created favourable conditions for the advance of all other branches of agriculture, especially animal husbandry. The cattle population in all branches of farming increased during the five-year period as follows: by 24 per cent for large horned cattle, including a 28 per cent increase in the number of cows, by 41 per cent for pigs and by 29 per cent for sheep. As a result of the growth in the cattle population, the output of animal products rose and the supply of these products to the population improved.

All branches of socialist agriculture were progressing at a more or less even rate towards perceptible expansion. This was true not only of grain farming and animal husbandry, which have already been discussed, but also of other branches of agriculture. The upsurge in agricultural production was accompanied by a further consolidation of socialised farming, growth in the incomes of collective farms and collective farmers and improved material standards for the entire Soviet people.

The Extraordinary 21st Congress of the CPSU in 1959 reviewed and approved control figures detailing the growth of the Soviet economy during the next seven-year period. The Directives of the Central Committee of the CPSU set out the prospects for the development of the Soviet Union in the immediate future. The Soviet people rated this historic document with full

¹ *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 7, 1971, pp. 346-347.

justification as a grand programme for full-scale communist construction. The programme aroused the admiration of Soviet people by the scope of economic and cultural construction it envisaged and therefore released a new influx of energy, an ir-repressible desire to work even more and better, giving all one's powers to the great cause of building communism.

In the course of the seven-year period major objectives in the further expansion of all sectors of the country's economy had to be achieved. Basing itself on the level of agricultural production achieved during the preceding five-year period, the congress defined new goals in agricultural development. Realisation of these objectives was to lead towards a fresh upsurge in the productive forces of agriculture. As previously, grain farming was to play the principal role in achieving this aim. However, unlike the previous five-year period, when increased grain production was basically achieved by opening up the virgin and disused lands, the main and decisive source of increased grain production during the coming seven-year period was to be improved yields resulting from better methods of cultivation and a further increase in labour productivity. Development of animal husbandry on collective and state farms was planned on a substantial scale.

Thus, having ensured the full and final victory of socialism in the USSR, the Communist Party inspired the Soviet people to new, even greater achievements—to the establishment of a material and technical basis for communism and construction of the edifice of a communist society itself. The theoretical grounding of this historic undertaking was subsequently given in the new Party Programme adopted at the 22nd Congress of the CPSU.

4. SCIENTIFIC METHODS OF DIRECTION AS THE MAIN CONDITION FOR SOCIALIST MANAGEMENT

Consolidating and expanding the socialist economy and advancing the productive forces of agriculture form one of the most complex areas in building socialism. As we have already shown, important work in this direction was done after the September 1953 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU. As a result of this work, sowing areas were substantially expanded, over a five-year period gross and marketable agricultural output increased, supply of the population improved and the collective-farm system was strengthened. During the five years from

1953 the growth rates of Soviet agriculture were sufficiently high. This was made possible by using the economic laws of socialism and increasing material incentives for rural workers, which enabled the Communist Party to mobilise the enormous reserves latent in the socialist system of farming.

However, these successes, obvious to all, were not consolidated or further developed in subsequent years. From 1959 onwards the rates of agricultural growth began to fall. Plans to boost agricultural production were not fulfilled. For example, the planned rise in gross agricultural output over the seven years from 1959 to 1965 was 70 per cent. In fact, growth over six years amounted to only 10 per cent. While gross agricultural output increased by 7.6 per cent annually between 1955 and 1959, the annual growth rate during the next six years was only 1.9 per cent. The slow-down in growth rates was especially noticeable in two important branches of agriculture—grain farming and animal husbandry. In turn, the entire economic organism both in the towns and the countryside began to experience considerable difficulties in a chain reaction.

What had happened? What were the reasons for the slow-down in the steady advance of the agricultural economy? The documents of the October and November Plenums of the Central Committee of the CPSU in 1964 gave an exhaustive answer to this question.

Instead of truly scientific methods of direction based on profound objective analysis of the real state of affairs, stereotyped directives were issued that depreciated the creative initiative of agricultural workers. Important economic laws and principles of socialist management were ignored. This was especially true of the practical conduct of procurement and purchase of agricultural products. In a number of districts purchase prices on individual agricultural products, in particular animal products, did not cover production costs. As a result, many collective and state farms incurred substantial losses and were unable to apply the principle of extended reproduction. Similarly, the system of grassland crop rotation was essentially destroyed in a number of districts. Many meadows were ploughed up and forest shelter belts were grubbed up.

In the pursuit of expanded sowing areas very little was done in practice to resolve the central problem of improving methods of cultivation, raising soil fertility and thereby increasing crop yields. The results were felt primarily in the production of such valuable food crops as wheat, rye, rice, buckwheat and millet. The old, ethnographic, economically established agricultural districts along the Volga and in the North Caucasus and the Central Black Earth Area were in an especially difficult position. Insufficient

attention was directed towards the former consuming belt of Central Russia.

In many regions a large number of collective farms were turned into state farms without sufficient economic grounds and, at the same time, the unjustified enlargement of collective farms was carried out on a wide scale. The machine and tractor stations were closed down with similar haste and their material and technical inventories dispersed.

Disturbed by the situation in agriculture and in other sectors of state and Party work, the Central Committee of the CPSU exposed these serious shortcomings with Leninist directness. The October 1964 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU subjected methods of state administration and the entire complex of economic and political problems associated with the development of socialist society to the most searching analysis. The Plenum of the Central Committee met the request of N. S. Khrushchev to relieve him of all responsible state and Party posts in connection with his retirement. The documents of the October Plenum make scientific generalisations of great theoretical and practical significance for the further development of the socialist economy, the improvement of methods of Party direction of economic construction and the further strengthening of the alliance between the working class and the peasantry. *The October Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU will undoubtedly occupy an outstanding place in the history of the Communist Party. Its decisions were yet further evidence of the ideological and organisational strength of the Party.*

The Leninist tradition of the Communist Party consists in approaching the solution of urgent, immediate problems from the standpoint of critical analysis of phenomena, taking into account the historical experience and practice of communist construction and boldly overcoming all the obstacles and contradictions that emerge in its path. Under the leadership of the Central Committee of the CPSU much work was done in analysing the state of agriculture and the economy of the collective and state farms and in elaborating scientifically substantiated methods of managing agricultural production. Leading agricultural specialists, scientists, economists and a broad range of the Party, government and economic executives in the provinces took part in this work. All that was best in the findings and results of practice and science during the years of development of socialist agriculture was generalised and taken into account by the Central Committee of the Party.

The March 1965 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU took note of the urgent need for uninterrupted agricultural expansion, concentrating the special attention of specialists on the necessity for profound study of the objective patterns of the socialist economy, the fullest use of the advantages of the socialist economic system, acquisition of Leninist mastery in directing the masses and resolute eradication of subjectivism and all kinds of voluntarist manifestations in the theory and practice of communist construction.

The Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU adopted important measures to improve the system of procurement and purchase of agricultural products. The former approach to determining procurement targets had not always been based on a proper combination of state and intra-farm interests and, because of this, had done little to promote the steady growth of agricultural production. As a rule, procurement plans were not stable or firm. They were communicated to collective and state farms on a year-to-year basis only, often without due account being taken on the latter's differing capacities and specialisations. These plans were frequently changed in the course of procurement, for the most part by an increase in requirements. As a result, incentives to increase production were undercut, the interest of collective and state farms in increasing labour productivity dropped and elements of instability and uncertainty were introduced into the economic life of the countryside.

Such procurement practice damaged not only the collective and state farms but also the whole of society, which began to experience considerable difficulties connected with state procurements of agricultural products. Measures implemented on the basis of the decisions taken at the March Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU put an end to these abnormal phenomena, which conflicted with the laws of the socialist economic system. Agricultural management, as the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU stressed, should be built on truly scientific principles. The Leninist principle of cost accounting was to be restored across the board in agriculture. The mutually advantageous exchange of the products of labour between town and country and the development of commodity-money relations between them constitute the economic foundation of the alliance between the workers and the peasants. Lenin's approach to these issues was crystal-clear: the entire period of socialism is one of development of social property on the basis of cost accounting. He wrote that a new society could be built "not directly relying

on enthusiasm, but aided by the enthusiasm engendered by the great revolution, and on the basis of personal interest, personal incentive and business principles".¹

Lenin revealed fully the significance of business principles and personal material and moral incentives under the conditions of socialism. With the object of stimulating growth in production and increased labour productivity, he boldly proceeded to apply such economic levers as commodity-money relations, prices, credit and profit. A number of pseudo-Marxists sought to portray this as little short of a return to capitalism. In fact, the application of these levers is a natural method of socialist management, corresponding to such principles as control of the measure of labour and the measure of consumption, and distribution according to work done. These principles, as is well known, are inherent in the very nature of the socialist system.

After profound study of the state of affairs, the Central Committee of the CPSU decided from 1965 onwards to go over to fixed and economically realistic long-term procurement plans for agricultural products. The harmonious combination of state and intra-farm interests constitutes an important feature of these plans. It is precisely this that corresponds to the essential requirements of the economic development of society in the period of socialism. Such a link comprehensively stimulates the growth of agricultural production and increases the material incentives of all categories of rural workers. The state grain procurement plan for 1965 was reduced from 4,000 million to 3,400 million poods, a volume of procurement that was firmly fixed for all forthcoming years. A stable grain procurement plan was set for republics, regions, territories, districts, collective and state farms in accordance with the zonal conditions of the country's areas.

This approach to procurement planning was fundamentally new in grain procurement policy. It corresponded fully to the principles of socialist management, which presuppose creative initiative and economic resourcefulness. During the transition to the New Economic Policy Lenin pointed out that in economic relations with the countryside *three fundamental principles had to be observed: realistic and fixed plans; long-term and unvarying plans; guaranteed prices and broad stimulation of state procurements of products.* This made it possible to plan each farm in advance and to determine prospects for its development. It may

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Fourth Anniversary of the October Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 58.

be said, of course, that conditions were different at that time. This is also true. But the principles of socialist management do not contradict Lenin's propositions, they supplement and develop them under new conditions.

Fundamental reconstruction of agricultural procurement was supplemented by a substantial increase in the purchase prices at which the collective farms would now sell their output to procurement organisations. For example, the average price for 1 ton of wheat in the USSR was raised from 74 to 83 rubles for collective farms and from 48 to 60 rubles for state farms; the price of rye was raised from 75 to 92 rubles for collective farms and from 57 to 75 rubles for state farms. Sliding prices, which did not stimulate collective and state farms to raise crop yields or productivity in animal husbandry and failed to promote reduction of the prime cost of output, were abolished. As a result of these measures, conditions were created for eliminating losses in the production of many agricultural crops and raising the profitability of collective and state farms, which received substantial material gains.

Special measures were also envisaged to increase grain production in districts of the non-black earth zone of the Russian Federation, Byelorussia and the Baltic republics. Prices for rye and wheat from collective farms in these districts were raised from 85 to 130 rubles per ton, while prices paid to state farms were increased proportionally. In making these increases account was taken of the history of agriculture in these districts, which in the past had occupied a leading place in the production of rye, oats, buckwheat and other crops. They account for a sowing area of more than 40 million hectares, i. e., 20 per cent of the country's entire sowing area. Moreover, this is a zone of stable moistness where, given appropriate agricultural standards, high yields may be obtained every year. In contrast to many districts of the USSR, which are subject to frequent natural calamities, the non-black earth zone is a highly stable agricultural area. Understandably, increased agricultural productivity in this zone is of immense economic importance.

Since a fixed procurement plan does not cover all the country's requirements for agricultural products, purchases of surplus production remaining on collective and state farms after fulfilling the fixed plan are organised. Procurement agencies purchase these surpluses on strictly voluntary principles at a price 50 per cent above the basic purchase price for wheat and rye. Quotas for supra-plan purchases are not fixed: the establishment of these

is the voluntary affair of the producers themselves. A similar purchasing procedure was also introduced for animal products. Purchase and procurement prices of animal products were also raised for planned purchases: from 20 per cent to 55 per cent for large horned cattle, from 30 per cent to 70 per cent for pigs and from 10 per cent to 70 per cent for sheep. "*The state will encourage free sales of agricultural produce and stimulate them by maintaining stable prices, and promote the utmost development of commodity relations*"¹, L. I. Brezhnev stated at the March 1965 Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU.

The introduction of a reduced plan of compulsory sales of agricultural products with a higher level of prices and the opportunity for collective farms to sell a part of their output freely at higher prices is a measure leading to the development of commodity relations based on a mutually beneficial exchange between town and country. It should be emphasised here that raising the purchase prices of animal products, as of grain and groats, in no way affects the existing retail prices of these products. In embarking upon large-scale financial expenditure, the CPSU and the Soviet government were firmly convinced that these enormous costs would be repaid with interest. This was subsequently proved correct.

Measures to increase material incentives for collective farms to expand agricultural production and increase labour productivity by means of raising purchase prices are supplemented by the introduction of a new procedure for levying income tax on collective farms. This will play an important role in improving their financial and economic position. The Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet has adopted a Decree on income tax to be paid by collective farms, which will be levied not on the gross income of collective farms but on their net income.

To sum up, firm procurement plans, increased procurement prices ensuring the profitable output of agricultural products and an economically well-founded tax system are now creating a solid foundation for the normal course of extended reproduction in agriculture. Economic levers based on the operation of the objective economic laws of socialism are being brought into play.

The Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU forthrightly demanded of Party and agricultural bodies that they grant greater economic independence to the collective and state farms and put

¹ L. I. Brezhnev, *Leninskim kursom. Rechi i statji* (Following Lenin's Course. Speeches and Articles), Vol. 1, Moscow, 1970, p. 74 (in Russian).

an end to petty tutelage. Instead of numerous indicators of the economic activity of state and collective farms, a combined criterion was introduced—the level of profitability. The importance of this step would be difficult to overestimate. An increase in the profitability of production, given a firm procurement plan and stable purchase prices, creates a powerful incentive to collective and state farms and to each agricultural worker to increase output, raise labour productivity and reduce prime cost. The use of profitability as the criterion for assessing economic activity will have far-reaching consequences.

In order to ensure success in expanding agricultural production, the Party considers it necessary to improve the material and technical plant of agriculture and to bring the level of its productive forces into conformity with contemporary demands. The Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU set out practical measures to broaden the technical base of agriculture. Investments in agriculture of unprecedented scale were planned for a single five-year period. They were to amount to 71,000 million rubles, which equals the total sum invested in agriculture during the twenty post-war years. The basic part of these resources was to be expended on implementing wide-scale mechanisation, land improvement and the introduction of chemical procedures to agricultural production, on building public amenities in the countryside and on expanding irrigated agriculture.

The great and enduring significance of the March Plenary Meeting of the Central Committee of the CPSU also consists in the fact that it indicated ways of further developing the collective and state farms. *Its documents formulated the thesis that the two types of socialised farming—state farms and collective farms—would continue simultaneously to exist and develop for a long time. At the contemporary stage our objective was not to accelerate the transformation of one form into the other but comprehensively to promote the growth and flourishing of both types of socialised farming. Under contemporary conditions the aim was to advance and consolidate still further both those farms which were state property and those which were founded on co-operative-collective-farm property.*

Further progressive development of the productive forces in agriculture is possible only on this firm material basis. An appropriate answer to the question of which is more important—collective farms or state farms—and what in the future will be the single form of socialised farming in agriculture can only be given by practice, the creativity of the popular masses and the

experience of communist construction. State farms in the Soviet Union will continue to advance in the vanguard as farms of a consistently socialist type, and will be followed by the collective farms as large-scale, mechanised farms with a new, socialist content.

The March Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party showed quite clearly that the socialist system of farming, the most advanced, most progressive socio-economic system, can function efficiently only on condition that there exist correct organisational forms and methods of management and all economic levers of state regulation in the development of socialised farming are correctly applied. Only then can the immense advantages of the socialist system of agriculture be realised.

In order to make maximum use of existing opportunities for developing agriculture, the efforts of more than just rural workers are required. The task of advancing agriculture depends, directly or indirectly, on all sectors of the economy and the entire Soviet people. Large-scale economic measures to develop socialist agriculture further were dictated by new circumstances and new historical conditions. It was now clear to all that colossal reserves had been mobilised as a result of implementing these important state measures. Soviet agriculture which only a short time ago had been undergoing certain difficulties, is now experiencing a period of strong upsurge in its productive forces.

CHAPTER XXI

THE CONFIDENT AND INSPIRED TREAD OF THE BUILDERS OF COMMUNISM

Every Party congress is a great event in the life of the Party and the people. However, the 23rd Congress of the CPSU in April 1966 will, objectively speaking, occupy an outstanding place in terms of its enduring historical importance. The Congress unanimously approved the decisions of the historic October 1964 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU and demonstrated the unity and solidarity of the entire Party beneath the victorious banner of great Lenin. The work of the Congress was imbued with a confident, business-like and militant atmosphere. The reports and speeches of delegates were distinguished by the profundity of their analysis, the scientific character of their arguments and the realism of the goals that were put forward.

The immense work done to implement the decisions of the October and November 1964 Plenums of the Central Committee of the CPSU had a beneficial effect on the entire activity of the Party, increasing its leading role in the Soviet state. The Party not only corrected the shortcomings and mistakes made in economic policy and intra-Party life but also implemented large-scale measures in all spheres of the economic and spiritual life of Soviet society. In elaborating a political line for the years to come, the CPSU Congress focussed attention on the economic development of the Soviet state, the acceleration of technical progress, increased efficiency of social production and the introduction of scientific methods into all stages of socialist management.

The Congress coincided with the process of summing up the results of the preceding seven-year period, during which the economic potential of the country had grown substantially: aggregate social product had risen by almost 60 per cent, gross industrial

output had increased by 84 per cent and fixed productive assets had almost doubled. At the same time, all the difficulties which had prevented fulfilment of certain important tasks during the seven-year period, especially those already referred to in the sphere of agriculture, were addressed directly at the Congress. While pointing to the objective reasons, the Congress also drew special attention to a number of subjective reasons: under-estimation of the use of economic levers and the cost-accounting system, inability to make full use of material and moral incentives, miscalculations in planning and a voluntarist approach to major issues of economic construction.

The Communist Party drew the appropriate lessons from the past and has in recent years passed through a fine school of political maturity and economic training. The Congress approved the decisions of the March and September 1965 Plenums of the Central Committee of the CPSU which provided for fundamental measures aimed at improving the methods and forms of managing the economy and bringing them into conformity with the contemporary level of development of the productive forces, eliminating shortcomings resulting from unjustified reorganisation of economic management. The Party restored the proven method of planning the development of the country's economy in five-year periods.

The Congress directed a great deal of attention to strengthening the ranks of the Party, improving Party organisational work and developing intra-Party democracy. These circumstances made a number of important changes in the CPSU Rules necessary. The changes were directed towards a single objective—that of raising the responsibility of each member of the Party and strengthening the organising role of primary Party organisations as well as that of district and city committees, territorial and regional committees and the Central Committees of the Party in the Union republics. The changes made in the Rules were imbued with profound concern to expand intra-Party democracy and achieve a higher level of responsibility at all stages of Party work.

The Congress gave exceptional attention to the tasks of the Party in ideological work. In almost every speech at the Congress fundamental problems concerning the development of revolutionary Marxist-Leninist theory and the ideological and political education of the masses were put forward. Such attention to ideological problems is quite natural. It is well known that ideological work is an inalienable part of communist construction, inseparably linked to achievement of all the most important aims in the material and spiritual development of Soviet society.

The decisions of the 23rd Congress of the CPSU inspired Soviet people to great new achievements. Public life became more full-blooded. This came about, above all, because the Communist Party boldly advances and solves a constantly growing number of new problems in social development, clearly perceiving its noble, lofty goal. It persistently and consistently purges theory and practice of accretions of dogmatism, conservatism and formalism and is working to eliminate the gap between theory and practice which existed in the past. In developing Leninist standards of intra-Party life and introducing into all stages of administrative and Party work the method of collective leadership on the basis of democratic centralism, the Communist Party has raised even higher its leading role and become still more closely linked with the masses, mobilising and organising them to struggle for fresh successes in communist construction.

1. THE LENINIST COURSE OF AGRARIAN THEORY AND AGRARIAN POLICY IN ACTION

We shall touch here upon an extremely important issue, which was at the centre of attention of the Party congress—the elaboration and implementation of agrarian policy. It is now clear to all that Soviet agriculture is experiencing a sharp upsurge in the development of its productive forces. All its constituent parts are growing harmoniously on the basis of a correct combination of systematic planning and proportionality. The overcoming of subjectivism and voluntarism in the practical management of the economy and fuller utilisation of the benefits of the advanced socialist system have liberated great, hitherto unused reserves and agricultural production has surged ahead. *In the steady advance of agricultural production the active force of Leninist agrarian theory and the agrarian policy of the Party is clearly discernible.*

The steady upturn in socialist agriculture in the USSR that is registered from year to year has now attracted the attention and aroused the interest of the entire world community. Even the bourgeois press has been obliged to recognise this incontestable fact. The “Sovietologists”, so-called specialists in the affairs of the Soviet Union, are also racking their brains in an effort to understand the reasons for so sharp an advance in Soviet agriculture. Of course, they assess this, for them, “ill-starred” problem in their own manner. We shall note only that, while recognising positive results and achievements, they reduce them, as a rule,

to pure chance amounting virtually to "a gift from the gods" falling from the heavens upon the "altar" of communism.

Forced to recognise the fact, obvious to all, of an upsurge in agricultural production in the USSR, these "judges of the truth" once again try to avoid the main issue here—that of analysing the advantages of the socialist system in agriculture. This is understandable, since undertaking an objective analysis of the socialist system means comparing it with the capitalist economic system, objectively tracing the patterns of development of the two systems and correctly answering the question—to which of them belongs the future? It is precisely this central issue which so-called specialists in the affairs of Soviet Russia are shunning.

The Soviet people, filled with pride in its great achievements, regards these achievements as the result of the active, vivifying force of Leninist agrarian theory and agrarian policy, the result of revealing the immense strength, maturity and developed character of the socialist economic system in agriculture. We have already stated that the agrarian sphere is the most difficult part of social development. It is not surprising that, from the very outset of his political and scholarly activity, Lenin turned his attention to the agrarian and peasant problem, solution of which, after the conquest of state power by the proletariat, he defined as the most complex and difficult issue in the policy and practice of the Party. If the ideas enshrined in Leninist agrarian theory and agrarian policy are broadly generalised, they may be reduced to the *four basic problems* which the Party had to solve.

Firstly, ownership of land as the main source of society's wealth and of subsistence for people. In solving the fundamental issue of the proletariat's conquest of state power, the Leninist Party was simultaneously tackling another issue of immense importance—that of transferring land into the hands of the many millions of working peasants, i.e., the people who work the land and who by their labour extract from it the inexhaustible gifts of nature for the good of all people. The October Socialist Revolution solved this age-old burning problem by decisive actions against the exploiters, taking land from landlords and large landed proprietors and transferring it to its real masters—the toiling masses—thus ending once and for all private ownership of land and at the same time eliminating absolute land rent, a parasitic form of appropriating another's labour. By this act the new Soviet government of workers and peasants opened up enormous prospects for the development of agriculture and the creative labour of the peasantry on liberated, free land. In short,

the October Revolution realised the dream sung of in *The Internationale*:

*By toil in shops and fields united,
The party we of all who work.
The earth belongs to us, the people,
No room here for those who shirk.*

Secondly, forms of farming. The system of landowning in old, tsarist Russia was the most confused and most backward among all the large countries of Europe. It included big landowner, large capitalist, communal, private peasant, farmstead, co-operative and other forms of land-holding. All these forms of land-holding, which incorporated deep-seated survivals of feudal and patriarchal relations, were, in the overwhelming majority of cases, examples of the least advanced standard of agricultural labour. That was why Lenin firmly and consistently demanded in all his agrarian programmes that the barriers in agriculture should be destroyed, that it should be mixed and re-divided and that the agricultural economy should then be launched on a new basis. In order to lift Russia's agriculture from the slough of backwardness and low standards, he considered it essential to create a new, co-operative type of farming through the voluntary amalgamation of petty peasant producers in large socialised farms. Naturally, it was impossible to achieve this aim immediately after the revolution. As well as enormous material and organisational preparations, long and painstaking work was required to change peasant psychology and to convince the peasants on the basis of their own practical experience of the advantages of collective, socialised farming.

Capitalism had created the material and technical pre-conditions for socialist development of Russia's industry. In agriculture these pre-conditions had only been emerging and were, in essence, to be created afresh. This required time, large material resources and immense organisational efforts by the Party. Ten to fifteen years were needed in order to turn the peasant masses in the direction of building large-scale socialised agricultural enterprises and to replace the small commodity peasant economy by large-scale socialist farming. This goal was successfully achieved. By the mid-1930s the new, socialist collective-farm system had completely triumphed.

Thirdly, agriculture and the introduction of modern technology and advanced working methods. This problem was the most

difficult, demanding much time and enormous material outlays. The characteristic features of Russian agriculture were the three-field system, the use of the most primitive implements (wooden ploughs, hoes and spades) and the natural type of economy, completely adapted to the life of one or other peasant family. It was understandable that this burdensome inheritance from the past could be combatted only on the basis of a new social system in the countryside.

By introducing new technology into collective agriculture and ensuring multi-branch development of agriculture, the Party was able to achieve a number of economic goals of immense importance: elimination of the antediluvian three-field system in agriculture and introduction of multi-field crop rotation; liberation of agriculture from the prison of patriarchal, natural isolation and its transformation into a multi-branch economy producing a high marketable surplus; promotion of grain farming and fruit and vegetable production in remote northern areas; elimination of the division of the country's regions into those which produced and those which consumed—into industrial and agricultural regions. In fact, a real, profound technical and economic revolution was carried out in agriculture on the basis of the collective-farm system even in the pre-war years. However, under present-day conditions the problem of raising agricultural standards still remains at the centre of the Party's attention, a topic to which we shall return.

Fourthly, the social problem, concerning the close alliance and co-operation of the working class and the peasantry, mutual relations between town and country and the establishment of an integrated, uniform economic system uniting industry and agriculture on a single, planned socialist basis. This problem was extremely difficult and complex, demanding a prolonged period for its solution. The Party succeeded in resolving one of the most difficult issues—that of eliminating fundamental differences between the working class and the peasantry and transforming the many millions of rural workers into a homogeneous socialist class of collective-farm peasantry, working and living in close co-operation with the working class—only as a result of the victory of socialism. Major successes have now been achieved in erasing fundamental differences between town and country and in the broad introduction of industrial working methods into agricultural production. Important steps have been taken in transforming industrial workers and peasants into workers of communist society.

Thus, when we speak of today's sharp upsurge in socialist agriculture, we do not forget that this is, above all, the result of an immense development of socialist production relations, which are in conformity with the development of socialist productive forces; that this is the result of revealing the full might of the socialist economic system; finally, that this is the result of the Party's unswerving adherence in its practical activity to Lenin's agrarian theory and agrarian policy, which it creatively develops and effectively applies in practice.

Here we may remind "Sovietologists" in the bourgeois world of yet another very important circumstance, which, as a rule, they pass over in silence. The socialist system in agriculture is, after all, still very young. In terms of social development, 30-40 years is a mere moment. And if one speaks of the actual length of time allotted by history for creative work in the field of socialist agriculture, this amounted in fact to a period of not more than 25 years. Although the socialist collective farm system became firmly established in the Soviet Union in the mid-1930s, the hard test it was subjected to and the destruction its productive forces suffered during the years of the Great Patriotic War were sufficient to put back the development of agriculture by a decade.

We have already stated that the agrarian and peasant sphere is the most difficult and complex part of social development. If we take into account the fact that socialist construction in the countryside was something new for the Soviet Republic and that the country was a pioneer in this, it is not surprising that there were shortcomings, omissions and weak spots in its practical direction. These cannot be ignored. The strength of the CPSU lies in critically analysing its direction of the work of all parts of the economic mechanism and refusing to gloss over shortcomings and weaknesses. The Party boldly and openly reveals such shortcomings and takes appropriate measures to correct them.

In reviewing and analysing the multi-sided experience of directing socialist agriculture, we cannot but indicate an important weakness that evidenced itself from time to time, leaving a negative trace. For a certain period of time the requirements of one of the basic economic laws of socialism—the law of planned, balanced development—were not always strictly observed in the practical direction of socialist agriculture. This led to impaired stability of agricultural production and spasmodic rates of agricultural development. It is not surprising, therefore, that agricultural

development, especially in the post-war period, was marked by a certain instability. We shall show this process in terms of the concrete facts.

We shall take as an example the decisions of the February 1947 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party, which adopted a ramified programme of agricultural development during the difficult post-war period. Despite the colossal material difficulties of the time, the Party and the government found substantial resources to finance socialist agriculture and this speedily produced notable results. During the first post-war five-year period the pre-war level of agricultural production was restored. However, as soon as these results became more or less perceptible, investment funds were reduced, the level of attention directed towards agriculture dropped and the rate of growth in agricultural output began to fall.

Much the same was witnessed after the September 1953 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, which took a very important decision sharply to increase agricultural production. Indeed, in carrying out the programme it set out, the Party rapidly achieved remarkable successes in all branches of agricultural production. However, when perceptible results had been obtained, investment funds were again cut and attention towards the countryside waned. As a result, the major organisational measures mapped out by the September Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU were not fully realised. As was to be expected, this led to a substantial drop in agricultural output. The result was the emergence of certain difficulties in supplying the population with food products and meeting industry's needs for raw materials. These serious difficulties were, of course, not rooted in subjective causes alone but were also determined to a great extent by the objective conditions of the country's development at that time.

It is important here to examine how these difficulties were overcome and to review the paths through which the Party led agriculture, until recently a backward sector of the economy, on to a broad highway of growth, pouring invigorating strength into it and making it a stable and highly-productive economy which has achieved in all avenues the indicators of a mature, developed socialist economy. In achieving this great goal a special place belongs to the March 1965 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, the guidelines of which still remain at the basis of the Party's programme of action. In its Directives on the Eighth Five-Year Economic Development Plan for the USSR,

the 23rd Congress of the CPSU stated: "*In agriculture the central task is to achieve a considerable increase in the output of farm and animal produce with the object of satisfying more fully the population's growing demand for foodstuffs and industry's demand for agricultural raw materials. The implementation of this task must be founded on the consistent fulfilment of the series of economic measures worked out at the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU in March 1965.*"¹

The March Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU comprehensively analysed the state of agriculture and methods of agricultural management. Proceeding from Leninist agrarian theory, it discussed the special conditions of development for all branches of agriculture and the practical forms in which the objective laws characteristic of it manifest themselves. Indeed, agricultural production has specific features radically differing from the conditions of industrial production. Accordingly, methods of managing agricultural production also differ from the methods applied in industry.

What are these specific features of agricultural production and what barriers have to be overcome in order to approximate agriculture to the conditions of industrial production?

Firstly, it must not be forgotten that agriculture is still strongly dependent on the elements. This is a fundamental factor, the continuing potency of which must always be kept at the centre of attention. Further, while large resources may be invested in raising soil fertility, if the soil is cultivated at the wrong time and still more if it is cultivated with primitive implements, the results will be poor. Conversely, if enormous resources are invested in mechanisation and the most up-to-date machinery appears in the fields, but no attention is directed to the fertility of the soil, the results will also be poor. If, let us say, agriculture is well reinforced with both fertilizers and machinery, but seeds are of poor quality with low germinating capacity, the results will again be unsatisfactory.

But what will be the return yielded by agriculture if it is simultaneously given material assistance in every avenue and this assistance is then curtailed? Of course, under favourable conditions it will respond with a single return, but under unfavourable conditions it may not respond to the largest investments with even a single return. Such are the characteristic features of agriculture.

¹ *23rd Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Moscow, 1966, p. 351.*

Agriculture is therefore such a specific sphere as to require constant, unwavering, always respectful and patient attention. Moreover, in view of the objective conditions of agriculture, it calls for an integrated approach and clearly-defined, stable management, excluding unevenness and abrupt changes.

There is another extremely vulnerable side to the management of agriculture—that of evaluating the labour of its producers. How is their labour to be rewarded? Whatever the natural conditions that obtain, they work day and night in the fields during harvest time, striving to gather in as many of the gifts of nature as possible. But this is not always successful—very often, results do not depend on the labour performed by the producers. Therefore, the Party had to concern itself to ensure that the workers of the land had a firm guarantee that under any conditions—favourable or unfavourable—their labour would receive recognition and reward. *Of course, only the socialist economic system is capable of giving such a guarantee.* This is why we must emphasise once again the special historical role of the March 1965 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU since, proceeding from its scientific guidelines, the Party went on to implement an entire system of measures directed at providing broad and comprehensive material incentives for agricultural workers, a topic we shall deal with below.

Secondly, Soviet agriculture, despite its high productive, economic, scientific and technical potential, continues to bear the stamp of seasonality. Although much has been done in recent times to overcome the seasonal character of agricultural work, a great deal remains to be done in this direction. It should be said that the seasonality of agricultural production has always been the most oppressive fact of life for workers on the land. It was especially painful for the enormous army of rural workers in the prime of life who, under the conditions of petty peasant farming, did not know where or how to find work during autumn and winter. It is sufficient to point out that in pre-revolutionary Russia more than 50 per cent of the working class was connected with agriculture. Even at the beginning of the 1930s more than one-third of industrial workers were involved in agriculture. As a rule, they went into the countryside from the factories in spring and summer, returning to their enterprises in autumn and winter.

The question of overcoming the adverse consequences of the seasonality of agricultural labour is, therefore, becoming extremely topical. Consequently, we are confronted by the problem not simply

of guaranteeing that the labour of agricultural producers during spring or summer is paid for under any natural conditions—favourable or unfavourable—but also of guaranteeing them employment throughout the year. *Of course, this difficult problem, too, is soluble only under the socialist economic system.* What are the ways of solving this burning issue? The Party has already mapped out ways: firstly, agricultural specialisation, with which we shall deal below, and secondly, broad development of agricultural processing industry in areas of agricultural production. There is no doubt that all this will move agricultural production nearer to industrial production.

We have embarked on this brief aside in order to emphasise that agricultural production calls for constant concern, and aid and unflagging attention to its needs. Now a truly Leninist method of directing agriculture has taken firm root in the practical activity of Party organs and in the practice of local Party, Soviet, government and economic bodies. In this connection we shall briefly analyse the process of elaborating the agrarian policy of the Party, the work for its implementation and the results achieved in the period between the 23rd and 24th congresses of the CPSU. In all these avenues an important role was played by the decisions of three plenums of the Central Committee of the CPSU: in May 1966, October 1968 and July 1970. We shall briefly remind readers of these decisions.

The May 1966 Plenum of the Central Committee of the Party, continuing the scientifically substantiated agrarian policy that had been elaborated, examined the major question “On the Broad Development of Land Improvement to Obtain High and Stable Harvests of Grain and Other Farm Crops”. This was a truly bold and daring plan aimed at reducing as much as possible agriculture’s dependence on natural conditions. The Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU set the goal of integrated implementation of measures to increase soil fertility and improve farming methods as a whole, laying down as the main and most urgent aim implementation of wide-scale land improvement both on a national scale and on the scale of republics, regions, districts and individual farms. A substantial improvement in the condition of all lands in areas with functioning irrigation or draining systems was envisaged; the rates of irrigation work in the North Caucasus, southern Ukraine, Moldavia, Kazakhstan and Soviet Far East were to be raised considerably; simultaneously, construction of irrigation systems in the Volga area was to be launched and the further expansion of irrigation in Central Asia,

the Trans-Caucasus and a number of other areas was to be ensured.

The resources of nature were to be used to the maximum through wide-scale land-improvement, irrigation and the planting of forest shelter belts in order to obtain higher and more stable harvests. It is clear that in the conditions of the Soviet Union, where great tracts of land are either wet and boggy or are under constant threat of drought, these measures have great importance for the development of agriculture and are a powerful factor in increasing its efficiency.

The *October 1968 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU* was devoted to extensive discussion of the question "the course of implementing the decisions of the 23rd Congress and plenums of the Central Committee of the CPSU on agricultural matters". The Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU thoroughly analysed implementation of the new course in agrarian policy and noted with satisfaction the first results of its effectiveness. Per capita production of agricultural products had increased in the country by 11 per cent in three years and average annual gross output of farm produce totalled 75,000 million rubles, i.e., almost 10,000 million rubles more than the corresponding figure for the previous three years.¹ The yield of agricultural crops and the productivity of animal husbandry had risen notably and the economy of collective and state farms had strengthened. As a result of increased production and procurements of agricultural products, per capita consumption in the country in 1967 by comparison with 1964 had increased as follows: of meat by 21 per cent, of milk and milk products by 15 per cent and of eggs by 22 per cent.²

The Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU pointed out once again that acceleration of agricultural growth rates and unremitting struggle to increase grain production as the essential basis for the development of animal husbandry and the further advance of all agricultural production constituted a key political and national task. A decisive upsurge in grain farming would form the firm foundation upon which all branches of agriculture could be developed in a broad front. It should be said that the task of achieving a sharp expansion in grain farming had been set previously, but never in such practical terms or with such urgency. Moreover, solution of this problem was

¹ See: *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 9, p. 502.

² See: *ibid.*, p. 503.

reinforced by extremely large-scale financial and material and technical measures. This meant that *Soviet agriculture had to be sharply directed away from development in breadth to decisive development in depth by means of increasing soil fertility, i.e., a switch had to be made from extensive to intensive farming.*

It was of great importance that the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU set with all clarity the task of enhancing the role of science in developing agricultural production and of broad introduction of scientific principles into all stages of the productive and economic activity and management of collective and state farms. In defining ways of strengthening organisational work in the countryside, further improving the system of labour remuneration and reducing the prime cost of agricultural output, the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU attached special importance to increasing the efficiency of scientific research as an indispensable condition for raising agricultural growth rates. Appropriate organs were instructed substantially to step up the activity of agricultural research institutions and educational establishments and to direct the work of scientists towards solving such immediate problems as the creation of high-yielding strains of agricultural crops and the developing of new breeds of cattle and poultry. Practical measures were mapped out to promote the implementation of a broad programme of chemical farming aids, integrated mechanisation and electrification of collective and state farm production.

The July 1970 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU again discussed the question "the urgent tasks of the Party in agriculture" and elaborated an integrated, long-term programme of agricultural development. "Under the present conditions of growth of our economy, agriculture is confronted with greater demands," L. I. Brezhnev said in a report to the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU. "This is quite natural. In this connection the further advance of agriculture will continue during the immediate future to be one of our main economic and political goals."¹ Creation of permanent economic pre-conditions for stimulating the growth of agricultural production and comprehensive consideration of all factors objectively determining this growth thus form the main avenue of the Party's agrarian policy.

The Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU again stressed that the decisive factor in expanding agriculture and

¹ L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course, Speeches and Articles*, Vol. 3, 1972, p. 66 (in Russian).

increasing labour productivity was still greater reinforcement of agriculture's material and technical infrastructure. State investment in agriculture was therefore substantially increased in the new five-year plan period. Following approval by the 24th Party Congress of the Directives on the ninth five-year plan, investment was fixed at 82,200 million rubles.¹

A resolution of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU provided for the supply to agriculture between 1971 and 1975 of 1,700,000 tractors and much other agricultural equipment.² Goals were set for the manufacture of all kinds of fertilizers and special measures were outlined to increase the output of chemical products designed to increase agricultural yields.

The decision of the July Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU on agriculture represented a far-reaching, long-term programme of action. With complete consistency, it again stressed the necessity for directing paramount attention to increasing grain production. A practical goal was set: to increase the overall yield of grain crops in the country during the new five-year plan period to not less than 4 centners per hectare. At the same time, the task was set of ensuring steady growth in the production of cotton, sugar beet, sunflower seeds, vegetables and other agricultural products.

In addition to the question of increasing grain production, that key problem of agriculture, the Plenum closely analysed the state of affairs in animal husbandry and adopted a number of measures to increase the output of animal products. Large-scale practical measures involving material and moral incentives for this important branch of agricultural production were mapped out. Procurement prices of animal products were raised while, simultaneously, special attention was directed towards creating a strong fodder-producing infrastructure and especially its industrial base, which would enable the fodder problem to be resolved once and for all.

The 3rd All-Union Congress of Collective Farmers in November 1969, which played a major role in developing the collective-farm system, was an important political event in the life of the USSR. The Congress adopted new Model Rules for collective farms. In noting their importance for boosting agricultural production generally and for the further development of socialist democracy

¹ See: *24th Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1971, p. 278.

² See: *CPSU in Resolutions and Decisions...*, Vol. 10, 1972, p. 286.

and of creative activity on the part of the masses of collective farmers, L. I. Brezhnev stated: "The old Model Rules of the Collective Farm were a source of inspiration and a guide for the activities of the collective farms during the years of socialism's establishment and development in our country. The new Model Rules will become the law of life and work of the collective-farm peasantry during the period of construction of communist society in the USSR".¹

We have examined in detail the decisions of the three plenums of the Central Committee of the CPSU which took place between the 23rd and 24th congresses of the Party because they elaborated most fully and precisely Leninist agrarian theory and the agrarian policy of the Party for a prolonged period to come. The results of implementing these decisions are now clearly demonstrated by the important shifts that have occurred in agricultural production. Moreover, the Central Committee of the CPSU and the government have adopted a number of large-scale measures aimed at promoting socialist agriculture both in terms of individual branches and on a zonal basis. Enormous efforts have been devoted to opening up and increasing the fertility of the virgin and disused lands. It may be said that the virgin lands area is working at top productivity for communism. "The ancient steppe proved to be a giant of strength," L. I. Brezhnev noted in *The Virgin Lands*. "Transformed by human labour, it has brought stability to our whole agriculture and guaranteed a steady and adequate supply of grain, and this soil is still building up its potential."²

A broad complex of large-scale measures to advance agricultural production was set forth in the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the USSR Council of Ministers "On Measures Further to Develop Agriculture in the Non-Black-Earth Area of the Russian Federation", which was published on 3 April 1974. This area embraces 29 regions and autonomous republics of the Russian Federation. The land stock here totals 52 million hectares, including 32 million hectares of arable land. This, it may be said without exaggeration, was a gigantic programme of transformation, opening up broad prospects for the development of agriculture in the central areas of the Russian Federation.

¹ L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course. Speeches and Articles*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1972, pp. 248-49.

² L. I. Brezhnev, *The Virgin Lands*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1979, p. 181.

As indicated in the Party and government resolution, land improvement is the basic element in this programme for the accelerated promotion of agriculture in the non-black-earth area of the Russian Federation. The following measures were singled out as necessary between 1975 and 1990: the drainage of between 9 million and 10 million hectares of land (principally closed drainage); the irrigation of 2-2.5 million hectares for pasture and to expand vegetable growing around industrial centres; integrated measures to improve technical cultivation standards over 8-10 million hectares. Wide-scale liming of sour soils is also envisaged. All this will undoubtedly make it possible to create a firm basis for substantially increased soil fertility, the stable production of grain, potatoes, flax and fodder crops and expanded, highly-productive animal husbandry.

Enormous material and technical resources are being provided to implement the plan. In 1976-1980 alone as much as 31,200 million rubles was invested in the agriculture of the non-black earth area of the Russian Federation; this is 60 per cent more than was invested between 1971 and 1975.¹ Many live-stock-breeding complexes are being built, the existing farm produce processing plants are being modernised and new ones are commissioned. The electricity requirements of agricultural production and the domestic electricity needs of the rural population will be fully met.

At the same time, important measures are being implemented to improve social and economic conditions in the countryside, including the transformation of villages into well-appointed settlements and the construction of general schools, boarding schools, children's pre-school institutions, cultural and social centres, hospitals and shopping centres; advantages have been established for those moving into these settlements from small villages. The 1981 resolution of the CPSU Central Committee and the Council of Ministers of the USSR "On the Further Development and Raising of the Efficiency of Agriculture in the non-black-earth area of the Russian Federation in 1981-1985" is further evidence of the Party's concern for the rise of agricultural production in the area. The resolution sets aside 39,300 million rubles to be invested in the development of agriculture in the non-black-earth area of the Russian Federation.² The non-black-earth area of the Russian Federation will thus be transformed into a major source of agricultural products and will become an important supplier of farm produce to large industrial centres.

¹ See *Pravda*, 15 April 1981.

² *ibid.*

All this shows how consistently and purposefully the Party leads the development of agriculture and how much attention the Party is devoting to increasing the output of agricultural products. Agricultural development is truly the affair of the entire people. The Party keeps constantly in view improvement of the material infrastructure of collective and state farms, the strengthening of state and collective farm and co-operative property and utilisation of existing reserves and opportunities within the socialist system of farming.

2. INTENSIFICATION AND SPECIALISATION: THE MAIN ROAD OF FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN SOVIET AGRICULTURE

If one casts one's gaze over the successes of the Soviet economy as a whole, one may with full justification assess the entire sweep and importance of the most recent five-year Soviet economic development plans, which have merged and continue to merge all the streams and torrents of a complex economic organism into a single purposeful current. We shall briefly describe the basic features of the five-year plans.

First: maintenance of high rates of growth of social production. This is ensured above all by increased efficiency of social production and improvement of its qualitative indicators on the basis of scientific and technological progress, which is increasingly becoming the decisive factor in raising the productivity of social labour. In improving economic growth rates, an important role is played by capital construction, both in industry and in agriculture. As a result, a substantial part of the growth in output comes from the introduction of new capacity and the modernisation of existing plant.

Second: the plans provide for an alignment of the growth rates of agriculture and industry. All the documents of the 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th congresses of the CPSU contain the idea that, if the basic problems of agricultural development are not resolved, an upsurge in the economy, growth of the national income and improvement of the people's well-being will be impossible. Of course, this will require a certain amount of time and a great deal of work. It should be stressed that the Party is firmly pursuing the course adopted by the March 1965 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU and persistently and consistently resolving the complex problems of transforming agriculture into an advanced sector of the country's economy.

Third: the policy is pursued in the five-year plans of bringing growth rates for the manufacture of the means of production and of consumer goods into alignment. Unprecedented attention is therefore being devoted to expanding the light and food industries and developing branches producing consumer goods. All this has been made possible by the successes achieved in expanding heavy industry and by the high industrial potential of the Soviet Union.

Fourth: the great concern manifested by the Communist Party to implement large-scale social and economic measures to advance the material well-being and cultural standards of working people and ensure that the needs of Soviet people are more fully met. Especial emphasis should be laid here on the fact that the Party has, for the first time in such practical terms, initiated steps to solve the major problem of overcoming social and economic distinctions between the working class and the peasantry and accelerating the process of bringing the standards of living of the urban and rural population into alignment. It would be difficult to overestimate the political importance of these measures. There is no doubt that they will consolidate still further the inviolable alliance of the working class and the peasantry and will form a new, notable confirmation of the achievements of the socialist system of society.

It now remains for us to examine one further question: what have been the results of the struggle by all the people to achieve a really sharp upsurge in socialist agricultural production? Here we must resort to a number of statistical comparisons, at first glance dull and dry but in fact interesting in the highest degree, which are essential to underpin our arguments.

The chief result of the agrarian policy adopted by the Party, a result of primary importance, has been to strengthen the material and technical infrastructure of all branches of agriculture and consistently to increase its material and technical potential. It may safely be stated that never before have such immense resources been invested in agriculture as now. Moreover, this is being done in a planned way, following a rising curve. We should stress that strengthening of the material and technical infrastructure of socialist agriculture is a constant factor, which the CPSU has confirmed in its agrarian policy.

“The problem of the material and technical infrastructure of our agriculture is fundamental and supreme,”¹ L. I. Brezhnev

¹ L. I. Brezhnev, *Following Lenin's Course. Speeches and Articles*, Vol. 3, p. 81 (in Russian).

stressed in a report to the July 1970 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU. The long-standing and stable Party policy of comprehensively strengthening the material and technical infrastructure of agriculture embraces an entire complex of measures directed at introducing elements of industrial production and engineering and technical skills into agriculture: comprehensive mechanisation, electrification, chemical fertilizers, land-improvement and irrigation. The Party attaches decisive importance to these measures and is directing its efforts towards increasing the intensification of agricultural production.

The increased economic might of the USSR is now enabling enormous investments in agriculture. It is sufficient to state that, according to the tenth five-year plan, over 171,000 million rubles were invested in the development of agriculture, i.e., 41,000 million rubles more than during the ninth five-year plan period. This is a striking upsurge, which vividly reflects the effective force of the socialist system and of the Party's Leninist agrarian policy. We shall attempt to examine the channels along which these truly gigantic capital investments flow and which advance technical progress in agriculture.

We should point above all to the universally known truth that the intensification of agricultural production and its transfer to an industrial basis are inconceivable without comprehensive mechanisation, the introduction of new technology and increased electrification of agriculture. Fundamental changes have recently been brought about in this respect. For example, ploughing, the sowing of grain crops, cotton and sugar beet and the harvesting of grain and silage are now fully mechanised, while the planting of potatoes, inter-row tilling of sugar beet, maize and cotton and the winnowing and loading of grain are approaching full mechanisation. At the time, much is being done to mechanise labour-intensive processes in animal husbandry. A special branch of industry has been established for this purpose.

Agriculture now has at its disposal an enormous amount of modern technology and the volume of new agricultural machinery delivered to farms is constantly increasing. During only ten years, between 1966 and 1975, collective and state farms received more than 3 million tractors, 1,800,000 trucks and specialised vehicles and 900,000 combine harvesters, including a large number of the most efficient Niva, Kolos and Sibiryak models. In the tenth five-year plan period agriculture was supplied with 1,800,000 tractors, over 1,300,000 trucks and specialised vehicles, nearly 540,000

combine harvesters and a large quantity of other agricultural machinery.

The use of electricity in agriculture and electric-power consumption per person engaged in agriculture are steadily improving. Electrification of agricultural production is a highly effective means of reducing the expenditure of labour and thus increasing labour productivity. Over the past ten years the electric-power consumption per person engaged in agriculture has doubled.

Increased mechanisation of agriculture leads to a rise in the number of machine-operators. In 1975 a total of 3,913,000 tractor-driver-machine-operators, tractor-drivers, combine-operators and drivers were working on collective and state farms—819,000 more than in 1965.¹ Party and government concern for rural machine-operators was manifested in the 1971 resolution "On Measures to Improve the Working Conditions and Job Stability of Machine-Operators in Agriculture". Qualitative changes have taken place in the ranks of agricultural managers. During the ten years following the March 1965 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, the number of collective-farm chairmen with a complete higher or secondary specialised education rose from 67.3 per cent to 90.9 per cent, while the corresponding increase among state-farm directors was from 91.8 per cent to 97.7 per cent.²

The role of chemical products in raising agricultural standards sharply increased. The growth in the production of mineral fertilizers and chemical means of plant protection in the Soviet Union is enabling steady growth in the supply of these products to agriculture. Between 1966 and 1975 the use of fertilizers increased by 180 per cent, while the use of chemical means of plant protection more than doubled.³ The goal has now been set of satisfying socialist agriculture's requirements for all kinds of fertilizers in the next few years. Land-improvement work in agriculture is in full swing and is being implemented on a broad scale.

The second result, which is of equal importance, is the increased return shown by agricultural production in relation to the

¹ See: *Narodnoye khozyaistvo SSSR v 1974 g.* Statistichesky ezhegodnik (The Soviet Economy in 1974. Statistical Yearbook). Moscow, 1975, p. 455 (in Russian).

² See: *Narodnoye khozyaistvo SSSR v 1964 g.* Statistichesky ezhegodnik (The Soviet Economy in 1964. Statistical Yearbook), Moscow, 1965, pp. 424, 426; *The Soviet Economy in 1974*, pp. 452, 454 (both in Russian).

³ *Documents and Resolutions, XXVth Congress of the CPSU*, p. 60.

immense material investments made in it. The Soviet Party and people are developing the productive forces in the interests of the whole of society with the object of steadily raising the standard of living of all Soviet people. In theoretically substantiating the inevitability of the victory of the new, communist formation, Marx foresaw the time when the productive forces increase with the all-round development of the individual and "all the springs of co-operative wealth flow more abundantly".¹

We may say with every justification that Soviet socialist society has drawn perceptibly closer to achieving the historic goal of developing the productive forces to the extent that the material and cultural needs of working people can be fully met. This is testified to by the high growth-rates of agricultural production and the steady increase of agricultural output. During the eighth five-year plan average annual agricultural output amounted to 80,500 million rubles (in 1965 prices), exceeding that of the seventh five-year plan period by 14,200 million rubles. In the ninth five-year plan period it reached 91,000 million rubles.

In the years of the ninth five-year plan period, despite the unfavourable weather conditions, the average annual output increased by 13 per cent over the preceding five-year period. Average annual production of grain totalled 181.5 million tons, of meat—14 million tons (slaughtered weight), of milk—87.4 million tons and of eggs—51,500 million, which was substantially more than during the eighth five-year plan. The average annual cotton crop reached 7.7 million tons, i.e., 1.6 million tons more than in the preceding five-year period.²

It is indicative that the growth in agricultural output in recent years has been achieved through a substantial increase in yields, i.e., through the more intensive use of all means of production. Grain yields have increased by 40 per cent during the past two five-year plan periods. The increased volume of output of agricultural crops and animal products is making possible rising state procurements.

During the tenth five-year period the average annual grain harvest for the first time reached 205 million tons. The production of meat, milk, eggs, cotton and other produce grew. Between 1971 and 1980 the increment in the total agricultural output as

¹ Karl Marx, "Critique of the Gotha Programme", in: K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 19.

² See: *SSSR v tsifrakh v 1975 godu* (The USSR in Figures in 1975), pp. 104, 105 (in Russian).

compared with the previous decade was to a sum of 272,000 million rubles.

Between 1981 and 1985 it is planned to increase the average annual agricultural output by 12-14 per cent and its increment per capita will be twice as much as in 1976-80. Labour productivity in socialised agriculture is to grow by 22-24 per cent.¹

The third important result consists in a substantial improvement in the well-being of the Soviet peasantry. It is understandable that this depends wholly upon the production sphere, since development of the productive forces forms the basis of social progress. Development of the productive forces and production relations in Soviet rural areas is, indeed, being accompanied by further improvement in the well-being of rural workers. The gradual elimination of socio-economic differences and disparities in everyday living standards between the town and the countryside is being actively pursued. The upsurge in the development of the productive forces and production relations in agriculture is now creating increasingly favourable conditions for raising material and cultural living standards in the countryside to the level of the town.

The introduction of guaranteed labour payments on collective farms (in cash and kind) linked to the wage levels of corresponding categories of workers on state farms, improved prices for basic food products and an increased role of credit, among other measures, have resulted in a substantial growth in the incomes of farms, strengthened their economies and raised the standard of living of collective farmers and state-farm workers.

The payment of pensions plays a key role in bringing the living standards of rural workers close to those of the urban population. By the beginning of 1976, 12 million Soviet collective farmers were receiving pensions under the law on pensions, benefits and allowances for members of collective farms.² The sale of consumer durables has substantially increased in rural areas. For example, sales of refrigerators in rural areas in 1974 rose to 1,273,000 as compared to 210,000 in 1965; the corresponding rise in television sales was from 804,000 to 1,843,000.³

In briefly surveying the steady advance of socialist agriculture along the path outlined by the March 1965 Plenum and ampli-

¹ See: *Materiali XXVI syezda KPSS* (Documents of the 26th CPSU Congress), Moscow, 1981, p. 35 (in Russian).

² See: *ibid.*, p. 164.

³ See: *The Soviet Economy in 1974*, p. 603.

fied at subsequent plenums of the Central Committee of the CPSU and in the decisions of the 23rd, 24th and 25th congresses of the Party, we have sought to show the effective force of the Party's agrarian theory and agrarian policy at the contemporary stage of the mature, developed socialist society that exists in the USSR. However, this survey would be incomplete if we omitted to consider a fundamental question, which is acquiring increasingly topical importance: the types of socialist farming. We have already indicated that the new, socialist farming passed through many economic forms as it developed and improved, each of which corresponded to a definite stage in building socialism in the countryside.

At present there are two types of farming within the single socialist system of the USSR—the state farms and the collective farms. However, they, too, do not represent forms fixed once and for all. The profound reforms which are being implemented in agricultural production are improving these forms of farming. Differences between these two types of farm, i.e., the state farms and collective farms, are being gradually eliminated, and they are becoming increasingly similar. There are already many collective farms which, in terms of the machinery at their disposal, organisation, production efficiency and the working and living conditions of their workers, differ in no way from state farms. However, there are also many collective farms which are as yet inferior to advanced state farms in terms of production and other indicators.

All this is closely taken into account by the Party. Proceeding from concrete facts, it concludes that both these types of farm will continue to exist for a protracted period. However, it is true that objective social and economic processes have quite clearly revealed a trend towards eliminating past differences both between the two types of farm and between the two forms of socialist property in agriculture.

In the course of this natural process new types of enterprises emerge: agrarian-industrial complexes and industrial-agrarian combines to produce animal and poultry products; state farm-collective farm and collective farm-state farm amalgamations to produce individual agricultural products and raw materials. These very complex and profound social and economic processes in the socialist system of farming require close study, analysis and generalisation. It is important to create conditions for their development, but they should not be hurried or artificially accelerated. Only scientifically generalised experience, practice and the actual

facts will indicate how to resolve this urgent and vitally important problem.

We now have the opportunity to take an important step forward towards the further intensification of agriculture and improvement of methods of agricultural management on the basis of multi-branch farming and wide-scale mechanisation and application of chemical methods. This means a step-by-step move towards large-scale specialised production in agriculture, the application of industrial methods and the broad use of scientific and technological achievements. That, as L. I. Brezhnev has said, *is our main road in the further development of agriculture*. Of course, this is a complex matter and requires a considerable amount of time and effort. However, such a policy must be pursued steadily and consistently. Life itself dictates that we conduct agriculture rationally, in terms of sound economic principles and on the basis of the firmly established principles of socialism, taking into account all aspects and consequences of this profound transforming process.

In this connection we should dwell on the subject of specialisation in agriculture. In general terms this is not a new problem. There is sufficient literature on the subject, describing specialisation in capitalist agriculture both in the past and the present. In his agrarian works Lenin provided a detailed analysis of capitalist specialisation in the agriculture of European countries, in particular Scandinavia. At the same time, he showed the historical role of the development of capitalism in Russia's agriculture. In destroying the old, patriarchal, feudal and pre-feudal relations in agriculture, capitalism also advanced through specialisation and by means of specialisation in agriculture. In his work *The Development of Capitalism in Russia* Lenin made it quite clear that specialisation occurs in agriculture just as it does in various branches of industry.¹

It may be said that capitalism advanced in Russia's agriculture specifically through specialisation. Let us take, for example, the first large capitalist-type farms for growing wheat and barley, which developed principally in the Trans-Volga area, the North Caucasus and the Ukraine. The success of these enterprises was owed to specialisation. Wheat and barley were mainly exported and enjoyed high renown in Europe and even America. In

¹ See: V. I. Lenin, "The Development of Capitalism in Russia", *Collected Works*, Vol. 3, 1972, p. 38.

parallel with this, enterprises of an industrial type spread widely in these areas: elevators and various kinds of warehouses and grain-winning and drying installations.

Areas of capitalist development in other branches of agriculture became, thanks to specialisation, centres of flax-growing, hemp-growing, beet-growing, grape-growing, cotton-growing and oil crops-growing, while areas of specialised animal husbandry became pedigree cattle-breeding, dairy or meat production centres. The development of capitalist specialisation in Russia's agriculture went hand in hand with the growth of agricultural processing industry: sugar refining, starch and molasses production, distilling, cheese-making, etc.

Socialist specialisation in agricultural production is, to a certain extent, a new departure. We have as yet insufficient experience and few research works or generalisations in this area, although the subject, i.e., specialisation under the conditions of Soviet management of agriculture, is one to which the Party and the government have attached great importance since the first days of the October Revolution. However, the state did not dispose of the necessary material and technical conditions for launching full-blooded specialisation in Soviet agriculture. Many years had to be devoted to creating the integrated, all-embracing organism of a multi-branch agriculture dictated by the need rapidly to eliminate old, antediluvian methods of managing the economy and the old, backward system of farming.

Under present conditions, when the Soviet state disposes of enormous material and technical resources and the multi-branch socialist agriculture has reached a high level of development, the Party has squarely set the goal of wide-scale specialisation and concentration in socialist agricultural production. But here, too, as L. I. Brezhnev has indicated, a cautious approach is called for. Appropriate experience must be accumulated, generalised and disseminated. It should never be forgotten that we are dealing with specialisation under the conditions of the socialist economic system with all its norms and principles of development, which require new approaches and new forms and content. A practical programme of action in this area was outlined in the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU "On the Further Development of Specialisation and Concentration in Agricultural Production on the Basis of Inter-Farm Co-operation and Agro-Industrial Integration".

Specialisation and concentration in socialist agricultural production will, undoubtedly, also accelerate the solution of major social

problems. They will promote the improvement of production and other social relations and serve the cause of building communism. The most important, most fundamental element of this process is that a basis has been established upon which many new problems can be solved. These include defining a unified type of socialist farming and expanding industrial enterprises processing agricultural products and raw materials in growing areas, making it possible to eliminate the seasonal character of agricultural work and promote total uniting of the processes of agricultural and industrial production in a single whole. Ultimately this will form "the communist mode of production".

3. THE HISTORIC EXPERIENCE OF SOCIALIST RECONSTRUCTION OF AGRICULTURE IN THE USSR AND ITS INTERNATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

The honourable mission of becoming the first country of large-scale socialist agriculture fell to the Soviet Union. The historic experience of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in the socialist remaking of agriculture represents an outstanding contribution to the theory of scientific communism and the practical experience of building socialism. It led to the triumph of Lenin's co-operative plan, of large-scale socialist farming, which has shown its immense advantages over both large-scale capitalist farms and small peasant holdings. These advantages have been demonstrated especially convincingly now, when Soviet socialist agriculture has achieved a rapid leap in the development of its productive forces and the collective-farm system has grown into a powerful, irresistible force.

The victory of the collective-farm system in the USSR forms brilliant proof of the correctness of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine that socialist reconstruction of agriculture is an essential condition for the development of the productive forces and formation of the most advanced production relations in society. This is also evidenced by the fact that the path of socialist construction has now been decisively chosen by millions of peasants in many socialist countries, the experience of which has yielded remarkable examples of a creative approach to resolving this difficult and complex problem of social development. The co-operative movement aimed at transforming agriculture is now gaining momentum in Asian, African and Latin American countries which have liberated themselves from colonial, imperialist oppression.

It is to the credit of the CPSU to have been the first in history to involve the enormous mass of peasants in building socialism and to have eliminated for ever the poverty and exploitation of this, the largest and most deprived section of the population. Guided by Marxist-Leninist theory and relying on the experience of the masses, the Communist Party found the most correct and sound ways of socialist reconstruction of agriculture, studied and verified in practice the most important principles and forms of organising a new social and economic system in the countryside and discovered and scientifically generalised the laws of its development. The large and varied experience accumulated by the Party in building socialism and, in particular, in collective-farm construction undoubtedly has great international importance.

The immense vital force of Marxist-Leninist theory lies in the fact that it has provided a scientific basis for carrying out socialist reconstruction of agriculture and involving the toiling masses of the peasantry in building socialism. The need of all the people and the historical necessity for collectivisation in agriculture stem directly from the economic law of socialism which requires that production relations should correspond to the developing productive forces of society.

It is well known that such correspondence was achieved in industrial production immediately after the October Socialist Revolution. As a result of the abolition of private ownership of the means of production, new production relations were established which enabled the Soviet state to reconstruct the economy in a short period of time and advance it along the path of rapid development of the country's productive forces. The absence of the necessary socio-economic and technical conditions in agriculture meant that such immediate abolition of private property and of the old production relations was impossible there: these remained valid for a certain period even after the October Socialist Revolution.

In this connection we shall examine several aspects of the CPSU's experience in socialist reconstruction of Soviet agriculture and the international importance of this.

1. The socialist path for the countryside results from a profound, destructive crisis in the bourgeois-landowner system of agriculture—the mainstay of imperialist reaction, of cruel exploitation of the working peasantry and rural proletarianisation and pauperism. A few statistics describing agrarian relations in pre-revolutionary Russia provide convincing evidence of this. A total of 75 mil-

lion dessiatines of land was held by 10.5 million half-ruined peasant farms, while 70 million dessiatines of land were concentrated in the hands of 30,000 noble men or other big landowners. There were 2,200,000 landless peasant households and at least 7 million agricultural labourers who subsisted exclusively on the sale of their labour.

The crisis in the old agrarian relations in Russia had become so urgent that the peasant masses could no longer reconcile themselves with the existing situation and demanded the abolition of private ownership of land and the implementation of radical land reforms. This was the beginning of that great transformation which, as Lenin indicated even before the revolution, "will go a long way forward and which, it may be said without exaggeration, will undoubtedly be brought to completion in Russia because there is no power that can stop it".¹

The October Revolution not only brought the toiling peasantry of Russia political and economic liberation, but also gave them immense material benefits. It freed the peasants from the oppression of landowners and capitalists, smashed the old, exploitative agrarian relations, put an end to peasant land-hunger and opened the way to building a new life in the countryside. It is not fortuitous, therefore, that the new, socialist, collective-farm road for rural areas in Soviet Russia had its inception after the October Socialist Revolution. It was paved by the progressive forces of the Soviet peasantry led by the working class and with all-round support from the Soviet government.

However, the October Revolution was only a beginning, a necessary pre-condition for accomplishing a true socialist revolution in the countryside later and crowning it with the complete victory of the collective-farm system. Ten to fifteen years of hard economic, organisational and educational work by the Communist Party and the working class were required in order to strengthen the socialist state, create a material and technical basis and psychologically to prepare the peasant masses for the implementation of this great task. The peasants had to be helped to understand that it was necessary for the entire people and in their own personal economic interest to continue the socialist revolution in the countryside, finally smash the old, obsolete foundations of peasant life, eliminate the small commodity economy

¹ V. I. Lenin, "First Congress of Peasants' Deputies", *Collected Works*, Vol. 24, p. 501.

and build a new social and economic system in the countryside.

This pattern is not only characteristic of the Soviet Union but was also manifested with full force in other socialist countries. The revolutionary agrarian reforms carried out in these countries aroused great enthusiasm among the peasant masses and made them direct their strength along the paths of developing co-operation and collectivisation. Co-operative associations of peasants came into being after the victory of popular revolutions in all the socialist countries of Europe and Asia. It is true that at first these were small islands, uniting only the advanced, the most class-conscious poorest sections of the peasant population; nevertheless, they were the first shoots of socialism in the countryside, heralding its great future. Mass production co-operation among the peasantry came, as it did in the USSR, considerably later: for example, in the twelfth year of the revolution in the USSR, and in the tenth year of the revolution in Bulgaria, Hungary, the GDR, Czechoslovakia and Rumania. The experience of the socialist countries has demonstrated that collectivisation of peasant farms is a long and complex process of social and economic development.

It follows from all this that, after the proletariat has gained state power, the task of collectivising agriculture and drawing the toiling peasantry into the mainstream of socialist development is, as Lenin indicated, the chief and, at the same time, the most complex and difficult task in building socialism. The complexity and difficulty of this goal consists in the fact that the communist and workers' parties have had to solve the agrarian question as an integral part of the socialist revolution amid the most numerous, economically and politically split and culturally backward section of the population, the peasants.

Since it remained the largest class of petty proprietors even after the victory of socialist revolutions, the peasantry was, naturally, unable in its entire mass immediately to take the path of socialist reconstruction of agriculture, while the popular revolutions themselves were unable immediately to set and achieve the goal of a mass transition by the peasantry to large-scale collective farming. Foreseeing the difficulties involved in achieving this goal, Lenin wrote: "We fully realise that such tremendous changes in the lives of tens of millions of people as the transition from small individual peasant farming to collective farming, affecting as they do the most deep-going roots of the peasants' way of life and their mores, can only be accomplished by long

effort and only when necessity compels people to reshape their lives."¹

Consequently, after the victory of socialist revolution the small commodity peasant economy, far from being rejected is, on the contrary, for a certain time given a genuine opportunity to develop and receives comprehensive support from the people's government, since it corresponds to the character of the transitional period from capitalism to socialism. However, it now develops on a quite different socio-economic basis and follows other patterns. This is a process in the course of which a profound regrouping of class forces takes place and the economy and structure of agricultural production change.

Of course, under the conditions of the small commodity peasant economy in the Soviet state the process of stratification of the rural population continued, but it had fundamental differences from the stratification of the peasantry under the conditions of capitalist development. In the pre-revolutionary period the basic processes were those of the disintegration of the middle peasantry and the steady polarisation of the countryside into the extremes of poor and rich peasants (kulaks). Under the Soviet system the middle peasant became the *central figure* in agriculture. In ten years of Soviet power the proportion of middle-sized farms tripled, from 20 per cent to 60 per cent. Of course, this new process of differentiation among the peasantry did not exclude a certain expansion of the kulak stratum, which had deep roots in petty-peasant production and had grown out of it. However, the rate of increase in the number of kulak farms could in no way be compared with the rate under the conditions of capitalist development.

Under the conditions of the Soviet state, socio-economic relations in the countryside formed objectively in favour of socialist development and in favour of an alliance between the working class and the bulk of the peasantry. However, the given process also contained shortcomings, chiefly of an economic character. Principal among these was the fact that the Soviet countryside, in contrast to the countryside of pre-revolutionary times, became mainly petty-peasant in character, in which small-commodity type of production predominated. Agriculture became more small-scale, fragmented and dispersed and therefore less productive. Moreover, the fragmentation and shrinking of peasant farms continued. Before World War I there were 14-15 million peasant farms in

¹ V. I. Lenin, "First Congress of Land Departments", *Collected Works*, Vol. 28, p. 342.

Russia; by the end of the first decade of Soviet power their number had increased to 24-25 million.

Some theoreticians in the Trotskyist camp claimed that the fragmentation of peasant farms was, supposedly, the result of the mistaken agrarian policy of the Soviet government. However, such claims were quite groundless. This is confirmed by the fact that a similar process also took place in other socialist countries where, after expropriation of large private landowners, the number of petty peasant farms increased considerably. Consequently, the process of fragmentation and shrinkage of peasant farms is inevitable in the transition period. Moreover, to a certain extent this process is even useful for the peasant masses themselves, who become fully convinced on the basis of their own practical experience of the economic unprofitability of the small-scale individual economy and of the necessity for going over to large-scale social farming.

However, fragmentation and shrinkage of peasant farms were accompanied by the temporary drop in agricultural productivity. The shrinkage of peasant farms and the associated temporary drop in agricultural productivity were a kind of "overhead expense" incurred in the course of grand agrarian reconstruction. Of course, small peasant farming could develop within its own framework only until it came into conflict with the development of the productive forces of society. A long period of development within this framework was impossible. And, indeed, as soon as the Party launched socialist industrialisation of the country the economic bankruptcy of the small-commodity peasant economy was fully revealed.

Despite the enormous material, technical, financial and organisational assistance given the toiling peasantry by the Soviet government, it nevertheless remained at a low level. A transition towards large-scale socialist agriculture was inevitable. Moreover, the working peasants could not take the capitalist path of development without coming into conflict with their own fundamental interests. The new, socialist agriculture took firm root in the countryside. Large-scale collective farming, uniting the most progressive elements of the toiling peasantry, grew and strengthened with each passing year.

Thus, the outline of the social and economic development of Soviet agriculture in the period of transition from capitalism to socialism, is as follows: during the first years of the revolution, after the decisive crushing of the landowners and the partial expropriation of the kulaks, the process of economic development of

agriculture proceeded from large-scale, highly-marketable farming to small, low-marketable farming. Then a reverse movement emerged in this process, from low-marketable to large-scale, highly-marketable farming, proceeding now in the direction of socialised, collective agriculture.

This pattern of agricultural development also applies to other socialist countries. In order to achieve collectivisation, each socialist state had not only to eliminate the age-old backwardness of agriculture and put an end to problems in food supply, but also to rebuild agriculture from top to bottom on a new, socialist basis. The communist and workers' parties are fully aware that the all-round development of collectivisation is an important and inalienable part of the great historical task of building socialism and that without socialist remaking of agriculture socialism cannot be built.

In their policies the communist and workers' parties proceed from the fundamental Marxist proposition that socialism cannot be built in industry alone, leaving agriculture to the mercy of spontaneous development in the hope that the petty-bourgeois countryside will itself follow the lead of the socialist town. Similarly, it is impossible to base people's power and the construction of socialism on two contradictory foundations for any long period of time: the foundation, that is, of large-scale socialist industry and that of the most backward and fragmented small peasant economy. Sooner or later this could lead to the collapse of the entire economy.

Overcoming this objective contradiction was possible only by replacing the old capitalist and pre-capitalist relations in the countryside with new, socialist production relations, opening up the way to accelerated development of the productive forces in the entire economy. Thus, the necessity for creating a single economic base of large-scale socialist production in both industry and agriculture flows objectively from social and economic conditions themselves.

At the same time, the experience of building collective farms in the USSR and other socialist countries has shown that, despite favourable objective conditions, the success of this complex historical process nevertheless depends to a decisive degree on the correctness of the policy pursued by the communist and workers' parties in the countryside, their tireless organisational work among the peasant masses and their resolute struggle against issuing excessive administrative orders and decrees, on the one hand, and opportunistic conceptions of laissez-faire and spontaneous action in the collectivisation of peasant farms, on the other.

2. The immense merit of the CPSU consists in having transformed the spontaneous movement of individual groups and strata of the peasantry in support of collective farms into an organised movement of the entire people embracing the millions of working peasants, the working class, the intelligentsia and all the social forces of the country. In the course of this great struggle by all the people for the victory of the collective-farm system, the Party found the correct forms of socialist reconstruction of agriculture, studied and verified in practice important principles and forms of organising the new, socialist system in rural areas and discovered and generalised new laws of its development.

It may be said without exaggeration that the period of collectivisation in the Soviet Union was not only decisive for the victory of the socialist system, but was also a brilliant period in terms of the scale of the movement of the masses, the richness and variety of the processes of political and socio-economic development and the wealth of forms and methods of work by the Party in rural areas. The colossal experience accumulated by the CPSU in building socialism and, in particular, in collective-farm construction, undoubtedly has enormous international importance. The answer may be found in this experience to the question of how to build the life of a free peasant and how to build socialism in the countryside.

First and foremost, we shall examine forms of socialist reconstruction of agriculture. It should be said that the Party had no ready-made recipes for this. Armed with the scientific theory of Marxism-Leninism, it was firmly convinced of the historical necessity for socialist reform of agriculture. However, the Party could not know in advance through which intermediate stages the process of this construction would pass, at what pace it would develop or what organisational forms the new type of socialist agricultural enterprise would assume. None of these questions could be automatically answered by the classics of Marxism-Leninism: they were resolved in the course of historical development by the practical experience of the movement of the masses. When we took power in order to enter upon socialist reorganisation, Lenin stated, "we could not know the forms of transformation, or the rate of development of the concrete reorganisation. Collective experience, the experience of millions can alone give us decisive guidance in this respect..."¹

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Speech at the First Congress of Economic Councils", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 410.

Consequently, the forms of socialist reconstruction of agriculture could not emerge ready-made, but were conceived and developed in the process of prolonged constructive labour, amid the creative work of the popular masses. Only as a result of the accumulation of experience by the masses and close study and generalisation of it did the Party determine with full justification that socialist reorganisation of agriculture would proceed along three avenues: firstly, through the establishment of state farms, the main support in reconstructing the old fabric of village life; secondly, through the establishment of machine-and-tractor stations—support points for the re-equipping of agriculture on the basis of new farm technology; thirdly, through the collective farms, which unite the broad peasant masses.

Thus, the establishment of the new, socialist system in the countryside was ensured by the construction of two homogeneous types of socialised farming—state farms and machine-and-tractor stations, based on state ownership, and collective farms—farms of a socialist type, based on large-scale co-operative and collective-farm ownership and the collective labour of the peasants themselves. Practice shows that the combined work of these two systems not only made possible completion of socialist reconstruction of agriculture but also ensured the advance of agricultural production and improvement of the material well-being of the toiling peasantry.

It has now been tested by time and confirmed by many years of practice that this form of socialist reorganisation of agriculture is not only correct for the USSR but has also proved in differing measures acceptable for other socialist countries as well which, having taken Soviet experience as a basis, began in conformity with their own national conditions to create similar types of socialised farming on a wide scale. There is no doubt that the combined work of these two types of farming, enriched by the new experience of collective construction of each country, has ensured the complete victory of the new, socialist system in the rural areas of these countries.

Soviet experience in the choice of organisational forms for collective farming is no less valuable for these countries. Here, too, the CPSU was without ready-made recipes: this was a new and unknown area for it. The history of collective-farm construction in the USSR is, therefore, marked by a special multiplicity of forms of socialised farming, from the highest form, the commune, to mutual-assistance teams. It should be said that a considerable number of wrong turnings and false starts were made here. The

Party contained theoreticians who occupied themselves with devising wild schemes respecting the choice of forms of collective farming, seeking to create unviable monsters and combines of all kinds and propagating communes without taking into account the objective conditions of development of the movement or the practical experience of the masses. It is not surprising, therefore, that none of these artificial and far-fetched forms of collective farming stood the test of time and that all were rejected by life itself.

Relying on the experience of collective-farm construction, the Communist Party studied, tested in practice and firmly established the basic form of collective farming—the *farm co-operative*. This was a great historical achievement of popular creativity, embodied in practical collective-farm construction. The advantages of the co-operative form of farming are that all the principles of its internal life are simple, accessible and comprehensible to the broad masses of the collective-farm peasantry. The Party also took into account the fact that traditions of co-operative work had deep roots in the history of the Russian peasantry. That is why this economic form was unanimously accepted by the Russian peasantry. *The farm co-operative as a form of production co-operation embraced all sides of the public and private life of the collective-farm peasantry in the optimum way and was therefore the basic link in the general chain of collective-farm construction.*

Correct forms of internal collective-farm organisation corresponding to the co-operative were discovered and consolidated in the course of collective-farm construction. They included socialist principles of organising and paying collective labour, based on piece work and permanent production teams and animal-husbandry units designed to produce a marketable surplus. Correct principles for mutual economic relations between the state and the collective farms and new forms of union between the town and the countryside were discovered. These economic and organisational forms acquired new socialist content, constantly developed, changed and improved in the course of the collective-farm movement and were enriched by a new experience of collective-farm construction.

In generalising the experience of collective-farm construction in the USSR, we should indicate yet another characteristic feature of it. We are referring here to the vanguard role played by the key grain growing areas in collective-farm construction. Under the conditions of the Soviet Union, such major grain growing areas as the North Caucasus, the Lower and Middle Volga territories and the Ukraine were in every sense support points in

launching mass collectivisation in the country. *Just as the main industrial centres—Leningrad, Moscow and others—were the support points of the socialist revolution in Russia in October 1917, so the main grain growing areas of the country were the support points for a profound revolutionary change in the countryside.*

However, the development of the collective-farm system cannot be regarded as an uninterruptedly triumphant advance made up of easy victories. The formation and growth of the collective-farm system proceeded amid complex contradictions, immense difficulties and the most acute class struggle. It is necessary in this connection to point out *two* extremely complex and dangerous facts in the history of collective-farm construction in the USSR. *The first* dates from the spring of 1930, when provocative actions by the class enemy and mistakes made in the conduct of collectivisation in a number of areas led to the disintegration of many collective farms and the withdrawal from them of the wavering section of the middle peasants. *The second* dates from the end of the period of reorganisation (1932), when class enemies who had penetrated the collective farms attempted to wreck them and bring about their disintegration from within. The class enemy and its agents banked on destroying the young, newly-emerged collective-farm system by means of sabotage of the productive forces, frustration of the fulfilment of state-assigned quotas and the undermining of labour discipline.

This undoubtedly left its mark on collective-farm construction. During the years of socialist reorganisation agricultural productivity dropped, a substantial fall occurred in the gross output of grain and the numbers of all kinds of livestock were sharply reduced. Trotskyites and Bukharinites judged shortcomings in the period of reorganisation as marking failure of the collectivisation policy. They began maliciously to slander the collective farms, declaring that they were unprofitable and should be dissolved. The Party firmly rejected these hostile assaults on the collective farms. It showed that Soviet collective farms, those large-scale socialist enterprises, were only finding their feet, but had a great future. This prediction was brilliantly confirmed.

3. The historical experience of socialist reconstruction of agriculture in the USSR has now acquired an international character. However, this does not, of course, mean that all the methods and forms of collective-farm construction in the USSR could be transplanted mechanically into all socialist countries. To take such a course would mean renouncing the basic principles of Marxism-

Leninism, which requires that the national, historical, socio-economic and natural conditions of each individual country should be taken into account. Moreover, socialist remaking of agriculture in the people's democracies proceeded in new, concrete historical circumstances, amid other, specific conditions differing in many respects from those that had obtained in the USSR.

Above all, the historical fact should not be forgotten that the *land of Soviets was advancing along an unknown and untrodden path*. Amid hostile capitalist encirclement, it had to rely exclusively on its own reserves and find in them powerful sources for the industrialisation of the country and the collectivisation of agriculture. This required enormous privations and sacrifices on the part of the Soviet people. The other countries of the socialist community find themselves in quite different historical conditions. They are faced by a more favourable international situation than that which confronted the USSR. They are not alone in their great socialist reconstruction, but are welded into a single, fraternal alliance and constantly conscious of mutual support and assistance. Of course, this extremely favourable circumstance has enabled the other socialist countries, too, successfully to achieve the difficult and complex task of collectivising agriculture.

At the same time, the fraternal socialist countries also experienced difficulties, which blocked a more rapid rate of socialist agricultural reconstruction. As an example, we may take the problem of land nationalisation, which the case of the USSR demonstrated to be a vital lever in the collectivisation of peasant farms. Yet none of the socialist countries enjoyed this supremely favourable factor. This represented one of the difficulties and distinguishing features of all socialist countries, in which co-operation and collectivisation of peasant farms had to be carried out under the conditions of surviving small private property in land.

At the same time, it should be kept in view that socialist remaking of agriculture in the socialist countries was far from uniform in its development; similarly, the forms and methods applied in carrying out collectivisation had the most varied character. This was quite natural, since each country had its own special agricultural conditions. Some countries had passed through the capitalist phase of development of agriculture, while feudal or even pre-feudal agrarian relations obtained in others; some countries possessed a more advanced agriculture, while others were at the lowest level of development; in some countries the peasantry had an historically formed attachment to private owner-

ship of land, while in others private land ownership was not a matter of importance, etc.

Each country, therefore, proceeding along the correct, historically inevitable socialist path, contributed its experience to the theory and practice of building socialism in the countryside. This experience has now become so broad and rich that it is already possible to generalise and assess appropriately the basic trends and prospects for the further development of great changes in the socialist countries.

The main internal laws of this process have been fully manifested in the practical construction of collective agriculture in many socialist countries. *The following may be included among these general laws: gradual transition from small-commodity peasant economy to large-scale socialised farming; multi-stage forms of collective farming, developing from lower forms to higher; the establishment of two types of socialised farming, based on state and co-operative collective-farm property; organisation of permanent production teams and animal-husbandry units in production co-operatives and payment of labour according to work done.*

Production co-operation in the socialist countries is distinguished by the clearly expressed multi-stage character of co-operative associations. The GDR and Democratic People's Republic of Korea had three types of production co-operatives and Czechoslovakia and Poland had four types, and a similar multi-stage character was to be found in Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria, etc., ranging from the most simple forms of association to production co-operatives of a socialist type. Although the peasant retained the right to private ownership of land under all forms of collective association, he was introduced to collective forms of farming by means of such varied forms while a basis was prepared for abolishing private ownership of land and transforming the land into the socialist property of all the people.

At the 5th Congress of the Bulgarian Communist Party in December 1948, G. M. Dimitrov stated: "...with the gradual involvement of poor and middle peasants in producer co-operative farms and the development of machine-and-tractor stations and also as a result of the prohibition of land rental, the limitation and, subsequently, the prohibition of the sale and purchase of land and the reduction and, subsequently, the elimination of rent following the decision of the co-operative peasants themselves, when conditions permit this, *the question of land nationalisation will be resolved in practice by placing all land in the permanent use of the working peasants.* Thus, the working peasant, who is at present the slave of his little plot of land, will be able to

enjoy the fruits of the earth on the largest scale, the quantity of which will substantially increase as a result of modern machine cultivation of the land on large-scale co-operative farms."¹

The experience of history shows that production co-operation both in the USSR and in other socialist countries emerged and developed within the framework of simple co-operative use of peasants' implements and means of production until the farms were equipped with tractors and other complex machinery. It has now been demonstrated in practice that even the simple combining of peasants' implements and collective labour give socialised farming a great advantage over petty, low-productivity farming. Therefore the idea disseminated by some putative agrarian experts that production co-operation is possible only when agriculture is equipped with a full range of tractors and other agricultural machinery is wholly groundless. Of course, simple co-operative use of peasants' means of production is only the first step towards raising the productivity of agricultural labour. Genuine scope for development of the productive forces and socialist production relations in the countryside is created by new, machine technology, which not only lightens the labour of the peasants but also enables exploitation of the inexhaustible reserves inherent in the very nature of large-scale collective farming.

Bourgeois apologists have not ceased to slander the communist parties, claiming that through co-operation and collectivisation the latter supposedly "introduce" socialism into the countryside by force. Ideologists of this stamp do not wish to reckon with the fact that the historical and socio-economic conditions that have taken shape have prepared the ground for the development of socialism in agriculture. The aim of communist and workers' parties is not to "introduce" socialism into the countryside, but to help the peasant masses to understand this objective historical process of development in order that they themselves should become the grave-diggers of the old, bourgeois system in the countryside and creators of a new, socialist life.

However, it should be kept in mind that the creation of large-scale socialised agriculture and the involvement of the toiling peasantry in building socialism is a complex task of social development which cannot be achieved by the forces of the peasantry alone, without the assistance and support of the working class and the guidance of the Communist Party. This principle

¹ Georgy Dimitrov, *Selected Works*, Vol. 2, Moscow, 1957, p. 670 (Russian edition).

was scientifically substantiated by the classics of Marxism-Leninism and tested by the practical experience of the socialist countries.

Therefore, the ideas of those agrarian theorists who peddle worn-out theories of "laissez-faire" and "spontaneity" in agricultural development and the theories of "balance" between a socialist sector in the town and a small-commodity economy in the countryside, of simultaneous, parallel co-existence of capitalist and socialist trends of development, are completely bankrupt. Close examination of such theories is sufficient to show that these theoreticians have unreservedly embraced the anti-Marxist theory of Bukharin, who claimed that the path to socialism in the countryside did not lie through production co-operation but through the trading supply and marketing co-operation uniting all peasants, including kulaks, NEP speculators and usurers.

The present success of production co-operation in the socialist countries utterly refutes these fabricated theories. Life has shown that a profound change had taken place in the hearts and minds of the peasants themselves in favour of radical reorganisation of the production structure. This change gave rise to a broad, invincible movement of many millions of poor and middle peasants for a new, socialist life. "Every revolution means a sharp turn in the lives of a vast number of people. Unless the time is ripe for such a turn, no real revolution can take place."¹

4. Socialist reconstruction of agriculture means a great revolution in the mode of agricultural production and the life of the many millions of toiling peasants. This revolution is linked with the smashing of old, bourgeois production relations in agriculture, the elimination of private ownership of implements and means of production and of the last, and most numerous class of exploiters—the kulaks. Of course, so profound a process could not proceed smoothly or peacefully. It inevitably intensified the class struggle by arousing fierce resistance from hostile forces, above all the kulaks, who were the bitter enemies of the new social and economic system in the countryside. This could be illustrated by numerous examples from both the USSR and the other socialist countries.

Therefore, the problem of attitudes towards the kulaks under the conditions of mass collectivisation of the peasants acquires

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Lessons of the Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, p. 225.

especial and fundamental importance, since its correct solution is crucial to the success of socialist construction in the countryside. The classics of Marxism-Leninism devoted close attention to this problem. In defining methods of socialist reorganisation of agriculture, they scientifically substantiated the proposition that expropriation of the kulaks as the last bourgeois class in the countryside is an historically legitimate and inevitable measure of socialist revolution; however, it cannot be implemented immediately after the victory of the revolution and is postponed to a later time. Under the conditions of the land of Soviets this goal was postponed for more than a decade. The same was, as we have already noted, wholly true of the other socialist countries.

This is explained by the special social and economic conditions of agricultural development and the complex interlocking of class forces in the countryside. It should be kept in mind that the kulaks form a bourgeois class with deep economic and social roots in the very system of small-commodity peasant economy. Therefore, the victorious proletariat, while sweeping capitalists and landowners from its revolutionary path, cannot expropriate the kulaks immediately. Lenin pointed out that expropriation of the kulaks could not in any way be an immediate objective of the victorious proletariat, since the material and technical, and social and economic conditions for the socialisation of such farms were still absent.

In order to eliminate the kulaks as a class, it was necessary, first and foremost, radically to change the entire social and economic structure of the small-commodity peasant economy, rebuilding it on new, socialist lines and thus finally destroying the economic basis which gives birth to and nourishes this exploiting class. In essence, this is a single objective, economic and political, leading to socialist reorganisation of agriculture and the completion of socialist reconstruction of the entire national economy.

In theoretically substantiating the historical necessity and inevitability of expropriating the kulaks, the classics of Marxism-Leninism also indicated which methods should be used to achieve this objective. Engels, for example, favoured the application of decisive revolutionary measures in dealing with large landowners, while admitting the possibility of eliminating their private ownership of the means of production by means of compensating them. However, Engels linked this possibility to the concrete historical situation in particular countries. Reviewing this principle in relation to the conditions of Russia, Lenin concluded that the revolutionary proletariat must first decisively crush the

counter-revolutionary actions of the kulaks and then, given certain material, technical and social conditions, move towards the complete and final expropriation of the kulaks as a class.

This revolutionary policy concerning the kulaks was based on a profound analysis of the historical and socio-economic conditions of development of this class. The kulaks are capitalist entrepreneurs in agriculture, living on capital accumulated through the cruel exploitation of the toiling peasantry. Spawned by the small-commodity peasant economy, this bourgeois class is the most dangerous and treacherous enemy of the working class and the toiling peasantry. In pre-revolutionary Russia it was an important economic and political force. Twenty per cent of the kulaks owned 40 per cent of peasant land, while 80 per cent of the peasantry—poor and middle peasants—had only 60 per cent of the land.

Although the economic position of the kulaks was drastically weakened after the October Socialist Revolution, they nevertheless continued for a certain period, even under Soviet power, to have large farms abundantly supplied with draught animals and agricultural machinery, making use of the right to rent land and to hire labour. However, the most important factor was that the kulaks had their roots in the predominant system of small peasant farming, which was, as Lenin defined it, breeding capitalist elements daily, hourly, spontaneously and on a mass scale.

It should not be forgotten, either, that the Russian kulaks were a politically mature class which had, from the very moment of its emergence, relied upon such Narodnik parties as the Trudoviks, the Socialist-Revolutionaries and other bourgeois groupings. These parties expressed and defended the class interests of the kulaks. Moreover, the kulaks had great experience of political struggle against the revolutionary movement of the working class and the toiling peasantry. Throughout the entire period of preparation and accomplishment of the socialist revolution, during the years of Civil War and foreign armed intervention and in the period of building socialism the kulaks acted as the sworn enemies of the working people, allying themselves with foreign interventionists and all counter-revolutionary forces within the country. Understandably, the Soviet power was forced to apply stern measures to them dictated by revolutionary laws: the kulaks were deprived of political rights and their economic development was restricted.

The Communist Party, taking into account the new balance of class forces in the countryside and the profound economic changes

that had taken place in the development of agriculture, changed its policy at the beginning of 1930. The old policy of restricting and ousting kulak elements gave way to a new policy of eliminating the kulaks as a class on the basis of solid collectivisation. By the end of 1932 this policy had been fundamentally carried out, culminating in the victory of the collective-farm system.

In their slanderous fabrications bourgeois apologists seek to represent the elimination of the kulaks as the physical extermination of this class. However, such nonsense is easily refuted by history. Of course, there could be no leniency towards those counter-revolutionary elements which resorted to terror, wrecking and subversion in their struggle against collectivisation. However, the bulk of the kulaks were subjected to labour re-education. More humane measures were applied to them than those implemented by the bourgeoisie against the revolutionary forces of the workers and peasants.

Thus, the historical correctness of the policy of the CPSU which, before the mass of the peasants entered the path of collectivisation, consistently carried out a policy of restricting and ousting kulak elements, while relying on the poor peasantry and strengthening its alliance with the middle peasants, is not open to doubt. At the stage of the mass collective-farm movement the Party and the Soviet government, relying on the entire collective-farm peasantry, eliminated the kulaks as a class by means of broadening the socialist base in the countryside and depriving the kulaks of private ownership of the means of production.

Such a policy is historically legitimate and truly Marxist, but it can be implemented by different methods. The international communist movement now has not only the Soviet experience of solving this problem but also the experience of the communist parties of other socialist countries, which elaborated and applied a number of new forms and methods in both the policy of restricting and the policy of eliminating the kulaks as a class. This experience has been thoroughly justified.

5. The historical experience of collectivising peasant farms in the USSR and other socialist countries has shown that, despite the enormous difficulties of uniting the peasants in collectives, this is nevertheless only the first step towards the establishment of the collective-farm system. The main difficulties involved in socialist reconstruction of rural areas consist in solving the problems of the collective-farm system. The main difficulties involved in consolidation of socialist property belonging to all the people,

introduction of the collective-farm peasantry to the new labour discipline and the mastering of the complex machinery of social production.

Lenin pointed out more than once that the new labour discipline does not drop from the clouds and is not born of good intentions. Each social mode of production with its inherent social organisation of labour also has its own special labour discipline. This process of creating a free and conscious labour discipline among the toiling peasantry takes place under the leadership of the working class and its Party; the new labour discipline is forged in the very practice of building socialist agriculture, in the practice of consolidating the collective-farm system, in the struggle against survivals of petty proprietorial psychology and alien class influence. Naturally, the creation of a new labour discipline is a long and complex process.

It would, therefore, be erroneous to think that, once the collective farms had become the predominant form of agriculture, everything had been done and affairs could be left to take their natural course, that the collective farms themselves would do all that was necessary, solving all the problems of developing socialist agricultural production without assistance from the socialist state or the guiding influence of the working class and its Party. Of course, this approach to building socialism in the countryside has nothing in common with Marxism-Leninism. The transition by the peasants to collective farming does not reduce but, on the contrary, increases one hundredfold the concern and the responsibility of the Party and the government for the further development and consolidation of socialist agriculture. Any weakening of Party leadership of the collective farms or overestimation of them as a form of farming would, in practice, mean denying leadership of the peasant masses by the working class, which would inevitably result in a weakening of socialist positions in the countryside and a strengthening of the position of class enemies.

It should be kept in mind that the collective farms as such, although they represent a socialist form of farming, are certainly not guaranteed against any kind of encroachment by counter-revolutionary elements or against being used, under certain circumstances, by hostile anti-socialist forces for their own purposes. There are many examples in the history of collective-farm construction in the USSR of kulaks, former landowners and other hostile elements themselves attempting to form various kinds of false collective farms, "collective farms without communists", with the object of discrediting the collective-farm movement. These enemies

were well aware that the collective farms as a form of farming could, in the absence of leadership by communist or workers' parties, easily be used against the interests of the toiling peasantry and against people's power.

A no less erroneous view was that, as soon as individual peasant producers had been united in large collective farms, they could be regarded as fully-fledged socialists, capable, without the help and leadership of the working class, of independently building socialism in the countryside. Such an erroneous idea can stem from failure to understand the laws of social development, since "for some time after the revolution traces of the old ethics will inevitably predominate over the young shoots of the new. When the new has just been born the old always remains stronger than it for some time; this is always the case in nature and in social life".¹

Naturally, in the course of the struggle for the new, collective-farm system, great changes occur in the social, economic and personal lives of the labouring masses of the peasantry and their political and cultural level, socialist consciousness and degree of activity in social production rise immeasurably. By their social and economic position the working peasants are not the petty producers they formerly were, dispersed and divided by small individual production itself, but are now collectivists, active builders and creators of a new, socialist life. However, it should never be forgotten that, in entering a collective farm, a peasant cannot immediately become a fully-fledged socialist, a politically conscious worker in a socialist enterprise. For centuries the peasantry lived under conditions in which private property was the foundation of social and economic life. This could not but leave a deep impression on peasant psychology and on the peasant's modes, traditions and habits.

It follows from this that peasants united in collective farms do not immediately acquire the experience of conducting a large-scale farm and do not immediately get rid of petty-bourgeois habits and traditions. Moreover, without leadership by the working class they are unable quickly to master large-scale socialist production and its material and technical infrastructure. "The assumption that all 'working people' are equally capable of doing this work would be an empty phrase, or the illusion of an antediluvian, pre-Marxist socialist; for this ability does not come of itself, but grows historically, and grows *only* out of

¹ V. I. Lenin, "A Great Beginning", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 425.

the material conditions of large-scale capitalist production. This ability, at the beginning of the road from capitalism to socialism, is possessed by the proletariat *alone*.”¹

It is the working class, which possesses the ability to organise large-scale production, that can organise labour on socialist principles and forge a new, socialist labour discipline. In guiding collective-farm construction, it passes on its knowledge, experience and organising abilities to the collective-farm peasantry. Thus, in organising large-scale socialist production and struggling against various remnants and survivals of capitalism, the working class leads the labouring peasantry to the construction of large-scale socialist production in agriculture and helps it master this production. In the Soviet Union the working class played an outstanding role at all stages of collective-farm construction.

6. Collectivisation in the socialist countries is putting down roots and developing as it advances victoriously. External and internal enemies have tried on more than one occasion to destroy the collective farms and to undermine the faith of the peasants in socialised farming. However, all these attempts have failed. The outcome of nazi plans to destroy collective farms in the Soviet Union is universally known. Counter-revolutionary insurgents in Hungary who counted on destroying the co-operative system met with a deserved rebuff. The working peasants of Hungary resolutely came to the defence of their co-operatives against attacks by counter-revolutionary elements. An instructive lesson was also given in Korea during the 1950-1953 war. The aggressors barbarically destroyed co-operative farms but, after the interventionists had been driven out, the Korean peasantry united in co-operatives to a man.

The collective-farm system is thus a great and invincible force in building socialism. In realising the Marxist-Leninist doctrine on socialist reconstruction of agriculture, the communist and workers' parties of the socialist countries have already succeeded in involving the enormous masses of peasants in building socialism and have ensured the advance of all branches of agriculture on the new, socialist path.

The victory of the socialist system in the agriculture of the socialist countries is a major defeat for the capitalist system of agriculture. The co-operative agricultural system of the socialist countries has demonstrated its superiority over the senescent capitalist system of agriculture. Further development and consolidation

¹ *ibid.*, p. 421.

of the co-operative system is opening up a great future before the established world socialist system of agriculture.

The great advantages of the socialist system of agriculture are that it develops on the basis of social ownership of the means of production. Exploitation of the working peasantry is excluded and all members of agricultural co-operatives have an equal right to work and to receive their share of income from the social fund in accordance with the labour they have performed. The planned basis of conducting social economy provides for the harmonious development of all sectors of the economy and the fuller use of all reserves and opportunities to achieve accelerated growth of the productive forces.

Now that the socialist system in agriculture has gained victory in virtually all the socialist countries, it has become possible correctly and purposefully to direct common efforts towards rational location of the various branches of agriculture, not only within each country but also on the scale of all these countries, with due account given to the climatic, soil, economic and historical conditions of each socialist country. Co-operation in industrial production between the socialist countries is developing on a wide scale and favourable opportunities are now opening up for co-operation in agricultural production as well.

Re-equipment of agriculture is now in full swing in the socialist countries, members of CMEA: mechanisation, the introduction of chemical fertilizers and plant-protection methods, the introduction of new machinery, electrification, land-improvement and irrigation. Investment in all branches of agricultural production is growing on a large scale. This is resulting in sufficiently high rates of growth of production and procurement of agricultural products. We shall not over-burden our text with statistics, but shall simply stress that the agriculture of the member-countries of CMEA, like that of the USSR, is experiencing a genuinely steep upsurge in the development of its productive forces.

Bourgeois apologists like to emphasise the high level of agricultural output in the advanced capitalist countries, which is supposedly linked with the superiority of the capitalist system of agriculture. However, they deliberately pass over in silence the fact that this high level has been reached by robbing other peoples, principally those of colonial countries, and at the cost of enormous sacrifices and deprivations suffered by the many millions of working peasants in their own countries. Furthermore, the high level of capitalist agricultural output is maintained today through

the mass ruin of petty and middle peasant producers and the merciless exploitation of an army of agricultural labourers that numbers many millions.

These profound defects, which are inherent in the capitalist system of agriculture, have been eliminated for ever in the agriculture of the socialist countries. This, ultimately, is the most important achievement of the working peasantry of these countries. The essential basis of the great advantages offered by the socialist system of agriculture lies specifically in elimination of the shameful capitalist system of exploiting the working peasantry. *Therefore, there is full justification for stating that while the world socialist agriculture is at the peak of its vivifying powers, the capitalist system of agriculture, rent by profound social and economic contradictions, is undergoing a severe and chronic crisis and has entered upon a period of decline.*

Harsh competition, a heavy tax burden associated with the militarisation of the economy, and pressure from large capitalist monopolies are leading to the ruin and demise of petty and middle peasant producers, the growth of an enormous army of expropriated peasants and their transformation into hired workers—the slaves of large-landed proprietors. This national disaster is being experienced by the working peasantry in all countries where the capitalist agricultural system prevails. It is sufficient to adduce such facts as the annual hunger marches by Italian agricultural labourers, the mass ruin and impoverishment of French and Spanish peasants and the endless uprisings of agricultural workers in South American plantations to be convinced of the rottenness of the capitalist system of land ownership.

How right Engels was when he wrote at the end of the 19th century: “It is the duty of our Party to make clear to the peasants again and again that their position is absolutely hopeless as long as capitalism holds sway, that it is absolutely impossible to preserve their small holdings for them as such, that capitalist large-scale production is absolutely sure to run over their impotent antiquated system of small production as a train runs over a pushcart”.¹

The agrarian question in the capitalist countries has now become especially acute and assumed front-rank importance. This is evidenced by the attention it has attracted recently from various political parties, the trade unions, the press and even govern-

¹ Frederick Engels, “Peasant Question in France and Germany”, in: K. Marx and F. Engels, *Selected Works* in three volumes, Vol. 3, p. 472.

ments and parliaments. Bourgeois agrarian theorists of different persuasions have taken an especially active part in this discussion. Such long exploded reactionary theories as that of "diminishing returns" and "improvement of the agrarian structure" and Malthus's obscurantist theory of overpopulation have again emerged.

In the socialist countries, where the peoples have taken power into their own hands, the new, socialist system of agriculture has become firmly established, liberating the working peasantry from capitalist enslavement for ever. The socialist agricultural system is not a temporary or transitory phenomenon. It was brought into life as a result of the natural, historical need of agriculture to be liberated from the intolerable trammels imposed by private ownership of land. Freeing the land from these parasitical shackles remains the key issue of the liberation movement of the peoples of the entire world. It is abundantly clear from the data already adduced what can be achieved when the land, which supports all of mankind, is in the hands of its true masters—the workers, the real creators of material and spiritual benefits.

The working peasantry of the capitalist countries are becoming ever more firmly convinced by the great experience of socialist reconstruction of agriculture in the USSR and the countries of the socialist community that they can gain true liberation and the right to a happy life only from the hands of the working class, struggling for these goals in close alliance with the working class and advancing along the socialist path.

CHAPTER XXII

RESULTS OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE

The great and beneficial influence of the 24th Congress of the CPSU (April 1971) on all sides of Soviet life and on the entire course of world development is now obvious to all. It would be no exaggeration to say that the Congress opened a new chapter in the history of the Party and the Soviet state, forming a towering landmark on the path of communist construction in the USSR.

The main importance of the Congress consisted in its laying down a policy of continuing communist construction on a broad front. This was reflected in the new five-year economic development plan, the enthusiastic struggle to fulfil which became an act of creation that truly involved the entire people.

The Communist Party began a new, long-term stage in economic policy. It implemented large-scale measures aimed at fundamentally improving planning, reinforcing economic methods and material incentives for economic development and broadening the economic independence and initiative of the popular masses. Real conditions are being created on the basis of the fundamental principle of democratic centralism to ensure optimal combination of the interests of the whole of society with the interests of collectives of working people and each worker individually. The Party is guided in this by Lenin's thesis that *communism grows out of the consciousness of the masses—out of their independent creative activity*. The Party sees in the nurturing of popular initiative in socialist production emulation one of the decisive prerequisites for successful establishment of the material and technical base for communism and the further consolidation of the USSR's economic and defensive might.

The Communist Party is the party of great Lenin. Lenin, as

is well known, was always concerned to strengthen the Party as an organising, guiding and leading force, to raise its militant, revolutionary spirit and organisational standard and consolidate its unity and conscious discipline. The Party is a living organism and like any organism it is growing, developing, improving, taking in the invigorating juices of life and gaining in wisdom and many-sided practical experience. The Party grows hand in hand with the development of society and contains both shortcomings and contradictions. Its great historical mission is to be the vanguard of a class and the political leader of the people. It must never lose its great reforming and vivifying strength. The Central Committee proceeded from these immutable principles in closely analysing the activity and the organisational, ideological and political principles of the Party.

The additions to the Rules of the CPSU confirmed by the Congress were directed at increasing still further the political activity and responsibility of Communists in all spheres of production and of public and cultural life. It is important to observe to the letter the well-known Leninist proposition that, in discussing a particular question, Communists may put forward proposals of any kind, actively criticise shortcomings and fully exercise their rights, but that, after a decision has been taken by the majority, every Communist is obliged without demur to obey the will of the majority and actively participate in implementing the decision adopted. This demand by the Party proceeds wholly and exclusively from the Leninist principle of democratic centralism.

The great attention devoted by the Congress to the sphere of ideology flowed principally from the growing spiritual demands of Soviet people and their vigour in creating a communist society. This is the reason for the increasing role of the Party in the ideological education of the popular masses. The Party's growing educational role is also dictated by the fact that ideological struggle on the international stage has sharply intensified, reflecting the irreconcilable class contradictions between the two social and political systems. Ideological sabotage, slander and the inflaming of hatred towards the peoples of the socialist countries have all assumed enormous dimensions.

Imperialist reaction is using a gigantic propaganda machine against the Soviet Union. Attempts to compromise the policy of the Communist Party and undermine the faith of the toiling masses in it are being made under the guise of objective, impartial expositions of the facts or even of a certain sympathy for the ideas of socialism. Only naive people, far removed from

Marxism, could console themselves with the illusion that socialist society is, by its nature, insured against the influence of bourgeois ideology. The interests of socialism and communism demand constantly increasing revolutionary vigilance on the part of Communists and all Soviet people and the exposure of ideological sabotage by imperialism.

During recent years numerous Party, government and economic cadres have been moulded ideologically and organisationally in the course of living organisational work and the conduct of great practical affairs. They are closely linked with the people and have a good understanding of their vital needs. The wise Leninist policy of the Party and its tireless organisational work have allowed for the broadest development of the mighty talent and creative forces of the people—the creator of the material wealth of society and the true builder of communism.

1. THE IMMUTABILITY OF THE LENINIST PRINCIPLES OF SOCIALIST MANAGEMENT

The historic documents of the 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th congresses of the CPSU reflected with especial force the consistent line of the Party in the creative development and practical implementation of Marxist-Leninist theory and represented a major new step towards perfecting the management of the complex and powerful machinery of the economy. An issue of immense state importance, affecting all sides of the economic, political and cultural development of Soviet society, was set on the course of practical implementation. We are referring here to the development of the Leninist principle of democratic centralism in socialist management, further strengthening of the principle of planning in developing the Soviet economy and enlargement of the role of the popular masses in all spheres of communist construction.

The principle of democratic centralism has wholly vindicated itself at all stages of socialist construction. The Soviet Communist Party, the Soviets, the trade unions, the Young Communist League and all other mass organisations of working people were built on this immutable basis. The Party, faithful to the behests of Lenin, has unfailingly devoted and continues to devote great attention to comprehensive practical implementation of this principle in the life of Soviet society. In recent years the Communist Party has carried out important measures aimed at further broadening the participation of the toiling masses in the management of the economy and,

in particular, at consistent implementation of democratic centralism in the direction of all links of the socialist economy.

The principle of democratic centralism in the management of the economy is characteristic of only one economic system—the socialist system. Its advantage is to enable optimum combination of economic direction by the Party and the government with active participation in this by the broad popular masses. In the sphere of industry and construction, the principle of democratic centralism has the distinguishing feature that management here is built from top to bottom on the basis of one-man management under broad and active supervision by the working class, exercised through the Party, the Soviets, the trade unions and other mass organisations.

Nevertheless, the Party is well aware that even the most progressive economic system, such as the socialist system unquestionably is, cannot by itself automatically solve all the problems of its development. In order fully and consistently to elicit and place at the service of the people all the reserves and opportunities objectively inherent in this system, the most sound management structure and organisational forms of directing the complex machinery of the economy must be created. The tasks of creating and developing the socialist economy are never decided by the Party in isolation but are invariably viewed in close connection with the problems of elaborating better, more flexible forms of economic management.

As we have already indicated, Lenin devoted a great deal of attention to the problem of how best to organise management of the economy, of which organisational forms of direction could ensure progressive development of the Soviet economy. These complex and wide-ranging issues have been discussed more than once by Party congresses, conferences and plenums of the Party's Central Committee. On each occasion the Party, relying on the practical experience of socialist construction, has found and applied the most effective forms of economic management, corresponding to the conditions and requirements of each new stage of development. These forms have invariably been based on the Leninist principle of democratic centralism.

Strengthening and augmenting the might of socialism means tirelessly improving and consistently developing the Leninist principles of socialist management. In the course of practical socialist construction the Party has elaborated new, unprecedented methods of conducting the economy profoundly differing from the methods of capitalist management. Socialist management methods, however, did not emerge by change, as a result of the arbitrary choice of

people. Their emergence and development was contingent upon the economic structure of society and the operation of its economic laws.

“Under the bourgeois system, business matters were managed by private owners and not by state agencies,” Lenin noted, “but now, business matters are our common concern. These are the politics that interest us most.”¹

The Soviet state has traversed a glorious path extending over more than half a century. In the course of great socialist reconstruction the Soviet people, led by the Communist Party, has elaborated new, genuinely socialist methods of economic management. The wealth of experience accumulated by the Party and the people in the field of economic management has become the property of all countries and peoples which have set out on the road of building socialism. At the dawn of the Soviet state Lenin, assessing the historical significance of the first steps taken by Soviet Russia in directing the economy, wrote: “This experience will never be forgotten.... It has gone down in history as socialism’s gain, and on it the future world revolution will erect its socialist edifice.”²

The peoples of other socialist countries, which are steadily advancing under the all-conquering banner of Marxism-Leninism, are skilfully drawing sound lessons from the rich treasury of Soviet experience in economic management, creatively and in conformity with their own historical and national features implementing the Leninist principle of democratic centralism in socialist construction and achieving major economic successes.

Under the guise of “freedom of criticism” bourgeois ideologists and, following in their footsteps, certain pseudo-theoreticians who consider themselves Marxists carry on an unceasing campaign of slander against Soviet methods of economic management. The fact that the socialist state of workers and peasants plays the leading role in building the Soviet economy and that, in the entire political, economic and cultural life of the Soviet people, the organising and leading role belongs to the Communist Party, which stands fast in defence of the Soviet people’s interests, is not to the taste of these theoreticians. It is on the basis of this dislike that some of them launch unfounded abuse of the Soviet social

¹ V. I. Lenin, “Tenth All-Russia Conference of R.C.P.(B.)”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 430.

² V. I. Lenin, “Speech at First Congress of Economic Councils”, *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 413.

economic system, which they call state capitalism, and the Soviet Union's genuinely socialist principles of management, which they brand as bureaucracy.

The times are new but the songs are old. For the Soviet people such hollow phrase-mongering presents no novelty. Over the years they have heard similar outbursts from the Trotskyists, the "labour opposition", the Democratic Centralists, the Zinovievites, the Bukharinists and other long vanished theoreticians and prophets. Marx, Engels and Lenin waged a consistent and irreconcilable struggle against such petty-bourgeois, anarchistic trends. In their works they totally exposed and demolished the unscientific conceptions of the Proudhonists and the followers of Lassalle, Bakunin and other petty-bourgeois ideologists.

Bourgeois and other pseudo-theorists strive to present any new reforming steps taken by the Party as a "crisis" or a "dead-end" in the development of the socialist economic system, directing their main attacks against the Leninist principle of democratic centralism in the field of economic construction. First place in this chorus continues to be held by reactionary bourgeois propaganda, which spreads the wildest fabrications concerning the measures implemented by the CPSU and the Soviet government. It has now become fashionable in bourgeois reactionary propaganda to criticise the Soviet socialist system from the standpoint of outworn theories of "convergence", "pluralism", "market socialism", "national communism", etc. Abundant material for this is provided by certain pseudo-theoreticians regarding themselves as Marxists, who, under the banner of "freedom of criticism", continue shamelessly to blacken and revile the socialist system of society in the USSR.

In the past this unseemly role was fulfilled by such socialists as Bernstein, Kautsky, Renner, Bauer, Trotsky and others. It was none other than Karl Kautsky who, in the 1930s, produced a book under the title *Bolshevism in a Dead-End*. It appeared at a time when the Soviet people, led by the Communist Party, was engaged in socialist reconstruction of the economy on an unprecedented scale and building giant factories, collective farms, state farms and machine-and-tractor stations. History mocked at the prophecies of this discredited renegade.

In seeking to present the Soviet socialist economic system in a false light, some theoreticians in the West are even now attempting to interpret the measures taken by the Communist Party and the Soviet government to improve the management of industry and agriculture as rejection of the principles of democratic centralism. However, this is a profound delusion. What, in fact, does it mean

to manage a socialist economy without a pivot such as that represented by democratic centralism? It means rejecting the leading and guiding role of the Party, the leader of the people, and dooming the trade unions and other mass organisations of the working class to passivity. To follow this path means risking anarchy, disorder and a laissez-faire approach. Of course, such theoreticians are at liberty in their thoughts and can occupy themselves with all kinds of speculative moralising, but this inevitably leads them into the camp of revisionists of Marxist-Leninist theory.

True proponents of Marxism-Leninism invariably adhere to the principle of democratic centralism, which stems from the very essence of the people's state and the laws of development of the socialist economy based on socialist property. The loyalty to this principle means not a weakening but a comprehensive strengthening of the socialist state, an enhancement of the leading role of the Party and broad development of the creative initiative of the masses through the trade unions, the Young Communist League, co-operation and other mass organisations of the people.

Recently, a number of ideologists have energetically propagated the anti-Marxist conception of "market socialism": of so-called associations of producers as the basis for managing industrial enterprises and the entire national economy. They believe that through the spread of such "associations of producers" it is possible to move quietly, peacefully and without trouble towards socialism without the leading role of the state and without interference in the management of the economy by the party of the working class. Adherents of such ideas advertise them as a new way of building socialism which they have supposedly discovered.

However, this is, in fact, far from being the case. The utopian socialists had ideas of advancing towards a new social system through the establishment of "associations of producers". As already noted, the "labour opposition", too, tried to impose this method on the Party. Bukharin's anti-Leninist, anarchistic theory that no state is needed by the working class is well known. Now this eclectic mixture has again been taken up by some ideologists. Moreover, they are striving to impose their "discovery", which they pass off as a creative development of Marxism-Leninism, on all socialist countries. Of course, this assessment of the social and economic process in the socialist countries cannot withstand any kind of criticism. Marxism-Leninism has proved scientifically that, under the conditions of socialism, separation of the Party and the state from the everyday needs of the people and from direction of the country's economy inevitably leads to the atrophy and pro-

found paralysis of the socialist economy and all social life and a strengthening of the positions of class enemies.

It is appropriate here to remind readers of the remarkable words of Lenin, who wrote, criticising the anarcho-syndicalist deviation: "Marxism teaches ... that only the political party of the working class, i.e., the Communist Party, is capable of uniting, training and organising a vanguard of the proletariat and of the whole mass of the working people that alone will be capable of withstanding the inevitable petty-bourgeois vacillations of this mass and the inevitable traditions and relapses of narrow craft unionism or craft prejudices among the proletariat, and of guiding all the united activities of the whole of the proletariat, i.e., of leading it politically, and through it, the whole mass of the working people."¹

It is an objective law that industrial development in our century is moving towards the creation of increasingly large-scale production – towards concentration and centralisation. This process applies equally to agriculture. There can be no true socialism without large centralised industry, controlled by the state and constructed in conformity with the latest achievements in science and technology. *Only confused theoreticians could dispute or ignore the fundamental principle of Marxism-Leninism that socialist property requires unity, harmony and planning on a national scale. Without this it is impossible to establish correct proportions between various sectors of the economy or the most effective distribution of the national income and thus ensure harmonious development of the socialist economy.*

The principle of democratic centralism as the fundamental principle of socialist management means the combination of centralised, planned direction of the economy by the Soviet state with the initiative of millions of urban and rural workers. In emphasising from the very inception of Soviet power the necessity for ensuring harmony and unity in the development of the economy, Lenin pointed out at the same time that "...centralism, understood in a truly democratic sense, presupposes the possibility, created for the first time in history, of a full and unhampered development not only of specific local features, but also of local inventiveness, local initiative, of diverse ways, methods and means of progress to the common goal".²

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Tenth Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 32, p. 246.

² V. I. Lenin, "Version of the Article 'The Immediate Tasks'", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, p. 208.

In recent years the Party and the government have adopted a series of measures to improve methods of economic management, planning and the material and moral stimulation of social labour. The Party's policy in directing economic construction was not to reject or abandon accumulated experience but consistently and steadily to develop, improve and refine already established and tested methods and forms of management on the basis of it. The Party is well aware that building the economic basis of communism is an extremely difficult and highly complex process demanding a prolonged period of time.

In comprehensively improving practical state planning, the Party strictly adheres to the Leninist policy of democratic centralism. While keeping the basic levers of the economy in the hands of the state, it simultaneously strives to broaden the rights of the Union republics, ministries heading sectors of the economy and the directors of enterprises and amalgamations and to give maximum freedom to local initiative and the creative inventiveness of the masses. It is precisely this that moves the economic machinery of socialism in the correct direction and endows it with co-ordination, harmony and high efficiency.

Of course, under the conditions of a gigantic development of the productive forces such complex economic machinery can only be managed on a scientific basis with the aid of highly-educated personnel. One of the most complex problems of centralised planning of the socialist economy is to ensure correct proportion between sectors and areas of the economy and to prevent disproportions. This principal objective has always received the attention of planning and other government and Party organs.

As a result of consistent implementation of the Leninist general policy of the Party, a powerful socialist industry has been created in the Soviet Union. Numerous trained organisers, specialists and workers have grown up with it. At the present stage of development, relying on a strong material and technical infrastructure, the USSR can, without special increases in its investment in new construction, ensure unbroken and substantial growth in production by means of better use of production capacity, more rational organisation and the comprehensive introduction of scientific achievements into material production. One of the chief sources of such reserves is the broad, organised and planned introduction of advanced methods, better organisation of social labour and improvement of economic management. An immense role here is assigned to the scientific and technical production propaganda and information, which is the most powerful and effective lever in the

system of scientific and technical progress. The basis of the Party's economic policy is correct understanding and practical implementation of the Leninist principle of material and moral incentives, both for each individual worker and for each working collective at a socialist enterprise, in order to raise labour productivity and improve production results.

There can be no question but that Marxist-Leninist science has made great advances both in terms of its knowledge of the economic laws of socialism and in the elaboration of new principles, forms and methods of socialist management. Nevertheless, it is still confronted with the cardinal and urgent practical issue of study, assimilation and creative generalisation of the immense experience of building socialism in the USSR and all other socialist countries and profound study of the laws of development, both of each individual country building socialism and of the entire world socialist system as a whole.

It should be kept in mind that, throughout the development of Marxism-Leninism, the bourgeoisie has not lost hope, either directly or through its agents in the working class, of depriving Marxism of its creative, reforming essence and substituting for it, or diluting it with, various quasi-scientific, anarcho-syndicalist or other petty-bourgeois views. Energetic attempts are now being made by bourgeois ideologists to introduce capitalist methods of management into the socialist system on the basis of such pseudo-scientific concepts as "convergence" and "pluralism". Bourgeois apologists are striving under the pretext of "different paths towards socialism" to deflect socialist development from the Leninist path. Under these conditions, theoretical elaboration of ways of building socialism and the transition from socialism to communism, as well as exposure of various distortions of Marxist-Leninist doctrine in the area of socialist management, are gaining immediate and vital importance.

Marxists-Leninists consider that, under contemporary conditions, direction of social production under socialism is possible only on the basis of the scientific principles of democratic centralism and that this can be achieved on behalf of the working class and all working people only by the socialist state. Organisation is, therefore, a key function of the socialist state. Lenin wrote that "...the transformation of the whole of the state economic mechanism into a single huge machine, into an economic organism that will work in such a way as to enable hundreds of millions of people to be guided by a single plan—such was the enormous organisational

problem that rested on our shoulders".¹

The role of the socialist state in directing social production cannot be disputed without rejecting socialism. Of course, if the state goes against the objective laws of development of the economy and uses its strength artificially to fragment modern industry among "associations of producers", nothing good for socialism will result. In this connection Lenin made the following observation: "The building of communism undoubtedly requires the greatest possible and most strict centralisation of labour on a nation-wide scale, and this presumes overcoming the scattering and disunity of workers, by trades and locally, which was one of the sources of capital's strength and labour's weakness."²

These words express a very important idea, which should be specially stressed. Fragmentation and splitting of the united production and economic mechanism inevitably divides, weakens and disorganises the working class, while harmonious centralisation in combination with democratisation endows it with unprecedented strength of organisation and unity and promotes the growth of its self-awareness. *The CPSU seeks to ensure that each worker, each working person in the land of socialism thinks on the scale of the entire state and acts as a state figure with a view to the interests of the working class and of all the working people of the country as a whole. It may be said without exaggeration that enormous successes have been achieved in this respect in the USSR and Soviet people are proud of them.*

The experience of building socialism in the USSR has shown that, if the principle of state planning of the national economy weakens, the market element invariably develops. If the working class is broken up into "associations of producers", many of these associations will, under market conditions, inevitably become competitors, weakening the working class and dividing and isolating workers' collectives. When it is fragmented among "associations of producers", the working class begins to live in terms of new concerns. Such is the inevitable consequence of denying the leading role of the socialist state in the sphere of economy. Experiments of this kind weaken instead of strengthening the leading

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Seventh Congress of the R.C.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 27, pp. 90-91.

² V. I. Lenin, "Draft Programme of the R.C.P.(B.)", *Collected Works*, Vol. 29, p. 114.

role of the working class in the economic development of the country.

It would not be superfluous in this connection to recall the experiment made by the Soviet Union in decentralising the management of industry when, in place of disbanded ministries, each of which had dealt with a particular sector of the economy, the principal role was played by Economic Councils. What was the result? During the six years the councils existed, centralised influence on industrial and agricultural development clearly weakened. The rapid growth of parochialism and local independence, fragmentation and isolation was obvious to all. Branches of industry lost their integrity and interdependence and began to wither. The total organism began to fall into disorder and serious consequences loomed on the horizon. As we have already indicated, the October and November 1964 plenums of the Central Committee of the CPSU decisively corrected this error.

We have no desire to counterpose centralisation to the development of socialist democracy. Under the conditions of socialist society this is a meaningless exercise. Democratic centralism is a proven Marxist-Leninist principle of management. While Lenin was still alive the Communist Party condemned once and for all the assaults launched by the "labour opposition" on the principle of democratic centralism. What did oppositionists not say then! Their platform contained the words: "Organisation of the management of the economy is the function of the All-Russia Congress of Producers". They abused the young Soviet state in every way possible, declaring that bureaucracy is "eating through the Soviet organs".

In supporting "congresses of producers", "industrial democracy" and "workers' associations", the oppositionists went so far as to accuse Lenin, who opposed these Lassalleian experiments, of "lacking faith in the working class". When one looks at the writings of the "labour opposition" today, one might think that one is reading the works of contemporary spokesmen for "market socialism" and so-called associations of producers. Are not the latter authors inspired in their struggle against the Leninist principles of socialist management by the ideas of ideologists of the "labour opposition"?

Of course, ideologists of this kind are at liberty to be guided by theories of any type. That is their affair. But when these theories are put forward as the last word in socialism, as a model to be imitated, and when such theories are used as a means of defaming the Soviet social and political system, then Soviet Communists are

entitled to make their party-spirited comment upon them. Indeed, there were ideologists in the Communist Party who called for management of the economy with the aid of so-called workers' associations and congresses of producers. Lenin firmly branded this as anarcho-syndicalism. Soviet Communists subscribe to Lenin's harsh judgement.

It is impossible, too, not to see a nationalist tinge in arguments of this kind. The propagation of ideas of national separateness and isolation and the assertion that mutual relations among the socialist countries and their relations with capitalist countries should be built on a completely identical basis are anti-socialist. This makes it clear why bourgeois ideologists, in gambling on pluralistic paths to socialism, count especially on propaganda in the countries of the socialist community and in the world communist movement favouring some special road to socialism.

However, genuine Communists have the way to build socialism discovered by great Lenin. He indicated that in building socialism every country liberated from capitalism has its own specific features determined by national and state differences. These differences are reflected in the rates, forms and methods of socialist construction. This undoubtedly enriches the theory and practice of the world communist movement and teaches Communists profoundly to assess the concrete conditions and opportunities that have taken shape in particular countries.

The CPSU regards with deep respect all fraternal communist parties which, embodying in themselves the wisdom of the working class, strive consistently to implement the general principles of scientific communism, proceeding from a profound understanding both of these principles themselves and of the concrete situation in a particular country. However, propagandists of the so-called special, pluralist paths to socialism, have something else in mind. They declare that they have discovered a brand-new variety of socialism opposed to Leninism and indicated a path supposedly suitable for all countries and peoples in the modern age. Such claims cannot but arouse criticism from genuine Marxists-Leninists. They result from mistaken theoretical constructs, which will undoubtedly be overcome in time by the practice of socialist construction, just as they were overcome and abandoned in the course of building socialism in the USSR.

Thus, the foundation of Soviet methods of economic management continues to be the Leninist principle of democratic centralism. The Soviet people is a consistent proponent of this principle. It has been convinced of its truth by many years of rich experience in build-

ing socialism in the Soviet Union and the immense successes that it has achieved under the leadership of the Communist Party in state, economic and cultural construction.

Of course, genuine Marxists-Leninists cannot dogmatically, formally and blindly adhere to a particular form or structure of management organisation as something given once for all. They consider that, while preserving and developing the principle itself without distorting its essence, it is necessary to discover new, more rational forms and methods of implementing the principle in practice in conformity with concrete historical circumstances. The principle remains, but the form in which it is manifested changes as concrete historical circumstances change. This approach to the principles of socialist construction guarantees success in practice. That is wholly true, too, of the principle of democratic centralism.

During the first years of Soviet power Lenin and the Party attached especial importance to centralisation of the management of industry. This was called for by the necessity of nationalising large-scale industry and uniting it in a single whole in order to ensure complete elimination of private capitalism in industry and re-establish it on a new, socialist basis. Centralised management of industry fully justified itself in the period of industrialisation and proved vital during World War II. Without centralised direction the Soviet state could not have relocated industry in the east, ensuring that it continued to operate without interruption. Finally, without centralised direction the USSR could not rapidly have restored the pre-war level of production or have launched new industrial, agricultural and housing and public facilities construction on an enormous scale.

At the present time the Soviet people and its Communist Party are consistently improving the management of industry, construction and agriculture, but this certainly does not mean that they are rejecting the principle of democratic centralism. The issue is not one of weakening centralised direction of the national economy, but of a considerable reinforcing and deepening of its democratic basis through still wider involvement of working people in direct economic management and the strengthening of the direction of industry, construction and agriculture by local Party, government and economic bodies. Centralised direction remains the best guarantee against parochialism and separatist tendencies of every kind.

Under the conditions of socialism the combination of vertical and horizontal direction has fully justified itself and the Communist Party, therefore, adheres strictly to the principle of democratic centralism in whatever concrete organisational form it may assume.

2. THE CREATION OF A MATURE, DEVELOPED SOCIALIST SOCIETY IN THE USSR AS A RESULT OF IMMENSE ACHIEVEMENTS

The outstanding importance of the 24th, 25th and 26th congresses of the CPSU consists in their comprehensive, creative development of Marxist-Leninist theory and their profound scientific substantiation of the contemporary stage of communist construction. Their theoretical and political conclusions represent a great contribution to the treasury of Marxist-Leninist theory. The decisions of the congresses proceeding from concrete historical conditions set the immediate goal of placing all economic, state and Party activity on a scientific basis. The congresses, embodying the collective intelligence of the Party and the many-sided experience of the masses, comprehensively revealed the paths along which Soviet society is to advance towards communism and laid down a scientifically substantiated programme for the long-term development of the Soviet Union's productive forces and its entire economy. A notable feature distinguishing the congresses was their Leninist optimism, the unity of views expressed on all questions associated with major policies, the orientation towards positive solution of the problems that emerge from life and the forward-looking quality of the views expressed. This was, above all, a manifestation of the revolutionary spirit and militancy of the Party, which invariably bases its activity on the immutable foundation of Marxism-Leninism.

In sundering the linked, strong but, at the same time, highly vulnerable chain of imperialism, the October Socialist Revolution opened a new page in the history of the development of human society. Engels's prediction that after a radical social upheaval "*will date a new epoch of history*"¹ was realised. A new epoch of history did, indeed, begin. A comparatively short period elapsed after the October Revolution before more links from the weakened chain of imperialism detached themselves in Europe, Asia, Africa and on the American continent. The development of society proceeded along the true path discovered by Marxism-Leninism.

The Soviet Union relied on the historic gains of the peoples in breaking out of hostile capitalist encirclement and achieving the complete and final victory of socialism in an historically short

¹ Frederick Engels, *Dialectics of Nature*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1974, p. 35.

period of time. This enabled the Communist Party to present the Soviet people with a bright new prospect of progress and to inspire it to even greater achievements—creation of the material and technical infrastructure of communism and construction of the edifice of communist society itself.

Objectively speaking, it is now incomparably easier for Soviet people to set and achieve in practice the most towering goals, since all the conditions for their achievement have been created by the preceding work done by the Party and the people. Nevertheless, without theoretical interpretation and critical analysis of the path that has been traversed or due account of historical experience, one may come upon serious obstacles and difficulties in achieving this goal. Evidently, *it is most important in this complex process neither to outstrip nor to fall behind the demands of life, since in either case this leads to the divorce of the vanguard from the masses and a breach of the Party's general policy.* We should not forget the methodological instructions of the founders of Marxism that "new superior relations of production never replace older ones before the material conditions for their existence have matured..."¹.

It will be useful to look back to the history of the recent past in order to see more clearly the Soviet Union's path towards achievement of its cherished goal. More than half a century ago Lenin developed the Marxist doctrine of the emergence and evolution of the communist formation in his work *The State and Revolution*. In defining the sequence of stages to be passed through in creating a new, higher type of society, he precisely demarcated these stages:

"So:

I 'long birth pangs'

II 'the first phase of communist society'

III 'the highest phase of communist society'"².

We find answers here to such problems as the period of transition from capitalism to socialism and socialism and communism as the two phases of socio-economic maturity of the single communist formation. The Leninist plan for building socialism in the Soviet Union and the activity of the Party in creating and perfecting the new socio-economic system were based on these fundamental ideas. The main stages in the formation and development

¹ Karl Marx. *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1970, p. 21.

² V. I. Lenin, "Marxism o gosudarstve" (Marxism on the State), *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 185 (in Russian).

of communism's first phase were most clearly outlined in the experience of the Soviet Union.

A. A transitional period was accomplished under especially difficult and complex conditions. During this period the "long birth pangs" of which Lenin wrote had to be overcome. "How socialists should fight within a capitalist society is not a difficult problem and has long since been settled.... But the most difficult task of all is how, in practice, to effect the transition from the old, customary, familiar capitalism to the new socialism, as yet unborn and without any firm foundations."¹

The difficulties of the transitional period stemmed not only from the solitary position of the land of Soviets but were also historically conditioned by the factors of social and economic development. As has been shown in detail in preceding sections of this book, Russia had a multi-structural and heterogeneous economy. Under the conditions of Soviet Russia, therefore, the transitional period had to be comparatively long. It lasted for 15 years² and essentially concluded, following the successful fulfilment of the first five-year plan (1932), *with the creation of the economic foundation of socialism*. This was a great historic victory for the Soviet state, which predetermined the complete victory of socialism initially in one country. The USSR was transformed from an agrarian country into a country with a first-rank industry. The roots of capitalism were undermined and socialist elements predominated over capitalist in all spheres of the economy; in industry they occupied a dominant position. This meant that the New Economic Policy, as a special policy designed for the entire transitional period, had fundamentally exhausted itself.

B. A further five years were required until, as a result of the successful implementation of the second five-year plan (1937), the edifice of socialist society was fundamentally completed. Thus the "long birth pangs" were overcome and the Soviet Union emerged from the transitional period and built socialism, the first phase of communism. The socialist system gained complete and undivided victory in all spheres of the economy. Of greatest importance here was the fact that, in the course of this profound transforming process, not only did capitalism disappear for ever in the Soviet Union, but the prerequisites for it were also eliminated. "What is

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Report on Work of All-Russia C.E.C. and C.P.C.," *Collected Works*, Vol. 30, pp. 330-31.

² It is true that three of those years were taken up by the Civil War, while five more were required to restore the economy destroyed by two wars.

usually called socialism was termed by Marx the 'first', or lower, phase of communist society. Insofar as the means of production became *common* property, the word communism is also applicable here, providing we do not forget that this is *not* complete communism."¹

C. Having adopted the policy of gradual transition from socialism to communism, the USSR had, even in the pre-war years, entered upon the stage of creating a mature, developed socialist society. However, this process was interrupted by the war and the colossal destruction of the productive forces of the economy. Time and enormous efforts were required to restore the pre-war economic potential and to advance rapidly. In the course of this process of transformation, the necessity arose for setting a new goal: creation of the material and technical infrastructure of communism.

But was not the socialist economic system created in the pre-war years the material infrastructure of communism? Of course, it was. However, it was seriously undermined during the hard years of war. The Party was, therefore, quite correct in formulating and proclaiming its thesis on the need to create the material and technical infrastructure of communism. This was a new approach to the theory of Marxism-Leninism, a new stage dictated by reality.

On the basis of analysis of historical experience and the contemporary practice of socialist construction in the USSR, the 24th Congress of the CPSU drew the profound conclusion that *a mature, developed socialist society had been built by the devoted work of Soviet people directed by the will and intelligence of the Party*. At the very dawn of the Soviet state Lenin had expressed unshakable faith that the Communist Party, despite difficulties, deprivations and adversity, would undoubtedly achieve "fully developed, fully stabilised and constituted, fully comprehensive and mature communism"².

The Communist Party can report with honour to the shining memory of Lenin that a mature, developed socialist society has been created in the USSR, which constitutes a firm foundation for full communism, which is now being built. Of course, a considerable distance has still to be covered before reaching the highest phase of communism. But the most difficult part of the way, which at times seemed insuperable, has already been traversed.

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The State and Revolution", *Collected Works*, Vol. 25, pp. 475-76.

² V. I. Lenin, "'Left-Wing' Communism—an Infantile Disorder", *Collected Works*, Vol. 31, p. 50.

The present stage of mature, developed and stable socialism is the final stage, from which the entire high road leading to the heights of communism is clearly visible.

Now, on the basis of public socialist ownership of the instruments and means of production, the Soviet Union possesses comprehensively and harmoniously developing productive forces and, corresponding to them, the co-ordinated production and social relations of socialism and a high level of culture, education and class-consciousness of the popular masses. This comprises everything necessary for a mature, developed socialist society. We shall seek to examine this position in its most general and fundamental features.

The first indicator of mature, developed socialism is, above all, enormous growth of the productive forces and optimal and rational utilisation of natural resources as well as of the inexhaustible reserves contained in social production. It is sufficient to state that the volume of fixed productive assets in the economy has increased 1,100 per cent by comparison with the pre-war period, while in industry these assets have increased 1,600 per cent. Construction of a mature, developed socialist society is associated with a huge leap forward in the material infrastructure, the foundation of which is a multi-branch industry, large-scale, mechanised agriculture, advanced science and highly trained personnel. Combination of the technological revolution with the advantages of the socialist system greatly adds to this.

Restoration of the enterprises destroyed during the war was conducted on the basis of new, modern technology and major successes in the technical re-equipment of leading sectors of the economy were achieved. An efficient production mechanism has now been created with a modern branch structure and a strong, comprehensively developed machine-building industry, which supplies the economy with modern technology. The output of the machine-building industry has increased 4,700 per cent by comparison with the pre-war period. Large-scale machine production now embraces all sectors of the economy, including agriculture, where, instead of 241,000 small collective farms and medium-size state farms, more than 48,000 socialist, highly-mechanised agricultural enterprises are operating.

The enormous economic might of the country has ensured high and stable production rates and increase in labour productivity. By comparison with the pre-war level gross output has increased 1,100 per cent and national income by more than 1,100 per cent. Monthly industrial output is now 50 per cent greater than annual

industrial output before the war. Labour productivity in industry over this period has risen 600 per cent; in agriculture the increase recorded has been 300 per cent.

The 25th Congress of the CPSU drew up an inspiring programme of social and economic development and of unbroken advance in agricultural production. The Congress clearly formulated the aims of the Party's agrarian policy at the contemporary stage and elaborated measures to implement it. "There is considerable work to be done in agriculture," L. I. Brezhnev stated in the Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the 25th Party Congress. "In this area the Party sets two interrelated aims. The first is to secure a reliable supply of food and agricultural primary materials for the country and always to have adequate reserves for this. The second is to make steady progress in levelling up the material, cultural and everyday conditions of life in town and countryside, this being our programme requirement."¹

The Communist Party, in following Leninist policy, is constantly improving its agrarian policy on the basis of comprehensive account of the real possibilities, scientific and technical progress and the many-sided experience of the masses.

Graphic confirmation of this was provided by the July 1978 Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU. The report delivered by L. I. Brezhnev and the Resolution of the Plenum defined scientifically substantiated ways of further developing Soviet agriculture at the stage of mature socialism. The Plenum noted that the major steps forward taken in the economic and social development of agriculture vividly testified to the vital force of the CPSU's agrarian policy. In agriculture the Party would firmly continue the policy elaborated by the March 1965 Plenum of the Central Committee and developed at subsequent Party congresses and plenums of the Central Committee of the CPSU.

The July 1978 Plenum elaborated practical measures to ensure under contemporary conditions increased efficiency of agricultural production and improvement of its management, strengthening of the material and technical infrastructure of agriculture, the achievement of objectives in the social development of rural areas and the conduct of political and organisational work among agricultural workers. Great attention was devoted to the use of existing reserves of agricultural production and the new opportunities created by the Party for strengthening links among branches of the agrarian-industrial complex and for successful inter-farm co-operation.

¹ *Documents and Resolutions, XXVth Congress of the CPSU*, pp. 58-59.

Much attention was also directed to work with trained personnel and to increasing their responsibility for the work entrusted to them.

In order to achieve strategic goals—comprehensive, dynamic development of all branches of agriculture and the securing of a reliable supply of food and agricultural raw materials for the country—the average annual grain harvest in the 1981-85 period should reach 238-243 million tons, while by 1990 it should attain an average per capita level of 1 ton. The production of meat, milk and eggs is to be greatly increased.¹

“We have golden ears of wheat in our State Emblem,” L. I. Brezhnev noted in his report to the Plenum. “They are not there by chance. Our bread is the product of the combined effort of the peasant, worker and intellectual. The advance of agriculture is an inalienable part of the country’s all-round economic progress.”²

The materials of the 26th CPSU Congress forcefully show that the Party pays constant attention to agriculture and regards the plans to boost agricultural production as a truly nationwide cause.

It was found necessary to work out a special food programme with emphasis on the further rise in agricultural production and the development of its main element, the agro-industrial complex. In view of this, the documents of the Congress explicitly formulate a line for the consistent industrialisation of the agricultural sector and for an integrated approach to problems of agricultural production, resolving them in close coordination with those of all other branches.

The Guidelines for the Economic and Social Development of the USSR for 1981-1985 and for the Period up to 1990 read: “Provisions are to be made for the comprehensive development of the agro-industrial and food complex, and for the well-balanced growth of agriculture, of the industries catering for it, of the food industry and of the industries related to the procurement, storage, transportation and processing of farm produce.”³ The Guidelines lay emphasis on raising the efficiency of all branches of agricultural production, expanding grain and fodder production, boosting live stock-breeding, preserving farm produce, and ensuring the best possible quality of farm products as they are delivered to the consumer.

¹ See: L. I. Brezhnev, “On the Further Development of Agriculture in the USSR”, in: *Socialism: Theory and Practice*, 10 October 1978, p. 9.

² *ibid.*, p. 15.

³ *Documents of the 26th CPSU Congress*, p. 140.

Adequate material resources are set aside to ensure the accomplishment of the political and organisational tasks set out by the Congress and achieve drastic expansion in agricultural production. Almost one-third of all capital investments in the national economy during the eleventh five-year period will go into developing and improving the agro-industrial complex; the bulk of this sum will be used directly to expand agricultural production. During the five years the Soviet farms will receive 1,870,000 tractors, 1,450,000 trucks, 600,000 grain harvesters and other farm machinery.¹ "We will continue allocating large financial and material resources to the countryside, and systematically regearing this branch along industrial lines," the Report of the CPSU Central Committee to the 26th Party Congress stated. "But the emphasis now—and this is a distinctive feature of the agrarian policy in the eighties—is being shifted to returns on capital investments, to making agriculture more productive, to deepening and improving its links with all branches of the agro-industrial complex."²

Throughout its history the socialist system has demonstrated unprecedentedly high rates of development in social production. It is obvious to all that the rates of increase in production recorded in the USSR are substantially higher than in the most developed capitalist countries. Between 1951 and 1975 annual average growth rates of national income in the USSR totalled 8.1 per cent, as compared to 3.1 per cent in the United States; corresponding rates for industrial output were 9.6 per cent and 3.8 per cent and for agricultural output—3.4 per cent and 1.7 per cent. The labour productivity of industrial workers increased over this period by an annual average of 6.2 per cent in the USSR and 3.2 per cent in the United States. It is characteristic that industrial production doubles in the USSR in 8.5 years, while in the United States 20 years are required for such an increase.

As a result of the Soviet Union's superior rates of economic development, the historical gap in levels of production between the USSR and the United States has been sharply reduced. In 1940 the USSR produced 29 per cent as much steel as the United States, 35 per cent as much pig iron, 40 per cent as much iron ore, 25 per cent as much cement, 64 per cent as much mineral fertilizers of various kinds, 36 per cent as much cotton cloth, 32

¹ L. I. Brezhnev, *Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the XXVI Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Immediate Tasks of the Party in Home and Foreign Policy*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1981, p. 61.

² *Documents of the 26th CPSU Congress*, p. 168.

per cent as much woollen cloth and 80 per cent as much granulated sugar. In 1974 Soviet extraction of oil and production of pig iron, steel, coal (marketable), iron ore, coke, cement, mineral fertilizers, woollen cloth, granulated sugar and animal oil exceeded that of the United States, while Soviet output of a number of other products equalled that of the USA. The USSR produces twice as many tractors and four times as many combine harvesters as the United States.

Most remarkable in the progressive development of the productive forces of socialism is the immense scientific potential that has been created in the USSR. The Soviet Union stands in the front rank of nations engaged in elaborating the key avenues of science and technology. The scientific and industrial potential of the country is now creating all the necessary conditions for solving the most complex problems in the development of material production. This proves, in Lenin's words, "to all and sundry that socialism contains within itself gigantic forces and that mankind had now entered into a new stage of development of extraordinarily brilliant prospects".¹

While realistically evaluating the indicators of Soviet economic growth by comparison with the advanced capitalist countries, the Party, nevertheless, does not consider them the only criteria for the development of socialism. The well-known formula—to catch up the most industrially developed capitalist countries in per capita production—arose out of historical conditions: specifically, the fact that socialism did not achieve its initial victory in the most advanced country. There is every justification for saying that, in economic competition with a capitalist country like the United States, the advantage is now on the side of socialism and that the time is inexorably approaching when the USSR will outstrip the developed capitalist countries in terms of all economic positions.

The second indicator of mature, developed socialism is the existence of new, developed socialist production relations, which have formed on the basis of the complete hegemony in all spheres of the economy of social property and the absence of exploiting classes. More than 90 per cent of the Soviet Union's productive assets are in state ownership by all the people, the remaining productive assets forming co-operative and collective-farm property. The concentration of the decisive means of production and natural resources in the hands of the state ensures the leading role of

¹ V. I. Lenin, "Better Fewer, But Better", *Collected Works*, Vol. 33, p. 498.

property owned by all the people in the development of the entire socialist economy.

Planned organisation of production, excluding crises and slumps, has taken firm root throughout the economy. There is a universal obligation to work and full employment; the system of distributing material goods according to the quantity and quality of work done is well established. The maturity of socialist production relations is manifested in the prevailing of genuine collectivism, comradesly co-operation and mutual assistance in relations among people; in active labour by people for themselves and their society; and in the creation of conditions for the harmonious development of the individual of a socialist type and for expanding the creative initiative of each worker. The developed system of socialism is distinguished by further consolidation of the social unity of classes and social groups, which is gradually leading to the complete social homogeneity of society, the flourishing of nations on a socialist, internationalist basis and comprehensive development of socialist democracy.

The class structure of society has changed in conformity with changes in the economy. Between 1939 and 1975 the proportion of industrial and office workers in the total population increased from 50.2 per cent to 82.9 per cent, while the proportion of collective-farm peasants correspondingly fell from 47.2 per cent to 17.1 per cent. The number of industrial workers has increased by more than 150 per cent. A substantial section of the working class has formed in rural areas. In 1940 workers engaged in agriculture, above all on state farms, totalled 1.6 million people; by 1975 their numbers had risen to 8.7 million—an increase of more than 400 per cent.

The working class is inseparably linked to large-scale machine production and is the bearer of advanced forms of organisation of social labour. Technical progress is increasing the importance of large-scale machine production as the basis of all production. Therefore, the role of the working class in public life is also increasing as the leading force in building communism.

The face of the collective-farm peasantry has changed. Engineers and technicians are now the decisive force in collective-farm production—tractor-drivers, combine-harvester operators, mechanics, machinists and drivers, who number at present more than 2 million. The work of machine-operators on collective farms is very similar to that of workers and engineers in industry and many have a secondary specialised education. Apart from machine-operators, an important place in collective-farm production is occu-

pied by economists, agronomists, zootechnicians, veterinarians and mechanical engineers—specialists possessing higher or secondary specialised education. They number 480,000.

The role of the intelligentsia is also changing under contemporary conditions. The active part played by the intelligentsia in productive labour, in increasing the social wealth of the socialist homeland is evidence of its transformation into an active force improving material production and the entire spiritual life of society. It is not fortuitous that the number of engineers, technicians, agronomists, zootechnicians, scientists, teachers, public-health workers, etc. is rapidly increasing.

The changes that have taken place in the class structure of society and the composition of the working class, the peasantry and the intelligentsia show that the social structure of a developed socialist society is characterised by the presence of friendly classes and groups of working people, unity of their economic, socio-political and ideological interests and common involvement in building communism.

The third indicator of mature, developed socialism is steady growth in the material well-being, culture and education of the people. This has become possible as a result of the intensive development in the USSR of the productive forces and of socialist production relations. By comparison with the pre-war period the real incomes of Soviet industrial and office workers have risen 260 per cent and of collective farmers 500 per cent. Real incomes of the population increased 410 per cent during the same period. Payments and benefits received by the population from social consumption funds have increased by comparison with the pre-war period from 4,600 million rubles to 95,000 million rubles—that is, by 1,960 per cent; per capita, the increase was from 24 rubles to 370 rubles, i.e., by 1,440 per cent. Soviet society guarantees its people security in old age or in case of disability or illness. Unemployment has long been forgotten.

The high cultural and educational level of working people is a vivid indicator of mature socialism. While, in 1939, only 24.2 per cent of the entire urban working population of the USSR and 6.3 per cent of its rural working population possessed a secondary (complete or incomplete) or higher education, by 1975 their proportion had increased to 82 per cent and 62.2 per cent respectively. During the ninth five-year plan period the introduction of universal secondary education was completed. It has an enormous number of trained workers, specialists and economic directors, who are capable of resolving complex problems in economic and cultural construction.

The Communist Party is firmly pursuing its policy of further fundamental improvement of the well-being of working people. This has become possible as a result of the rapid development of the Soviet Union's productive forces, the high level of technical equipment of the Soviet economy and the fact that the Party has always devoted immense attention to developing heavy industry – i. e., to production of the means of production (group A). Under the conditions of developed socialism and creation of the material and technical infrastructure of communism, the law of priority development of heavy industry remains in force. At the same time, opportunities have been created for the rapid development of consumer goods production as well (group B). As a result, the rates of growth of the first and second subdivisions will move closer together and the economy of developed socialist society will function even more harmoniously, enabling fulfilment of the plan target to boost the well-being of working people.

The entire complex of issues in the broad social programme mapped out by the Congress presupposes a highly dynamic, developed socialist society. The technological revolution is a key factor promoting the improvement of various sides of the Soviet system. Karl Marx once wrote that, at a certain stage of development of large-scale industry, the creation of real wealth begins in some degree to depend “on the general level of science and on the progress of technology or on the application of this science to production”.¹

This brilliant prediction has now become a real factor. Under contemporary conditions science has actively invaded all spheres of material production and the production relations of people. The organic combination of scientific achievements with the advantages of socialism is leading to an unprecedented dynamism in all spheres of social life. All these processes are guided and coordinated by the Communist Party, which attaches enormous importance to elaborating scientific principles and methods of managing society.

Scientific, technical and social progress will undoubtedly accelerate the growth of developed socialism with its system of public management into full communism. It will make it possible to increase economic potential on an enormous scale, to raise the level of education and class-consciousness of the masses, to eliminate the fundamental differences between mental and physical labour and between the town and the countryside and to transform work

¹ Karl Marx, *Grundrisse der Kritik der Politischen Ökonomie* (Rohentwurf) (1857-1858), Verlag für Fremdsprachige Literatur, Moscow, 1939, p. 592.

and everyday life in the countryside on Communist principles. Production and social relations in Soviet society will become really communist, freed from survivals of bourgeois customs and practices, when the Soviet people have fully overcome the "birth-marks" of the old society.

The fourth indicator of mature, developed socialism is the profound penetration of communist ideology into the consciousness of people and the further strengthening of the moral, political and ideological unity of society. This unity has as its basis socialist production relations, genuine popular power, flourishing socialist democracy and the predominance of the internationalist and humanist ideology of Marxism-Leninism, all of which determine the community of political, economic and spiritual interests of Soviet people. A great step has already been made towards achieving the full social homogeneity of society.

Solution of the nationalities problem was a necessary condition for the moral, political and ideological unity of the Soviet people. Relations of equality and reciprocal assistance based on complete mutual trust have become firmly rooted among the nations and peoples of the USSR. The principal outcome of the Party's activity in relations among nationalities has been to create an indestructible Soviet community of peoples joined together by a united will and shared communist ideals. In its nationalities policy the Party proceeds from Lenin's principle that "socialism, by organising production *without* class oppression, by ensuring the well-being of *all* members of the state, gives *full play* to the 'sympathies' of the population, thereby promoting and greatly accelerating the drawing together and fusion of the nations".¹ The natural consequence of such fusion of nations and peoples in the course of building communism was *the formation of a new historical community of people—the Soviet people.*

The more than fifty years that have passed since the formation of the USSR have shown convincingly that this victory has international, historic importance. The collapse of the colonial system and the awakening of national self-awareness, which gave rise to the national movements of many peoples, are the direct result of successfully developing socialist relations among nationalities—the relations of fraternal friendship and close co-operation among all the nations and peoples of the land of Soviets. The creative experience of the USSR hastened the launching of the national liberation movement and national self-determination in all parts of

¹ V. I. Lenin, "The Discussion on Self-Determination Summed Up", *Collected Works*, Vol. 22, 1977, p. 324.

the world. Of course, such a complex, multi-form process also has its reverse side—narrowly nationalistic manifestations also come to the surface in a number of instances, damaging the true interests and international solidarity of the peoples. However, this is a transitory phenomenon, which will be overcome.

Thus, the mature, developed socialist society in the USSR is characterised by progressive development of the productive forces and the complete correspondence to these forces of production relations, by the growth of people's well-being, by the predominance of the Marxist-Leninist view of the world and by the flowering of a new, socialist culture. This is most fully expressed in the formation of a socialist way of life by people who are consciously building communism. The economic policy of the Party and the government is specifically formulated in terms of the distinguishing features of developed socialism.

The new, tenth five-year plan, which entered history as the five-year plan of quality and efficiency, marks an important stage in the advance of developed socialist society towards communism. The 25th Congress of the CPSU defined its chief objective to be consistent implementation of the Party's policy of raising the material and cultural standard of living of the people. "The pivot of the Party's economic strategy both for the Tenth Five-Year Plan and for long-term development is a further build-up of the country's economic might, an enlargement and basic renewal of production assets and the maintenance of a stable, balanced growth of the heavy industry as the foundation of the economy,"¹ L. I. Brezhnev said in the Report of the Central Committee of the CPSU to the Congress. Rapid growth in labour productivity and a sharp improvement in the quality and efficiency of all social production form an important constituent of economic strategy.

Soviet society is developing in the direction indicated by Marx's genius, firm in the knowledge that it can build communism and inscribe on its banner: "From each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs!"

Immense successes have been achieved by the Soviet people in building communism during the past six decades of Soviet power. Analysis of the achievements of the Soviet state on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the October Revolution and the new USSR Constitution revealed with new force the advantages of the socialist system and the enormous opportunities contained in it. "The victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution has put our country and our people in the vanguard of social progress,"

¹ *Documents and Resolutions, XXVth Congress of the CPSU*, p. 50.

L. I. Brezhnev noted in the report *The Great October Revolution and Mankind's Progress*. "Today, sixty years later, we hold a worthy place in its most advanced areas. We have been the first in the world to build a developed socialist society, and we are the first to have embarked upon the building of communism."¹

Lenin said at the very earliest stage of the emergence of the Soviet state that it was most important to set in motion the revolutionary locomotive of history and to keep it on socialist rails. How pleasant it is to recognise that *the Leninist revolutionary locomotive of history is now invincibly racing ahead at full speed along the extremely stable socialist rails laid by the Great October Socialist Revolution*.

The many-sided historical experience of the CPSU shows that unflinching, principled struggle for purity of revolutionary theory has always, at every stage in the Party's development, been at the focus of its attention. Relying on real historical and contemporary facts, we may say with full justification that Marxist-Leninist social thinking has never stagnated: it has unflinchingly developed, enriched itself and advanced steadily. The Leninist principle of the continuity of the Party's best, progressive traditions is an invigorating force which nourishes and inspires our victorious struggle. In fact, if one examines the entire historical activity of the Party in broad terms, one can clearly see its strongest and most attractive characteristic features.

Firstly, Lenin's Party began the process of creatively developing Marxist theory on the basis of Russian reality. Before Lenin and the appearance of the Russian Communist Party Marxism had remained a bookish doctrine, as it were, which was studied and disseminated among the advanced section of society. The Bolshevik Party moved this teaching from the book shelf on to a practical basis, using it as a powerful ideological weapon of the proletariat. Unlimited fidelity to the revolutionary teaching and profound understanding of the life-affirming power of Marxism-Leninism are the most characteristic feature of the Party's activity. This also enabled it to elaborate Marxism still further, enriching it with new experience of practical revolutionary struggle by the working class and the toiling masses.

Secondly, the party of Lenin was the first to combine the revolutionary theory of Marxism with the mass revolutionary struggle of the working class and the toiling masses. It was on this strong foundation that the many-sided theoretical, political, organisational

¹ L. I. Brezhnev, *The Great October Revolution and Mankind's Progress*, Novosti Press Agency Publishing House, Moscow, 1977, p. 11.

and ideological activity of the Party was formed and refined. It is not surprising, therefore, that the great mission of being first to implement the revolutionary teaching of Marxism and first to fulfil its role of emancipation fell to the Russian proletariat.

Thirdly, at all stages of its struggle the party of Lenin has always regarded revolutionary theory as an outdistancing, leading, guiding force. This enabled it scientifically to substantiate the strategic slogans and tactical methods of struggle and to carry out, brilliantly and in a short space of time, three revolutions, crowned by the full victory of the proletariat. Revolutionary theory was that all-shattering ideological weapon which, interacting with the revolutionary practice of the masses, ensured the victory of socialism in Russia. It would not be an exaggeration, therefore, to say that the experience of Soviet people in building socialism is a model of scientific strategy and tactics of world importance. No matter how much defamers grumble, this remains an objectively true fact in the history of the international communist movement and malicious attempts to belittle it are inevitably in vain.

All these remarkable Leninist features remain at the contemporary stage the most characteristic, the strongest and the most attractive in the activity of the CPSU. In the international communist and workers' movement it continues to march among the foremost fighters for the emancipation of mankind from the oppression of capital. That is why the 23rd, 24th, 25th and 26th congresses of the Party posed with especial urgency the question of enhancing the role of revolutionary theory and ensuring that it attains the level which a complex and many-sided social life demands of it.

In the future, too, relying on the best revolutionary traditions of Bolshevism, the CPSU will wage an irreconcilable ideological struggle in defence of the revolutionary theory of Marxism-Leninism against Right revisionism, renegades and vendors of corrupt bourgeois ideology on the one hand, and, on the other, against "Left" adventurism, dogmatism and a doctrinaire approach, which form one of the main dangers at the contemporary stage of the international communist movement.

All the noble deeds of the party of Lenin, breathing the freshness of the ideas of scientific communism, are the beneficial source of the development of contemporary progressive social thought, an eternally burning torch brightly illuminating the historical superiority of the invigorating revolutionary teaching that is the militant banner of millions of working people in all countries in the struggle against capital and for peace, national independence, democracy, socialism and communism.

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