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THE PARTY PROGRAM, AGRARIAN PLANK

Again Promise vs. Reality

As the transition into a Communist society within the next two decades in the Soviet Union is predicated, wars apart, upon creation of an abundance of physical goods, Khrushchev's draft program of the CPSU follows the dicta of Marx and Lenin on the primacy of an abundance of industrial and agricultural products as the basis for a classless society. It is in the production sphere - the steady crescendo in economic progress - that one must look to evaluate the proposals for the transformation of Soviet society.

Weighing the potentials in growth between industry and agriculture, the experience of past performance however, casts grave doubt on achieving the dramatic rise in agricultural output on which no small part of Khrushchev's Utopian program is dependent. Thus, as so often in Russian history, agriculture and the peasantry assume a strategic role in the dynamics of power, and the unfolding of another long-term agrarian program is of vital political and economic significance. For notwithstanding the industrial growth of the Soviet Union, the rural population is still dominant; the 1959 census listed the rural population at 52 percent compared to 82 percent in 1913.¹

Is the agrarian policy plank of the Party program realistic? Which appears more plausible: promise or reality?

The draft program is specific on the planned rhythm of production in agriculture. The gross output of farm products is to increase by 150 percent in the first decade and 250 percent in the second.² This level is to satisfy fully the requirements of the population and of the national economy in agricultural production, and by the first decade (1970) the Soviet Union will surpass the USA in the per capita output of key products. In the breakdown of those commodities listed (only 3), gross grain products are to increase "more than double in the twenty years"; meat "will rise about threefold in the first decade and nearly fourfold in twenty years", while milk is to "double by 1970 and rise threefold in the twenty years."³

¹Narodnoye khozyaistvo SSSR v 1959 godu; p. 9.

²The report yields to statistical semantics to make the goals more impressive, thus, the cited data reads verbatim: "...to increase two and a half times in the first ten years, and three and a half times in twenty years." Pravda, 31 July 1961.

³ibid.

Applying these indices, the production schedule shapes up accordingly.

PROJECTED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION USSR
(in % or million tons)

	Present Output 1960	Planned	
		1970	1980
Gross Farm Products	-	150% increase	250% increase
Grain	133 m.T.	-	270 m.T.
Meat	8.7 m.T.	26.1 m.T.	34.8 m.T.
Milk	61.5 m.T.	122 m.T.	184.5 m.T.

The table clearly sketches the formidable targets set up for the two decades.

Before a comparison is drawn on input-output relationships, the annual growth rates required to meet the above targets ought to be determined for comparison with previous periods in order to evaluate the prospect of their realization.

Thus, for example, gross farm output is envisaged to rise 150 percent in the first ten years, or by approximately 12 percent a year. Yet the average annual growth during the ten years in the 'fifties was 4.9 percent.⁴ This increment occurred during the post-Stalin reforms when 40 million hectares of cropland were added to the national total, perhaps the most decisive and effective input into Soviet agriculture since collectivization. As this was a non-recurring economic input, its future effect will not be felt with such a direct impact as during the 'fifties. The table illustrates the dynamics of the probability of achievement for the key commodities listed in the draft program.

⁴ Selskoye khozyaistvo SSSR, 1960, p. 21; specifically 60% in 10 years. The Central Committee's specialist on agriculture, P. Doroshenko, wrote: "the average annual growth in gross agricultural output for 1950 to 1953 was 1.6%, while for 1954-57 it rose to 7.1%." Planovoye khozyaistvo, No. 8, 1958, p. 5. The highest annual rate reached was during the bumper harvest of 1958, when 10.7% growth was achieved.

COMPARISON OF GROWTH RATES FOR THE FUTURE WITH PAST:
AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS USSR

Approximate Average Annual Rates of Growth

	Planned for 1970	Planned for 1980	Actual 1950-1959
Gross Agricultural Products	12%	9.5%	4.9%
Grain	4%	4 %	3.9%
Meat	16%	13 %	5.5%
Milk	8%	7 %	5.3%

It is at once apparent that the grain projection is not in line with the gross output and the livestock product yields. As milk and meat volumes are the function of feed inputs - primarily grain - the low rate of growth envisaged for grain production makes the high growth rates for livestock products appear wholly unrealistic and unattainable. The analysis advanced in the previous paragraph on the non-recurrence (as one-shot input during the '50s) of the massive 40 million hectare addition to the national cropland area places a grave doubt over fulfillment of the grain goal - the one most likely of achievement - and puts the burden hard on doubling the yields per hectare.

Average grain yields in the Soviet Union in 1960 were 10.5 centners per hectare - (a gradual increase, caused by the rise in maize growing) - so a doubling of the national output by 1980 would require an average yield of 21 centners. Such meteoric progress has never been achieved by any nation with a large-scale spatial agriculture.⁵ Nor can much help come from revolutionary innovations - hybrid corn is considered the last revolutionary innovation in agricultural technology. This was introduced in the US in the mid-thirties but not commercially adopted in the Soviet Union until after Stalin's death, when the Lysenko prejudice to corn was overruled by Khrushchev. Nor can the ambitious schemes for irrigation in the dry regions of the eastern newlands offer much hope for raising the grain yields as irrigation is not adapted to large-scale small grain farming. It is applicable to maize, however, but

⁵ The United States almost doubled its average maize yields: from 29.9 bushels in 1939 to 47.5 bushels in 1958. But the aggregate grain yields were less than half this rate. The invention of hybrid corn and technological developments were responsible. Agricultural Statistics, 1956-1959 eds., USDA, pp. 27, 29 resp.

here the climatic limitations (length of growing season) restrict corn as ripe grain to a prescribed area in southern Russia. Chemical fertilizers, likewise, do not provide the yield response in areas of dry-land grain farming which characterize the virgin lands. Even in the western plains of the USA (so similar to Kazakhstan) average wheat yields only increased 40 percent from 1939 to 1958 as a result of massive capital inputs in the products of technology.⁶ Thus, on balance, the Soviet grain goal - perhaps the one target where progress is plausible - is more likely to be of the order of the U.S. achievement in the previous two decades. Somewhere near the 225 million ton mark would be a solid achievement, or about 60% of plan.

If the grain goal is short of the mark, the meat and milk objectives then are extremely improbable. First, the grain-meat-milk ratio is wholly unfounded. With the U.S. input-output balance as a model (200 mil. T. grain = 15 m. T. meat + 60 m. T. milk) the Soviet formula would read $x = 35m.T. + 185m.T.$ Thus approximately, 380 million tons grain would be required to produce the livestock products and supply the normal ratio of grain for consumption and industry. In no sector of the economy are the goals stated with less substance of achievement as in meat and milk output. It implies a 2 1/2 time rise over present U.S. meat levels and almost a 4 times boost in the milk fount. And in the realm of these rich protective foods it seems hardly possible that a technological innovation is on the horizon to boost dramatically their output. Their three- and fourfold increase is in the realm of phantasy.

In cadence with the march of rural progress the labor productivity in agriculture is set to rise not less than 150 percent in ten years, and five-to-six fold in twenty years, a rate higher than that of industry. On the achievement of these goals depends the promised rise in the real income of collective farmers: "more than double in the next ten years and increase more than fourfold in twenty." The rise is to proceed more rapidly than the incomes of factory workers. In the final analysis, however, both goals rest primarily on the realization of the production targets. And the 1950 percent planned rise in 10 years for total agricultural products, about 12% annually, and 250 percent boost in twenty years are untenable. There are no such massive reserves in Soviet agriculture, nor are the routine suggestions outlined in the Program convincing measures to achieve the promised horizon. Revolutionary innovations in agro-technology seem to have run out too.

A quarter-century ago, Party propagandists were agitating in the villages, after the famine in 1932-33, trying to restore some confidence among the peasantry with the slogan: "Free Bread After the Five-Year Plan". By 1980, finally, the Program promises, conscientious collective farmers at work on the communal economy will get a free lunch.

If communism is dependent upon the prescribed abundance of agricultural products, it will be a generation other than the present who will live under it.

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⁶ ibid., pp. 8-9 resp.

AGRICULTURE, RURAL ECONOMY

Extract from
The Program of the All-Russian
Communist Party (Bolsheviks)
Adopted at the 8th Congress in 1919

10. The Soviet Government, having carried out the complete abolition of private property in land, has already begun to carry out a series of measures directed to the organization of socialist agriculture on a wide scale. The principal measures are the following (1) the establishment of Soviet farms, e.e., large socialist economic enterprises; (2) Assistance to societies as well as associations for common land cultivation; (3) Organization by the state for the cultivation of all uncultivated acreage; (4) State mobilization of all agricultural forces for the purpose of taking the most energetic measures to increase agricultural productivity; (5) The support of agricultural communes as absolutely voluntary associations of agricultural laborers for the purpose of conducting a communal system of economy on a large scale.

The All-Russian Communist Party, considering all these measures as the only way toward the absolutely indispensable increase of productivity of agricultural labor, strives to extend them to the more backward regions of the country, as further steps in this direction the All-Russian Communist Party particularly supports:

(1) All possible encouragement by the state of agricultural cooperative societies engaged in the processing of agricultural products.

(2) The introduction of a system of melioration on a wide scale.

(3) The systematic supply on a wide scale of agricultural implements through special establishments, to the poorest and the middle class peasantry.

The All-Russian Communist Party, taking into consideration that the small scale system of agriculture will continue for a considerable time, strives to carry out a series of measures directed to the increase of productivity of the peasants' enterprise. The measures are: (1) The regulation of the exploitation of land by the peasants (abolition of scattered fields, etc); (2) The supply to the peasantry of improved seeds and artificial manure; (3) The improvement of the breed of cattle; (4) The dissemination of agricultural information; (5) Agricultural aid to the peasantry; (6) Repair of peasants' agricultural implements in Soviet workshops; (7) The establishment of loan centers, experimental stations, exhibition fields, etc. (8) The improvement of peasant lands.

11. The opposition between the town and the village is one of the chief causes of the economic and cultural backwardness of the village. In periods of serious crisis, such as the present, this opposition places the town as well as the village before the immediate danger of degeneration and destruction. The All-Russian Communist Party sees in the abolition of this opposition one of the principal tasks of communist construction, and among other measures considers essential the systematic attraction of industrial workmen to communist construction in agriculture,

and greater activity on the part of the already established "Workmen's Committees of Assistance", etc.

12. The All-Russian Communist Party in its work in the village as formerly, looks for support to the proletarian and semi-proletarian groups in it, and in the first place organizes these into an independent force, creating Party circles in the village, organizations of the rural poor, special types of trade unions of village proletarians and semi-proletarians, and so on, bringing them into closer contact with the urban proletarians, freeing them from the influence of the rural bourgeoisie and the interests of small property holders.

The relation of the All-Russian Communist Party to the rural bourgeois elements is one of carrying on a resolute struggle against their attempts at exploitation, and suppressing their resistance to the Soviet policy.

The policy of the All-Russian Communist Party with reference to the middle-class peasantry consists in gradually and systematically attracting it to the work of socialist construction. The Party's aim is to separate this section from the kulaks (rich peasants), by giving consideration to its needs, to bring it over to the side of the proletariat, to struggle against its backwardness by means of education and not by means of suppression, in all cases where the vital interests of this section are involved to come to an agreement with it, making concessions to it on questions related to method of realizing socialist reorganization.