

24 June 1959

WHAT'S IN A NAME?Ukrainian kolkhoz in New York

The extensive agricultural section of the Soviet exhibition in New York City will feature the achievements of the collective farm "Ukraina", located in Gorodok raion, Khmel'nitsky oblast in the western Ukraine. The kolkhoz is hailed as a "typical" example of the progress made in the socialization of Soviet agriculture under Communist rule since collectivization was enforced during the First FYP.

The selection of a collective farm located in former Polish territory is rather unique and not without political overtones: among the 69,000 kolkhozy in the country there are scores of famous farms such as Kalinovka, Rassvet, Bolshevik, Lenin's Behest that have all served as models in the Party's progress reports on agriculture. Why a relatively unknown farm was selected to do the honors at New York may well be traced to political rather than economic desiderata. First, the largest group of Russian emigrants in the U. S. are the Galician-Ukrainians clustered in the industrial areas around New York, for whom a display of "home-town" achievements would have a positive appeal; secondly, the farm was formerly part of a Polish estate, laid waste by enemy action during the war, and rehabilitated by the Soviets to serve as a model for the satellite countries in reconstructing agriculture, and finally, and most convincingly, kolkhoz "Ukraina" used to be called kolkhoz "in the name of Khrushchev".¹

While there are any number of collectives named after the First secretary, the west Ukrainian farm is an apparent counterpart of kolkhoz Kalinovka, Khrushchev's birthplace, the farm that serves as the model in testing out the policy innovations of the First secretary. Judged by the impressive photos of the huge livestock buildings, kolkhoz "Ukraina", like Kalinovka, has been the recipient of considerable financial credits and building resources from the State in reorganizing its economy. No farm could have accumulated the means to construct such an imposing complex of buildings as portrayed in Sovetskaya Rossiya (9 June 1959) during the difficult post-war years without preferential treatment from other sources.

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Sometime after March 1958: Kolkhoz "Khrushchev" was changed to "Ukraina"; its chairman G. I. Tkachuk was named Hero of Socialist Labor. He had been cited as head of kolkhoz Khrushchev in 2 references. (Kolkhoznovo Proizvodstvo, N. 12, 1957 and N. 3, 1958).

The first public announcement of the selection of the farm appeared in Radyanskaya Ukraina, 17 April 1959, by coincidence (?) Khrushchev's birthday.

Khrushchev had admitted helping Kalinovka to get horse power after the war, and no doubt this assistance extended to other capital goods in making an ideological working model out of the home farm. As forced capital rationing and lack of incentives have acted as twin regressive brakes on Soviet agricultural progress, any improvement in these areas would yield immediate and positive results.

From the cluster of accounts in the press, the relevant facts - some contradictory - on kolkhoz "Ukraina" are: it is a 4225 hectare³ live-stock-sugar beet farm in the forest-steppe zone of the western Ukraine created by the union of 732 peasant holdings; the gross income in 1958 was 9,500,000 rubles, of which 4.35 million came from crop sales; even in 1950 its grain yields were high and in last year's record harvest it averaged 28.4 centners grain and 52 centners corn per hectare; sugar beets went 428 centners; 133 centners meat and 510 centners milk were produced per 100 hectares farmland, with an average of 4321 kilograms milk per cow; work payments to its members were "more than" 16 rubles plus 3 kilograms grain per labor day earned.⁴ Besides the mentioned livestock barns, it has a newly built hospital, also a flour mill, brick and tile works, and a public bath. Like all Khrushchev's favorite collectives, it is strong on village reconstruction: a boarding school, a communal bakery, and 60 to 80 new homes are on the building plan for this year,⁵ the former two paid from the kolkhoz indivisible fund and built by an inter-kolkhoz construction brigade. Thus on all basic points in Khrushchev's farm policy for the 7YP "Ukraina" fits into the pattern of Kalinovka, apart from the voluntary sale of the privately owned livestock to the kolkhoz--a crucial issue on which there is no word from "Ukraina".

The validity of the cited figures cannot be substantiated, and there are many gaps that preclude any relevant study on farm efficiency. Perhaps such vital items as labor inputs by age and sex, net income, and subsidiary activities as the role of the private plots on family living, compulsory road work, will be forthcoming in the exhibit at the Coliseum. Yet comparative studies can be made to check the official claims that the farm is typical of Soviet farm progress.

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During 1959 the farm amalgamated with a neighboring kolkhoz of the same size (Sel. khozyaistkvo, 18 June 1959); it is assumed the cited 4225 hectares include the acquisition.

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All sources, unless otherwise noted, are from Radyanskaya Ukraina, 1 May 1959.

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Izvestia, 13 June 1959.

Kolkhoz "Ukraina" is about four times the size of the average Ukrainian collective farm--so too are its labor day payments of 16 rubles compared to 3.72 rubles.⁶ The 9 million gross income figure follows the new Khrushchev line on distorting farm income by omitting operating and fixed costs, items which have risen sharply since the MTS machinery take-over. The relatively high grain yields likewise reflect substantial cash outlays for fertilizer. The role of the kolkhoz market in the economy of the farm is nowhere mentioned--a rather significant omission--as the 1959 census lists the oblast population as 81 percent rural. The primacy of the private plots for the Khmelnytsky oblast however, is shown in the livestock figures: 66 percent of all cows and 40 percent of the hogs are privately owned⁷ in this third ranking livestock oblast in the republic. Clearly the income from communal labor is insufficient to meet the living needs of the rank-and-file peasant household. Further, this leading dairy region, where fully two-thirds of all the producing cows are in the tiny private herds of the peasantry, demonstrates that the basic contradiction in the Soviet countryside, after twenty years, is still unresolved. But of this ideological conflict, the plush photos of "Ukraina" at New York will be knowingly silent. With all rationality, one could claim for "Ukraina's" oblast nothing short of a paean for private farming!

Thus Kolkhoz Ukraina/Khrushchev will perform in New York almost the identical functions as at home -- a propaganda model designed by the "master of kolkhoz policy" to reflect his current conceptual plans for the reconstruction of agriculture. Viewers in New York may well share what is generally known in Russia, that the gap between the idolized farms like Ukraina-Khrushchev with the rank-and-file collective farms is on the order of contrast between the blast furnaces at Kuznetsk and the ovens of the Chinese communes.

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Ukrainian Statistical Handbook, 1957, pp. 283-298. Background Information, Ukrainian kolkhoz Income, 19 March 1958.

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Chislenmost Skota v SSSR, 1957, p. 19, 27, 148, 1955. The data apply to the 1956 count; no material change has since occurred in livestock ownership distribution.

RFE NEWS & INFORMATION
EVALUATION & RESEARCH
GENERAL DESK No. 715

1959

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News BackgroundCURT - YUGOSLAV PAPER ON BAD SITUATION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA'S
AGRICULTURE

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MUNICH, May 14 (Stankovic) -- After Tito's deputy Edvard Kardelj had claimed on May 4 and 5 that Yugoslavia's agriculture had achieved great successes because of the abandonment of the "Stalin-type" collectivization, the Zagreb daily "Vjesnik" of May 12 carried a report from the Tanjug Prague correspondent, Pero Ivacic, stressing that agricultural collectivization "was not able to solve the problem" in Czechoslovakia. The whole tenor of Ivacic's report from Prague was that "bureaucratic measures" taken in Czechoslovakia's agriculture have largely contributed to the failures in production and labor productivity.

This is the reason, Ivacic added, why "new measures" are going to be taken "in order to find a way out of the present impasse". Although the "socialist sector" in Czechoslovak agriculture embraces 80 per cent of the whole agricultural land and although great sums of money have been invested in agriculture by the State, the Czechoslovak leaders have come to the conclusion that "for an increase in agricultural production the material interest of the cooperatives and their members is necessary", Ivacic said.

He added that a "new system of purchasing, uniform prices and a new system of planning" are the measures aimed at contributing to the increase of production. The present system of prices (one price (low) for the purchase and another (higher) for the re-sale) "has influenced the process in a discouraging way" while the "centralistic planning has stultified the (peasants') initiative". Thus it happened, Ivacic went on, "that the members of the collectives have received the greatest part of their income from tilling their private land around their homes, and a lesser part from their work on the cooperative land".

Ivacic continued: "It is not yet known what the new prices and the new purchasing system will turn out to be because they are still under discussion. It is, however, significant that it was stressed that the present system has become a brake on further progress in the countryside...The changes in the purchasing system and in planning lead to a new system of management. Already now the predominance of the Ministry of Agriculture has been essentially diminished and certain rights have been transferred to people's committees. However, agricultural cooperatives as producers do not yet have any of their own (management) organs, not even at the district level, but they are directly subject to the State administration..."

The attitude toward the role of the Machine-Tractor-Stations (STS) "has also been revised", Ivacic said, adding that "although agriculture in Czechoslovakia has been mechanized, there is a

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shortage of labor. It is the youth especially which is disinclined to work in villages... Now it has been realized how necessary it is to interest the youth materially in agricultural work".

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H12 In conclusion Ivacic found a contradiction in the fact that while the Czechoslovak leaders "are, on the one hand, undertaking new measures, it is nevertheless continually being claimed that the 'production relationships in the villages have been solved' and that the agricultural policy has always been correct".

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