Preface

In September, 1962, a group of scholars representing various academic disciplines met at the University of Kansas at Lawrence to discuss problems of Soviet agriculture. At the close of the conference (whose proceedings were published in 1963) the participants decided to form a loose interdisciplinary association for the continued study of Soviet agriculture. The action resulted from a conviction that our knowledge in this field was incomplete and that more research was necessary to elucidate further some of the important aspects of farming in a socialist command economy. This field of scholarly inquiry cuts across the boundaries of several traditional disciplines. Experience gained at Kansas demonstrated the value of close contact and the associated exchange of ideas resulting from an interdisciplinary meeting. It was therefore believed that further undertakings of this type would be similarly worthwhile.

The present volume consists of contributions presented at the second gathering of the group, now named Conference on Soviet Agricultural and Peasant Affairs held at the University of California, Santa Barbara, on August 26–28, 1965, under the honorary chairmanship of Naum Jasny. The meeting was sponsored jointly by the Conference and the Center of Slavic and East European Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. This time, the discussion included also some problems of Eastern European agriculture. The decision to enlarge the scope of the conference reflected growing awareness of the need to increase our understanding of agricultural developments in other Communist areas and ultimately to promote comparative studies of agriculture within the Soviet bloc. Indeed, a scholar interested primarily in Soviet developments may often benefit from a more intensive study of related trends in

other Eastern European countries, and this is especially true of topics on which the available Soviet evidence is meager. For example, the discussion of the Soviet "employment problem" in rural areas, undertaken in this volume by Miss Nancy Nimitz may be viewed in a much larger perspective in the light of Professor Halpern's contribution on Yugoslav peasant attitudes towards agricultural careers and rural life in general. Some comments made on the same issue by Professor Korbonski on the basis of Polish experience are also relevant in this context.

The importance of agriculture in Soviet society may be illustrated in various ways. The territory of the Soviet Union covers 8.6 million square miles, but climatic and topographical limitations account for the fact that only one-tenth of this total is classified as arable land. Large socialized farms, of a size not encountered in other economic systems, account for 97 percent of total sown area. Yet, the importance of the socialized sector in the production of some major farm products is still rather small. For milk, meat, and vegetables, the share of state and collective farms in total output comes to slightly less than three-fifths; for potatoes and fruit this share amounts roughly to one-third. Of the total Soviet population, 47 percent is still classified as rural. According to a recent calculation, undertaken in the United States by Stanley Cohn, agriculture contributed 29.2 percent to the Soviet gross national product in 1959. Within the past two years, unfavorable weather conditions forced the Soviet government to import substantial quantities of wheat and flour from Western producers and to reduce the volume of Soviet grain exports to other members of the Soviet bloc. Finally, agriculture has played a significant role in the process of Soviet industrialization, and ever since 1928 rapid industrial growth has remained a major policy objective of the Soviet government.

It may be appropriate to discuss briefly the last-mentioned aspect of the problem to provide some background for the discussions that follow. As Adam Smith has once put it, "it is the surplus produce of the country . . . that constitutes the subsistence of the town." A part of the surplus produce may, of course, be exported to provide foreign exchange needed to finance the required machinery imports, while labor transferred to cities from the villages will be used to man the imported or domestically produced machines. A further margin for domestic capital formation may also be provided by restricting consumption in the rural areas. This can be achieved by taxation or by manipulation of prices paid to, as well as those paid by, the agricultural sector.

It is therefore not surprising that problems of agricultural production

and those related to farm organization have always been closely linked to major economic policy decisions at crucial junctures of Soviet history. When the leaders of Soviet Russia launched an extremely ambitious industrialization drive in the fall of 1928, they had to come to grips with the problem of extracting the surplus produce of the countryside in terms of either farm products or of human labor. Within the next two years, a drastic and radical transformation occurred in the Soviet countryside as millions of individual households were merged into large collective farms. The decision to collectivize agriculture, supported by ideological and political considerations, was implemented in spite of the human misery that accompanied the process. As reluctant and sometimes rebellious peasants were forced into collectives, livestock holdings were halved, and for a while famine stalked "the land of tomorrow." Yet, insofar as the objectives pertained to the goal of industrialization, the aims of the government were achieved as year after year the engine of growth produced substantial increases in industrial output.

But it was also expected in the U.S.S.R. that agricultural output would rise as a result of collectivization. This did not occur. In 1938–1940, the volume of gross farm output was roughly the same as in the preplan, precollectivization year 1928. As the government concentrated its attention on industry generally and on heavy industry in particular, it neglected those improvements in farming that would have increased agricultural production. The major characteristics of this policy were continued unchanged, broadly speaking, through the period of postwar reconstruction that for present purposes may be taken as ended with the death of Stalin in March, 1953. The results, measured in terms of gross output, were also unchanged, as in the last five years of the late dictator's rule, the index of this output fluctuated narrowly about the peak prewar level achieved in 1940.

To a large extent, the cause of stagnation in output may be sought precisely in those features of collectivized agriculture which had assured its success as the supplier of fuel for the engine of growth. A substantial proportion of what was produced accrued to the government through a complex system of compulsory deliveries and payments in kind for services of state-owned machine tractor stations (MTS). The peasant's claim on collective farm output was limited to the residual remaining after the claims of the state and the requirements of production were satisfied. The level of incentives in the socialized sector was low, as state prices for basic foods remained virtually unchanged since 1932 while urban wages and retail prices were rising rapidly. The resulting

burden of taxation in kind detracted much of the peasant attention to the small, individually operated household plot that provided not only the bulk of subsistence but also opportunities to earn cash through sales of products on urban markets. Not enough was done to ensure a volume of capitalization that would have compensated for considerable climatic disadvantages, for the decline in the number of draft animals, and for the transfer of labor to industry.

These features of the collective farm system had many other ramifications. The Soviet government found it difficult—and at times impossible—to reconcile the prime objective of collecting the surplus produce of the countryside with other policy goals that had been equally important for the agricultural sector. Given the considerable limitations imposed on farming activity in the Soviet Union by natural conditions, geographers in tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union have long concerned themselves with the subject of agricultural regionalization. As Professor Jensen notes in his contribution to this volume, this relatively advanced work was abandoned under the impact of cataclysmic stresses of the massive collectivization drive. Although this work has been resumed in the post-Stalin period, continuing pressures from the demand side and the time-honored objective of autarky still conflict with production patterns that would be indicated by the practical application of regional analysis.

It might also be thought that a planned economy of the Soviet type would find it easier to impose rapidly rational cropping patterns on farms that are subject to a vast variety of rules and regulations. However, the ability to impose one's will on the population is not the same thing as the ability to make the correct rational decisions. As Professor Joravsky points out in his stimulating discussion of Williams's grassland rotations, it was an outmoded cropping pattern, derived deductively without proper regard for truly scientific considerations, that received the official sanction. Although the evidence is not complete, it is also interesting to note that under the harsh impact of reality, the officially fostered cropping schemes appeared to have been altered frequently in an effort to adapt them to practical requirements. It still remains to be seen whether the benefits of all scientific achievements will flow fully to Soviet farming in the near and more distant future.

The Soviet system of collectivized farming has not, in the past, led to an efficient use of resources on farms. The existence of payments in kind for the use of machinery and the payment of labor from residual shares presented formidable difficulties to the introduction of simple

economic calculations. Indeed, no calculations of production costs were undertaken while Stalin was alive. It would have been embarrassing to do so while, in the words of a highly placed Soviet official, no self-respecting individual would bother to carry potatoes to the truck in return for the then prevailing compulsory delivery price.¹ Since prices set at such discriminatory levels could not direct production into desired lines of activity, the government relied on direct and detailed orders. To ensure that the required deliveries would, in fact, take place, state agencies planned the structure of sowings as well as the level and the structure of livestock herds for each individual farm.

Such policies were hardly calculated to instill the principle of economizing on farm managers and collective farmers. Indeed, the opposite has been true. Since 1953, Soviet farm prices were raised several times. As Naum Jasny shows in his essay, the present level of Soviet farm prices and costs is far above that of most, if not all, other countries of the world. But this was not the only consequence of extracting thoughtlessly the surplus produce of the countryside without reference to peasant welfare. People who must be ordered to produce at a loss cannot be trusted and must be tightly supervised. The Party has never trusted the peasant, but the application of Stalinist policies just described has resulted in further intensification of administrative interference into various affairs of the farm by all kinds of officials at all levels of the administrative ladders of the Communist party and the Soviet government. For obvious reasons, there has been little discussion of this phenomenon in general Soviet economic literature. But a good deal has been revealed in courageous and forthright commentaries of Soviet literary writers. Several examples of flagrant absurdities are given in the typically vigorous essay of Professor Nove, and there can be no question that the attitudes he describes have proved detrimental to the implementation of many reforms introduced in Soviet agriculture after the death of Stalin.

As has been indicated, the policies discussed above brought about a period of virtual stagnation of Soviet farm output during 1948–1952. From 1953 on, the history of Soviet agriculture records many changes in policies and institutions, introduced with the aim of breaking this stalemate and designed ultimately to provide the population with a more balanced and more attractive diet. From 1953 through early October,

¹ Vsesoiuznaia Ordena Lenina Akademiia Sel'skokhoziaistvennykh Nauk im. V. I. Lenina, *Materialy sessii Akademii posviashchennoi dal'neishemu razvitiu kolkhoznogo stroia i reorganizatsii MTS* (Moscow: 1958), p. 191.

1964, N. S. Khrushchev served as the chief Party and government spokesman on agricultural matters and his own views were very influential in the formulation of agricultural policies. Among the measures permanently identified with his name are the substantial increase in acreage in the New Lands and the attempt to increase the supply of feed through the introduction of corn. (The latter policy is analyzed here by Professor Anderson.) Among other measures introduced in the early post-Stalin period were increases in farm prices, improvements in incentives offered to peasants, changes in administrative and planning procedures, and increased allocations of off-farm inputs. Under the combined impact of these measures and partly as a result of good weather, output rose substantially through 1958. But as Dr. Volin makes clear in his essay, Khrushchev's impact on Soviet agriculture was by no means one-sided. This is particularly well illustrated by agricultural developments under the Seven-Year Plan (1959–1965). Output goals under this plan were set at a high level—by 1965 the level of production was to exceed its high 1958 counterpart by no less than 70 percent. (In 1961, at the October session of the Twenty-second Party Congress, a goal for an increase of 150 percent was enunciated for the decade 1960–1970).

At the same time, however, the government reduced its allocations of machinery to the farming sector. Financial pressures on collective farms grew rapidly following the abolition of the machine-tractor stations, the sale of their machinery to farms and the substantial increases in prices of machinery, spare parts, and fuels. As a result, collective-farm distributions to members declined in 1959–1960. Simultaneously, severe restrictions were placed on the highly productive private sector. The difficulties were aggravated by poor harvest conditions, not only in the nearly disastrous year 1963, but in 1965 as well. The achieved increases in output were moderate. According to official data, the 1965 output was only 14 percent higher than that of 1958, and this was barely enough to keep pace with the increase in total population.

Khrushchev showed some signs of concern about these adverse trends beginning in the fall of 1960. Financial pressures on farms were eased somewhat, there was some increase in state investment in agriculture, and more credit was made available to collective farms. But there was no major significant shift in the allocation of resources to agriculture. On the other hand, procurement goals were raised, the restrictions on the private sector were intensified, and administrative reforms followed each other with great rapidity, leading to increased interference by outsiders in simple as well as complex production problems. For ex-

ample, farms were often forbidden to reduce the size of herds even though feed supplies were insufficient.² Faced with rising urban demand for food and diminishing grain stocks, Khrushchev sought short-term relief in a campaign against Williams's grassland rotations and the existing (rather moderate) use of clean fallow. Thus, once again, the tenets of agronomy were violated in the pursuit of the surplus produce of the countryside to the detriment of peasant welfare. Moreover, as Professor Laird points out in his contribution, the fundamental need for greater autonomy in decision-making on the farm still went unrecognized.

Khrushchev was dismissed in October, 1964, and by March, 1965, his successors had formulated an agricultural program of their own. Its main features are reviewed in some detail in the paper by Professor Judy and Mr. Walters. Restrictions on the private sector were lifted, farm prices of grains, meat, and milk were raised once more, and greater allocations of machinery and other capital inputs have been promised in the near future. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the new program is a visible change in emphasis: much more attention is now paid to what must be put into agriculture in order to achieve desired results. An effort to limit undue administrative interference with farm management is also being made.

This change in emphasis has been underlined by the formulation of the agricultural goals in the directives of the Five-Year Plan for 1966–1970, approved in April, 1966. In the past, documents of this sort included precise goals for the output of many products in the terminal year of the plan. This is no longer the case, and detailed goals for many products have not been stipulated. In 1966–1970, the *average* annual farm output is to exceed the average output of 1961–1965 by 25 percent.

The projection of output for 1969–1972 undertaken in this volume by Mr. Walters and Professor Judy was of course completed before the new goals of the Five-Year Plan were announced. Their estimating methods, however, did not require any specific knowledge of the official Plan targets. On the other hand, their results depend upon the assumptions made with respect to the supply of inputs to Soviet farming. As far as this aspect is concerned, the projection relied upon the goals of the new agricultural program, announced in March, 1965. These targets

² *Plenum Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza 24–26 marta 1965 g.* (Moscow: 1965), p. 50.

have not been altered by the directives approved in the spring of 1966, and the Walters-Judy projection is therefore unaffected by the announcement of the new goals for output. (I very much regret that the pressure of other work made it impossible for Dr. Werner Klatt to revise his valuable contribution to the Santa Barbara Conference for publication. The very useful commentary by Professor Chapman has been revised to fit the contribution by Mr. Walters and Professor Judy.)

In recent years, the volume of statistical information made available by official Soviet agencies has greatly increased, but serious lacunae remain and Western researchers must still compile statistical series of their own. Miss Nimitz, in her essay, constructs one such series, dealing with man-day inputs of labor into the various sectors of Soviet agriculture. Her discussion of problems resulting from the appearance of local surpluses of unskilled labor has recently been confirmed by frequent Soviet references to the need of creating additional opportunities for seasonal or full-time employment in rural areas. Indeed, the intention to develop handicrafts, small-scale processing plants and the production of local building materials on farms has been explicitly included in the directives for the 1966–1970 Five-Year Plan.

If implemented, this eminently sensible policy will represent a major shift in emphasis in the pattern of Soviet industrialization, characterized until now by preference given to large scale, urban enterprises. Some of the consequences of this policy, aimed at the realization of technological economies of scale, are pointed out in Professor Hultquist's essay, dealing with the relation of the sugar-beet processing industry to its raw material base. Excessively long hauls have often led to waste of raw materials and to serious problems in the utilization of capacity. It remains to be seen whether similar pitfalls will be avoided when Soviet planners begin to deal with a new and unfamiliar problem on a relatively large scale.

One of the consequences of rapid industrialization in the U.S.S.R. has been the increased rate of participation of women in the labor force, in agriculture as well as in the other branches of the economy. The essay by Professor Dodge and Mr. Feshbach represents the first Western systematic effort to analyze the characteristics of the feminine component of the labor force and to consider in detail the various factors affecting their participation in various farming activities. The authors find that most of the women employed in agriculture are in occupations

requiring little skill but much manual labor. To a large extent, therefore, it is women who are in need of the seasonal employment opportunities referred to earlier.

Agricultural trends in Eastern Europe after World War II did not follow a uniform pattern. The Soviet example of a massive collectivization drive was not repeated. For the most part, gradual collectivization of individual peasant holdings did not begin until 1949 in the aftermath of the Yugoslav schism. Yugoslavia itself, after initiating a drive of its own in 1948–49, disbanded the great majority of its collectives in 1953. In other East European countries, collectivization was gradual and nonviolent, although various forms of compulsion were frequently employed. A moderate relaxation in the drive to collectivize occurred in 1953–1955 in connection with the New Course policies followed in Eastern Europe after the death of Stalin. During the fall of 1956, a dramatic and spontaneous decollectivization occurred in Hungary and Poland in connection with the revolutionary (or quasirevolutionary) developments in both countries. But with the single exception of Poland, the pressures were soon resumed, and the bulk of land in all other countries of the Soviet bloc is now farmed in the socialized sector.

The Polish case is thus unique in that a large private sector in agriculture coexists with socialized enterprises in other sectors of a planned economy. Trends in the performance of this sector are analyzed by Professor Korbonski, whose essay also deals with various proposals advanced in the Polish literature for the ultimate socialization of Polish agriculture. One of these suggestions exhibits a marked similarity with the official Yugoslav thinking on the same subject, elucidated by Professor Halpern.

Dr. Lazarcik's contribution on Czechoslovak agriculture approaches the subject in an entirely different manner. The author is concerned primarily with the measurement of the performance of a socialized agriculture in a relatively highly developed and industrialized economy. His computations lead to the conclusion that it is the present pattern of organization of farming activities that has led to rather disappointing trends in output and productivity. Some changes in this pattern may be forthcoming shortly in connection with the reform of the Czechoslovak economic system undertaken in 1965. No detailed blueprint for agricultural reform has as yet been officially published, but some suggestions for possible improvements have been listed by the author.

Although Professor Halpern's paper deals formally with Yugoslavia, the subject matter of his deliberations transcends the national bounda-

ries of any country. The impact of rapid industrialization affected profoundly the scale of values of rural as well as of urban population and wrought many changes in the attitudes of various groups that make up the developing society. New groups, such as the "peasant workers," emerged in Yugoslavia (as well as in Poland), and their existence poses new problems to the ruling elites. Halpern's investigations in Yugoslavia suggest that agricultural careers are not regarded as attractive by the younger generations. There can be no question that the pull of city life is strong. In the recent past, existing sharp disparities between urban and rural incomes tended to reinforce the tendency to outward migration from agriculture. But as Professor Bićanić suggests it is not yet certain that we are faced here with a continuing trend, and this observation is to some extent born out by Korbonski's observations on the self-image of the Polish peasant.

As these words are written, the Communist command economies find themselves in a state of flux. All Eastern European countries are either introducing or are about to introduce reforms in their economic systems, designed to rationalize their structure through increased scope for market-type incentives. As the Yugoslav experience suggests, the task of rationalizing a command economy is likely to be a hard and protracted one. In view of the existing ideological impediments and of the usual bureaucratic inertia that often reaches formidable proportions in a Communist society, there is no reason to think that progress elsewhere in Eastern Europe will be continuous. But the process of reform, once it is introduced, often develops a logic of its own. As time goes on, official attitudes towards agriculture and the peasants may well be altered. The recent shifts in Soviet agricultural policies and in the underlying attitudes of the Soviet leadership may perhaps be considered as a first, even though modest, step in this direction.

The impact of such changes on Communist societies will undoubtedly be complex. To the extent that it will occur, however, it is likely to result in profound changes in farm organization, methods of management and planning, in the relationships between agricultural and industrial incomes and perhaps even in actual—as opposed to nominal—forms of land tenure. In the meantime, of course, socialist agriculture will continue to offer a rich field for dispassionate scholarly study in several academic disciplines.

The conference held in Santa Barbara in August, 1965, was supported financially by the American Council of Learned Societies, the Center of Slavic and East European Studies of the University of California in Berkeley, the University of Kansas, and the University of Califor-

nia in Santa Barbara. A number of other universities and research institutions have also contributed by covering travel expenses of their staff members who took a part in the proceedings. All those associated with the conference join me in extending their expression of gratitude for the support that made the meeting possible.

I am also grateful to Mr. Robert T. Masson for faithful assistance in the preparation of the book and to Mr. Max Knight of the Editorial Department of the University of California Press for the most competent technical editing of a difficult manuscript and for helpful hints and advice in the performance of the editorial task. And I am indebted to Professor Andrzej Brzeski of the University of California at Davis for help in the final stages of proof-reading.

The papers printed in this volume represent more or less revised editions of those originally presented in Santa Barbara. For the most part, the revised versions reached me in February, 1966, but some commentaries not until May, 1966, at which time the manuscript was handed over to the University of California Press. In order to economize space, titles of most East European periodicals, including some weeklies and newspapers, have been abbreviated throughout the volume. This was also the case for the more frequently cited statistical handbooks published in the U.S.S.R. by the Central Statistical Administration and of the eight-volume collection of speeches and writings on agriculture by N. S. Khrushchev. Hopefully, those familiar with the literature will have no difficulty recognizing the relevant titles without further reference to the list of abbreviations which has been provided. We have also omitted the usually lengthy and frequently uninformative titles of Soviet journal articles, though we did retain the names of their authors.

The system of transliteration from the Russian alphabet is essentially that of the Library of Congress, though diacritical marks and ligatures were omitted.

For the tables the following symbols were used: a dash (-) for "not applicable or nonexistent; three dashes (---) for "negligible"; square brackets ([]) for estimates; and n.a. for "not available."

It remains to be said that the views and opinions expressed in this book are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect views held or positions supported by the organizations with which they are associated.

Jerzy F. Karcz

Santa Barbara
May, 1966