Collectivization and socialist agriculture (1917–1992): Revised comparison of the Soviet and East-European experience.

Part II. Collectivization in Eastern Europe under Stalin and Khrushchev (1944-1962)

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Abstract. To reassess collectivization and socialist agricultural policy, it is necessary to keep the whole period in view, distinguishing the following phases with basically different political approaches: (1) collectivization under Stalin as based on class war and peasant subjugation to transfer capital from agriculture to industry; (2) collectivization under Khrushchev, striving to complete it, although this policy was basically put in question (in 1953 in the Soviet Union and in 1957 in the GDR and Hungary); (3) efforts to stabilize the economically weak collective farms in the 1960s after finishing collectivization and replacing Khrushchev; (4) the final turn to modernization of agriculture expecting economies of scale through different concepts of industrialization in the 1970s; (5) the failure of these concepts causing a cost trap and enforcing the rehabilitation of small-scale private agriculture in the 1980s. The first part showed how Stalin eliminated modernization from collectivization so that agriculture would serve industrialization. The second part focuses on collectivization in Eastern Europe under Stalin and Khrushchev, including temporary attempts to revise collectivization policy after Stalin's death. Stalin's combination of collectivization and class war was applied in Eastern Europe, determining the same fatal consequences for the social-economic capital of agriculture as in the Soviet Union and threats for domestic food supplies. Stalin's approach was criticized in the Soviet Union: in June 1953, Beria and Malenkov questioned Stalin's infallibility. The revision of collectivization in several East European countries (primarily Hungary, GDR and Czechoslovakia) aimed at the stabilization of collective farms, which required consolidation denied by Stalin: state investment in agriculture, payment for work and efficient machinery for large-scale farming. Based on the working models of collective farming, numerous private farmers were to join collective farms, which was blocked by Khrushchev insisting on completing collectivization first. With his ideological approach, he worsened the destruction caused by Stalin's collectivization, and was responsible for the exodus of more flexible workforce from agriculture in the Soviet Union. Only Hungary managed to make use of the potential of family labor. The third part will focus on the stabilization of collective farms after Khrushchev's removal from office and on the industrialization of agriculture, which started in socialist countries in the 1970s, two decades later than in the West.

Key words: collectivization of agriculture, Stalin, Khrushchev, Kadar, Ulbricht, socialist agriculture, mechanization, collective farms, industrialization of agriculture, modernization, Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Hungary, GDR, small peasant farms, economies of scale, private plots, class war, myths of Stalin's infallibility, social differentiation

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Introduction

The East European Communist Party leaders accepted Stalin's propaganda as truth, i.e., Soviet collectivization as a successful model to overcome rural underdevelopment and poverty by establishing large-scale socialist enterprises which also would provide capital for rapid industrialization. Until Stalin's death, Soviet collective farms were economically extremely weak, without sufficient machinery from the state-owned machinery-tractor stations (MTS) and with yields same as those of small farmers in the 1920s. Stalin did not care about agricultural modernization due to the focus on peasant subjugation at collective farms to transfer capital from agriculture to industry. In 1946, Stalin's attempt to prove the superiority of socialism over capitalism by abolition of food rations caused a new famine which took about one million of lives (Ganson, 2009). The data on the situation remained tabooed until his death.

The shortcomings of Stalin's collectivization and socialist agriculture become clear when compared to Eastern Europe. Stalin's combination of collectivization and class war was applied in Eastern Europe with the same fatal consequences, threatening domestic food supplies. I will describe the essence of collectivization in Eastern Europe under Stalin and the changes after his death. The first section focuses on the term "modernization". The second section describes how Stalin interfered with collectivization in Eastern Europe from 1944 to 1953 and the features of his approach. The third section considers how and why collectivization was questioned right after Stalin's death, first by Beria's and Malenkov's "New Course" and then after uprisings in Poland and Hungary by the request to prove the superiority of collective farming first. The fourth section explains why Khrushchev's insistence on the completion of collectivization (1957–1962) without considering economic costs caused additional problems. He was responsible for the exodus of qualified workers from Soviet agriculture in the late 1950s. Collective farms started to stabilize only after the end of collectivization and Khrushchev's removal from office. In Part III I will consider the policy changes necessary to stabilize collective farms in the 1960s and the attempts to modernize agriculture in the 1970s according to the model of "industrialized agriculture", which was diametrically opposed Stalin's model of collectivization: huge amounts of money were invested in agriculture, and Stalin's ban on non-agricultural activities at collective farms was lifted as it hindered integration of agriculture with the up- and down-stream sectors of industry.

Collectivization under Stalin: Myths and realities

Whether there was "modernization" of agricultural production should be judged by the results. Modernization implies more than just the

state supply of mechanized equipment or an increase in the farm size — a clear increase in efficiency (labor productivity, crop yield and livestock production). Modernization strongly depended on science in improving farming techniques and in supplying sufficient high-quality equipment for complex mechanization.

Despite Bauerkämper's claim (2002: 14–15), collectivization was not a project of "enforced modernization". Stalin separated collectivization from modernization as a goal in itself, i.e., collectivization was only to subjugate peasants and to transfer capital from agriculture to industry. Under Stalin, permanent pressure and violence kept collective farms in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe from falling apart[1]. Thus, Viola's definition (2014: 50) of collectivization as a means of "state building" is contrary to the facts: to maintain power and keep faith in his infallibility, Stalin had to blame local officials for "mistakes", which made well-functioning local administrations counter-productive for his purpose (Merl, 2017). Moreover, people still believed in the myth of "good tzar and incompetent, corrupt local officials". This allowed Stalin to divert public attention from serious changes in his political course. Under pressure, local officials were effective in making peasants and then collective farms follow state orders (Part I). To assess the activities of local officials, it is necessary to answer the question of whether Stalin's orders could be fulfilled at all, since Stalin often gave impossible orders, for instance, when required that peasants "voluntary join" collective farms. No farmer with some implements and land would agree to work without payment at the collective farm, similar to the forced laborer of the regime. If the officials failed to "convince" farmers of joining the collective farm, they were accused of "incompetence" (Merl, 2024a). When choosing to report success in fulfilling Stalin's orders or failure in "convincing peasants to do voluntarily what they absolutely did not want to do", success was always a better choice to avoid sanctions. In any case, Stalin was not interested in the population's trust in local administrations.

Mechanization under Stalin as not contributing to "modernization"

In the West, mechanization started for economic reasons (to substitute labor due to its increasing costs) and became permanent, steadily improving equipment and machinery to increase efficiency, while in the Soviet Union mechanization started in the conditions of huge rural underemployment. Under the "taking grain" campaign, the an-

1. See Part I: in the Soviet Union, the rich harvest of 1937 and then the WWII determined the collapse of collective farms. In Eastern Europe, several collective farms fell apart after the end of the state violence in June 1953 and the 1956 uprisings.

imal draft power was lost and had to be replaced. Mechanization was extremely expensive and increased underemployment (Part I) due to its key purpose to ensure the state control over collective farms and their members[2].

In the 1930s, after the start of production of tractors and some agricultural machinery according to world standards, there was no improvement. In the early 1950s, all agricultural machinery in the Soviet Union was outdated by Western standards. Moreover, the Soviet Union did not take part in the "green revolution" which took advantage of the achievements of agricultural science and ensured a sharp increase in yields of crop and livestock production (Merl 2016a; 2016b). To significantly improve machinery and equipment, it would have been necessary to build new factories for producing them (Merl 2020b; 2021).

In all East European countries collectivization also started before there was an economic need for mechanization. Already in the 1950s, only in the GDR and in the Czech part of Czechoslovakia, there was a shortage of rural labor, while in other East European countries, there was severe and distressingly high surplus of rural labor. Small peasant farming did not reach its limits by improving agricultural production in any country, which became evident by the successfully increased agricultural production in Yugoslavia and Poland after they stopped collectivization, while countries continuing collectivization faced problems even in domestic food supplies (Wädekin, 1974: 71–72; 1978: 12)[3]. Collectivization in Eastern Europe started, when there was not enough tractors or machinery; mechanized equipment for large-scale farming was in acute shortage even in the Soviet Union: only in 1950, the MTS reached the 1940 level of provision, since industrial production had already doubled (Wädekin, 1974: 87). Mechanized agricultural machinery was mostly available in Germany and Czech part of Czechoslovakia and belonged mainly to large farms and cooperatives.

Collectivization in Eastern Europe in 1944–1953: How Stalin interfered and why the significant national features were ignored

After Stalin's victory over fascism, the East European Party leaders strived to apply his seemingly successful model of collectivization as a way to rapid industrialization and transformation of the backward

2. Mechanized equipment was provided only by state MTS, for which collective farms had to pay in kind by grain.
3. After 1956, Poland showed an impressive increase of agricultural production; from 1953 to 1959, after the end of enforced collectivization, Yugoslavia also increased production significantly, then after 1963.

village, since the deplorable economic situation of Soviet collective farms was tabooed.

In Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, collectivization started directly after the end of the war without Stalin's signal: both countries freed themselves from German occupation on their own, and many peasants had participated in the partisan movement (Swain, 2014: 509–510)[4]. Although collectivization campaigns in Eastern Europe followed the same Soviet principles, such a campaign in Bulgaria was significantly different: it started earlier (1944) and already in the end of 1947 aimed at "total collectivization" (as in the Soviet Union in the end of 1929), forcing all peasants to join collective farms. Since March 1948, only one statute similar to the Soviet artel was allowed (Gruev, 2014: 329–338)[5]. In the end of 1950, the collectivization peak was reached with about 50% of peasant farms registered as collective farm members. However, as in the Soviet case, forced collectivization caused fierce peasant resistance and several uprisings endangering rule (Gruev, 2014: 352–356)[6]. On Stalin's recommendation, the collectivization campaign was stopped, but, like Stalin in March 1930, the Bulgarian Party leaders criticized local officials of "abuses". Many collective farms fell apart, but eventually the riots stopped. Collectivization took a new turn — slowly and without pressure (Gruev, 2014: 352–356)[7]– and did not restart until Stalin's death. Only under Krushchev's pressure Bulgaria restarted collectivization in 1956 and was the first to complete it in Eastern Europe in 1958, without any interruptions after the uprisings in Poland and Hungary (Swain, 2014: 499–501; Gruev, 2014: 358–368). In Bulgaria, the first MTS were organized in 1945, and even collective farms had some machinery. In 1948, MTS and machinery became state property. In 1948, MTS had 3,600 tractors, in 1953 — 11,300 tractors and 1,370 combines (Wädekin, 1974: 187–197).

By Stalin's order, in other East European countries collectivization as the final goal was forbidden to be mentioned during the land reform. Stalin claimed that first it was necessary to gain the trust of poor peasants and land workers and even stopped those Communist Party Leaders who wanted to start collectivization immediately (Swain, 2014).

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4. Tito started collectivization in 1945, expecting that peasants would support it.
5. Since the end of 1944, "labor-cooperative farms" (TKZS) were organized and reached the number of 400 in 1948. In the fall of 1947, compulsory deliveries were introduced, taking almost all peasant grain for the state, while after joining the collective farm peasants were only to pay a tax for private land.
6. Collectivization came in waves, since campaigns stopped under fierce resistance (especially of peasant women that had less to fear).
7. On March 12, 1951, the Bulgarian Party leaders took the role of arbitrators and fair judges by blaming local officials of violence and arbitrariness, as if this was their conflict with peasants. The sudden retreat was announced on the radio. For the Soviet case, see Part I.

In 1948, Stalin suddenly changed his mind. At the Cominform meeting in June 1948 he criticized Tito who had already started collectivization, blaming him for underestimating the resistance of *kulaks* and the connection between class war and collectivization. Most East European Party leaders were used to guess Stalin's wishes, since he rarely gave clear orders. They understood that Stalin wanted them to start collectivization[8]. In December 1948, only the SED leaders got another order: given the political openness of the German question, Stalin demanded from Walter Ulbricht a strategy of revolutionary containment — to prevent revolution and class war against kulaks and collectivization (Scherstjanoi, 2007: 103–109, 591).

Most collectivization campaigns started in early 1949, and at first the pressure on peasants was generally not too strong[9]. When collectivization did not proceed as quickly as Stalin had expected, he increased pressure on the East European Party leaders. In 1951, Stalin demanded to declare class war against the kulaks to speed up collectivization. Arrests and mass repressions reached the peak during the winter of 1952/1953, just before Stalin's death (Swain, 2014: 525)[10].

Ignoring the significantly different conditions in the East European countries

In most East European countries, small land holdings prevailed, but after the expropriation and expulsion of Germans some countries had a lot of free land: the Czech part of Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Hungary. Most countries were at the very start of industrialization as the Soviet Union in the end of the 1920s, while others (GDR and the Czech part of Czechoslovakia) had already been industrialized. All still predominantly agrarian countries suffered from rural underemployment, while the GDR and the Czech part of Czechoslovakia already felt a shortage of rural labor. Such differences could not help but significantly affect collectivization, but Stalin did not pay attention to them and demanded basically the same approach everywhere.

Czechoslovakia used the lands from which the Germans were expelled to organize state farms. The significant share of arable land with state farms explains why the government saw no need for rapid collectivization, intending not to hinder the further development of

8. Most Party leaders believed in Stalin's infallibility and feared his revenge for the wrong choice.
9. Hungary prepared its campaign in the fall of 1948 and started collectivization in 1949. Poland took first careful steps in September 1948 and started to put more pressure in 1949.
10. The terror stopped shortly after Stalin's death.

private farming (Rychlik, 2014: 181–189)[11]. Only after the Communist coup d'état in June 1948, the Party Secretary Slansky changed this approach, putting collectivization on the agenda, as did other East European countries. The campaign started in May 1949, and already in July 1948, first "people's cooperatives" and Machinery Rental Stations (MAS) were organized and in 1951, turned into state enterprises (Rychlik, 2014: 181–189; Bauerkämper, 2002: 205–221).

Compared to these differences between East European countries being ignored, most points mentioned in literature as "different approaches in Eastern Europe" (Swain, 2014: 502–504) are less important or even misunderstood. Indeed, in most East European countries land ownership remained unchanged: only Hungary in 1967 introduced "cooperative land property", and Albania in 1946 de facto nationalized land plots larger than five hectares. However, land property lost importance under collectivization as owners could no longer dispose of their land. Certainly, there were no "mass deportations" under the class war, but Stalin died before collectivization in Eastern Europe reached that final stage. However, the class war was waged in all countries to speed up collectivization. The assertion that in Eastern Europe more types of statutes existed is misleading. Until the end of 1929, the Soviet Union had three types of statutes, after the start of total collectivization — only the artel statute; at the final stage of collectivization Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia also had only one type of statute similar to the Soviet artel; only the GDR allowed statutes of type 1 and 2 with lesser collective use at the final stage of collectivization and after its end in the 1960s[12].

In general, common elements of collectivization strategies are more important: what did Stalin aim at when insisted on including private plots in all East European statutes of fully socialized collective farms (type 3), even when, as in the GDR, the Party leadership at first refused to do it? In the Soviet Union, private plots were a precondition for the state to take the collective farms' produce without risking their members death from hunger (Part I). It seems that Stalin considered the income distribution according to the remainder principle insufficient for the guaranteed survival of the East European collective-farm members without an access to private plots to provide themselves with additional food. At least one "learning effect" of the collectivization disaster in the Soviet Union should be mentioned: several countries postponed collectivization of animal husbandry, focusing on crop production. Soviet Union suffered from heavy losses of livestock during collectivization (1928–1932) and then after cutting

11. About 2 million Sudeten Germans were expelled. As there was no special land demand from Czechs, most of the land confiscated in 1948 was used to organize state farms.

12. Hungary and the GDR used three types, Romania only two, Albania postponed collectivization of animal husbandry (Wädekin, 1974).

off land from private plots (1939–1940). Similar heavy losses of livestock did not happen in Eastern Europe.

Features of Stalin's approach: Combination of collectivization and class war

Several elements of Stalin's collectivization were abandoned immediately after his death, especially the combination of collectivization with class war and social discrimination of collective farmers. Class war against *kulaks* to push other peasants into collective farms was the key element of Stalin's collectivization, which only Yugoslavia and China ignored, trying to restructure agriculture "with the significant peasant support" (Swain, 2014: 505). All East European countries started the class war at first economically by setting higher obligatory deliveries and taxes for *kulaks* — in Bulgaria in 1947, in other countries in 1948. In 1946, the GDR introduced different norms for obligatory deliveries by farm size, which worsened differentiation in 1948/49. Yugoslavia started the economic attack on *kulaks* in June 1948, Czechoslovakia — in 1950 (Swain, 2014: 518–519). Most countries, except for Yugoslavia, questioned the further existence of kulak farms in 1951, the GDR — in 1952 (Swain, 2014: 505, 516–520, 525). Although the Soviet term "kulak" was unfamiliar, until 1951 nearly all East European countries started to use it for their large peasant farms (Swain, 2014: 516).

To what extent the "class war" was ordered by Stalin is obvious from the fact that at first several countries allowed *kulaks* to join collective farms if they gave their means of production (Swain, 2014: 517–520). Only after Stalin's order to speed up collectivization, *kulaks* were forbidden to join collective farms; previously accepted *kulaks* were now expelled. Several countries (as Hungary in 1951) introduced "*kulak* lists" — registries of farms classified as kulak, which determined additional anxiety. From the start of show trials against kulaks in June 1952 in Czechoslovakia to the end of the year, the number of collective farm members doubled (Wädekin, 1974: 153).

The combination of class war and collectivization was the essence of Stalin's unique approach, which allowed both to put pressure on officials and to intimidate peasants, since there was no clear definition of "*kulak*" and his means of "exploiting" others — this had been the case in the Soviet Union in the late 1920s and now was the situation in all East European countries (Merl, 1981: Part I). This "lack of precision concerning who the class enemy was" (Swain, 2014: 516) made the class war a perfect weapon for as if "voluntary" collectivization. Due to the arbitrariness of the term, every peasant opposing collectivization could be declared a *kulak*; even the reluctance to join the collective farm was the basis. The fear of being declared a kulak was the most efficient way to make peasants join collective farms.

Peasants saw with their own eyes how *kulaks* were subject to arrests, show trials, expropriation, expulsion from home and farm, or deportation[13]. Even without "mass deportations" in Eastern Europe, such punishments of kulaks were effective to intimidate other farmers (Swain, 2014: 520).

Although Stalin repeatedly demanded the "voluntariness" of joining collective farms, he did not interfere in widespread mass repressions and arrests in the winter of 1952/1953 (Transcript, 1953). In the beginning of 1953, in Poland 254,000 peasants were imprisoned or punished (Jarosz, 2014: 124–125), which determined the anti-Communist sentiments of peasants (Swain, 2014: 505, 516–520, 525). Officials that refused to participate in collectivization campaigns were suspected of being "class enemies" or counterrevolutionaries, i.e., they had no alternative than to put pressure on peasants. Stalin insisted that local officials find more *kulaks* to exercise more pressure on peasants (Swain, 2014: 519). After Stalin's death, class war and anti-kulak policies quickly disappeared from the agenda. In 1954, the GDR and Hungary announced the end of restriction against *kulaks*, which finally disappeared in the late 1950s.

How Stalin interfered: The case of the GDR

Historians often wanted to find clear orders given by Stalin and interpreted the lack of such orders as actions against Stalin's will, which ignores the features of Stalin's rule and how he created the myth of his infallibility. He often gave rather vague orders, forcing officials to figure out for themselves what he really wanted, which allowed him in case of failure to change his approach and blame those who followed his previous orders. Stalin used this tactic with the East European Party leaders to make them dependent on him: sometimes his orders were contradictory and not constant over time.

In a few cases, we have more precise information about Stalin's intervention, such as a detailed study of Soviet actions in the Soviet Occupation Zone in Germany and the GDR (Scherstjanoi, 2007)[14]. Some Stalin's orders confused the SED leadership: in December 1948, he demanded a strategy of the socialist revolution "containment" in order to improve food supply in competition with the Western parts of Germa-

13. There were deportations, for instance in Romania, but less often than in the Soviet Union. In Czechoslovakia repression against kulaks included resettlement or expulsion from home and farm. In Hungary, some *kulaks* were deported to labor camps (Swain, 2014: 520).

14. Scherstjanoi mistakenly expected from Stalin "rational action" and clear orders, which makes some her conclusions questionable. She argues that there are only a few notes on meetings with Stalin and that memorandums in Soviet archives differ from those in German archives (Scherstjanoi, 2007: 9–10).

ny, thus demonstrating the superiority of socialism (Scherstjanoi, 2007: 107–109, 591–595)[15]; in April 1952, he seemed surprised by the fact that there were no collective farms in the GDR. Despite his warning in December 1948, now he blamed the SED leaders that they did not start the fight against *kulaks* and did not organize collective farms.

The case of the GDR is of special interest, since the Soviet occupation authorities were permanently present to give advice and to control the policy of the SED and East Germany. In addition to Stalin's direct consultations with the SED leaders in Moscow in December 1948 and April 1952, there was constant indirect control and influence. As a rule, cooperation with officials from the Soviet Control Commission (SKK) and Soviet military administration (SMAD) was rather consistent. However, in times of crises as in 1952, the Soviets intervened harshly, paying little attention to the objections of German experts. In December 1948, on Stalin's order, they insisted on land-workers' protection law, and in the fall of 1952 — on allowing private plots at completely collectivized farms (type 3) (Scherstjanoi, 2007: 107–136, 605–606)[16]. At first the German side objected to private plots, but the SKK intervened and declared that the Soviet side would never allow nationalization of all livestock, insisting on preserving private plots at collective farms (Scherstjanoi, 2007: 404, 442) — 0.5 hectares, two cows and one horse or oxen.

On December 18, 1948, Stalin met with the SED leaders in Moscow (Scherstjanoi, 2007: 103–153)[17], and the meeting lasted four hours. Stalin still believed in negotiations with the Western powers about the future of Germany and raised strategic questions related to large peasant farms. He ignored the latest statements of the SED leaders, focusing on their previous plans to expropriate large farmers. Stalin strongly disagreed and ordered to stop expropriations in order to ensure control over private farms by other means — Germany was to move towards socialism not directly but in zigzag. Stalin blamed Ulbricht and demanded control over private farms through economic rather than administrative measures (Scherstjanoi, 2007: 32, 104–105)[18].

15. In 1948, the SED leaders were confused and asked after the meeting what Stalin meant by "too early" and what he wanted them to do. Pieck noted that the MAS were to be nationalized; however, according to the Soviet protocol, Stalin rejected nationalization. Such uncertainties caused many problems, since nobody dared to deviate from Stalin's orders.
16. In 1952, the SKK more often made decision without the German side, so the SED leaders could not clarify the situation directly with the Moscow Party leadership.
17. The German side was represented at the meeting by Pieck, Grotewohl, Ulbricht, and Oelßner, the Soviet side — by Stalin, Molotov and Semenov (the chief of the SMAD).
18. Stalin gave no detailed instructions; he did not object to the law on confiscating uncultivated land and forcing peasants to cultivate their land.

Stalin's next meeting with the SED leaders took place on April 1, 1952. Since mid-1951, the class war had become important in the GDR: rich peasants were now blamed for all deficiencies in people's food supply. Scherstjanoi (2007: 594–598) mentions "hysteria of sabotage" due to ignoring Stalin's warning in 1948. Stalin surprised the SED leaders with the question about collective farms in the GDR. Following his advice in 1948, the SED slowed down the socialist construction, hindering collectivization (Scherstjanoi, 2007: 423–424). When Ulbricht explained that the SED leaders had not organized collective farms in order not to threaten the unity of Germany, Stalin was upset. He blamed the SED leaders for not surrounding large farmers by producer cooperatives and emphasized the positive experience of Hungary to be followed (Scherstjanoi, 2007: 355–356). This situation showed to what extent Stalin did not know the state of German agriculture and how strongly he trusted the doubtful success reports of such Party leaders as Rakosi. Only after this meeting with Stalin, the SED leaders began to prepare for collectivization.

Scherstjanoi (2007: 594–601) did not understand that by blaming the SED leaders Stalin wanted only to change the strategy, so she interprets the attack on large private farmers in November 1952 as "a stubborn act of the SED leadership" ignoring Stalin's warning of 1948. As Stalin did not intervene, he certainly wanted the SED to start "liquidation of large peasants as a class". In 1951, Stalin initiated similar attacks on *kulaks* in all East European countries. The fact that he sent to the GDR A. D. Stupov (Scherstjanoi, 2007: 361, 368)[19], the official responsible for recommendations to the Bulgarian leaders, proves that Stalin wanted the GDR to start collectivization and class war. In April 1952, Stalin warned the SED leaders about "strictly voluntary" entry into collective farms, which is another example of his strategy to blame them later. In the GDR, collective farms could offer nothing to small farmers able to cultivate their fields on their own, this prevented their "voluntary" entry[20]. Following Stalin's recommendation, the SED leaders sent a delegation to Hungary (Scherstjanoi, 2007: 360–367; Bauerkämper, 2002: 160–165)[21]. However, in April 1952, Stalin's main concern was not collectivization but urgent creation of army in the GDR.

19. Stupov headed the new SKK-section for agriculture in May 1952. The alarmed SED-leaders consulted with him to understand what Stalin meant by "surrounding" large farmers. They decided to send two delegations to the Soviet Union to study production and life at collective farms.
20. The Politburo copied Stalin's strategy to blame local officials for violence later by stressing the "absolutely voluntary" entry into collective farms.
21. Ulbricht went to Budapest with the delegation. They listened to lectures at the Hungarian Party High School, met Rakosi, Gerö and Hegedüs, and visited some collective and state farms. They did not recommend copying the Hungarian statutes.

Before the SED leaders could announce the start of collectivization at the Second Party conference, they had to get Stalin's approval. They sent him a letter on July 1 and got his approval on July 8 (Bauerkämper, 2002: 160–165). According to the resolution, collective farms were to be organized primarily in regions which large farmers had left. It forbade regional competition for the highest speed of collectivization between the regions. At the Party conference, Ulbricht announced that organization of collective farms was part of the "planned construction of socialism" (Scherstjanoi, 2007: 380, 371–373, 379), and strong pressure was put on large farmers. In 1952, the Soviet side worsened the situation by insisting on larger obligatory delivery norms for them. Many large farmers lost prospects for continuing farming. They were blamed for sabotage, their land was expropriated as not cultivated properly, and many flew to the West. Since September 1952, among the fugitives, the share of peasants had increased significantly: from January to June of 1953, of 11,000 farmers 5,873 were large farmers. The number of large farms in the GDR decreased by about 40% (Scherstjanoi, 2007: 172–189, 485–501; Steiner, 2004: 67–68).

Who joined collective farms and why?

In all East European countries primary the rural poor (farmers without implements, new farmers failing to cope with production, and agricultural workers) joined collective farms that had land but not implements and machinery. As the Soviet Union sent very few machines, all countries expropriated machinery from large farmers or (in Hungary and Bulgaria) from cooperatives. In all countries, farmers were skeptical about joining. After the first collective farms were organized, the situation worsened, and their miserable state became evident to everybody: lack of machinery, implements, competent leadership, and payment for work. In almost all countries, economic results of collective farms were worse than those of small peasant farms, so collective farms had nothing to offer farmers. Even strong tax pressure and obligatory deliveries had limited success[22]. Only expropriation from kulaks and mass arrests in the last days of Stalin's life forced many unwilling farmers to join collective farms.

In some countries (GDR, Poland and Hungary), there were people who knew the miserable situation of Soviet collective farms: they witnessed starvation and poverty in the Soviet countryside and considered Soviet collectivization a social disaster. In addition, during

22. In the GDR, most farmers joined only under hard pressure. From January to May 1953, the number of collective farms increased from 1,906 to 5,074 (Steiner, 2004: 73–74).

the WWII, Russian forced laborers on German farms described the situation very negatively. All this made the resistance even stronger (Bauerkämper, 2014: 411–425): out of local peasants, living in their villages for a long time, hardly anybody joined; often "new" farmers, who had received land only under the land reform after WWII, were ready to join, since they did not have farm implements and sometimes experience to stabilize their farm. In the GDR, about 30% of new farmers failed, many of them returned their land; only a third successfully stabilized their farms; 20,000 of farmers who joined had high debts and tried to get a new chance (Steiner, 2004: 67–68; Witkowski, 2014, 478–484)[23]. Moreover, the "status" of land as "old" (inherited) or "new" strongly determined the willingness to join (Swain, 2014: 509–513). In Poland, there were tensions between farmers displaced from the East and resettled and local villagers (Jarosz 2014, 114-119)[24], in the GDR — between the resettled "new peasants" (from the lost eastern territories) and "local peasants", mainly new peasants joined collective farms (Schöne, 2014: 150–152).

As hardly any farmer joined the collective farm voluntarily, local authorities violated the official order by putting hard pressure: it was the most severe in Romania, but in Bulgaria it also included arrests, show trials, deportations and death sentences[25]. Severe repressions led to fierce and sometimes armed resistance, which in Bulgaria and Romania turned into local uprisings and revolts; often peasant women that had less to fear played a prominent role in such protests[26].

The supply of mechanized equipment was insufficient: when in the spring of 1949 in the GDR the MAS were organized, only every second MAS had a tractor. In 1949, the Soviet Union provided 1,000 tractors and 540 trucks. In 1950, the MAS were nationalized: their technical equipment was still poor, many tractors could not be used (Scherstjanoi, 2007: 110–145, 317–344). In the early 1950s, the

23. Governments supported collective farms therefore with privileges and sometimes with subsidies; their norms of obligatory deliveries were below the norms for other peasants.

24. In Poland, about 1 million peasants received land under the land reform, 620 thousand — in the "returned" territories

25. E.g.: in Bulgaria — death sentences, 4,208 families were deported in 1948–1951, in 1951 — show trials and many arrests (Gruev, 2014: 345, 354–355); in Romania — 2000 families lost land plots over 50 hectares, in 1951 — deportations from border regions to Yugoslavia, 44 thousands were resettled to special villages after riots (Irodachi, Dobrincu, 2014: 255, 263–264; Witkowski, 2014: 486–490; Swain, 2014: 522–525)l in the GDR — in 1949, show trials against cooperative chairmen (Scherstjanoi, 2007: 292–316); in Czechoslovakia — show trials (Wädekin, 1974: 153).

26. E.g.: in Romania — several uprising in 1949–1950 and 1958 (Swain, 2014: 522–525); in Bulgaria — in July 1950, women's uprising in three catholic villages (Gruev, 2014: 352–356); in Poland — armed gangs, resistance supported by the Catholic Church, women praying in the fields, singing religious songs and leaving meetings (Jarosz, 2014; 131–134).

MTS had 18,400 tractors — 21,383 were in private property (13,000 were owned by large farmers). In January 1953, local officials got the right to force tractor owners to rent tractors out. In 1953, the MTS increased their machinery by 28%, but labor and investment were still in short supply (Scherstjanoi, 2007: 485, 605). In Hungary, only in 1961, a decade after the end of collectivization, "most farms completely mechanized grain production and invested heavily in livestock buildings" (Swain, 1985: 28).

As most collective farms showed miserable economic results, collectivization in all countries threatened food supply. Czechoslovakia and the GDR had to return to or maintain food rationing: after small peasants had nearly restored the prewar food supply, collectivization campaigns determined a new reduction in production (Schöne, 2014: 151; Rychlik, 2014: 193–197; Kovacs, 2014: 217–220; Witkowski, 2014: 483–484; Wädekin, 1974: 155; Bauerkämper, 2002: 170)[27].

Peasant reaction — outmigration

In all East European countries, collective farmers reacted to the nonpayment for work in the same way as in the Soviet Union in the 1930s (Part I): showed little interest in work, tried to find some other paid work or focused on their private plots. Even in the countries with labor surplus (Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania), peasants reacted in the same way. Collective farms could hardly find volunteers for work, complained about a shortage of workers but offered neither paid work nor full-time jobs all year round. As collective farms were not allowed to carry out non-agricultural activities, they could not make productive use of their labor surplus (except during sowing and harvesting) (Swain, 1985; Jarosz, 2014: 130; Kovacz, 2014: 215–216).

Under collectivization, low and unstable wages forced male workers to leave the countryside and look for jobs in the cities, which is why often only women joined collective farms (Wädekin, 1974: 139–148, 159; Swain, 1985)[28]. In 1928–1929, when tractors had taken over the work in their fields, Soviet peasants reacted in the same way (Part I; Merl, 1985). In most East European countries, outmigration was easier and not limited to large farmers under severe pressure. Men left the countryside after the start of collectivization in the early 1950s, and again in 1957: collectivization accelerated the previously slow and reluctant outmigration of labor to cities (Wädekin, 1984: 136; Gruev, 2014: 359–360), which is why the elderly and women predominated in collective farms.

27. Czechoslovakia returned to rationing in 1951 (after its cancellation in 1948).
28. For instance, in Czechoslovakia often only one member of the family joined: in 1961, in 52,7% of households at least one family member worked outside the collective farm.

The problem of cultivating devastated land

In the GDR, some peasants did not cope with the high norms of obligatory deliveries and left their farms. The size of uncultivated land increased, and nobody wanted to take it due to the high norms of obligatory deliveries. In 1952, an increase in delivery norms worsened the situation — many large peasants flew to the West. In the Czech part of Czechoslovakia and partly in Hungary, the problem of uncultivated land was determined by the expulsion of Germans, but the result was the same: empty land and nobody willing to cultivate it (Bauerkämper, 2002; Scherstjanoi, 2007: 594–597; Rychlik, 2014: 193–195; Varga, 2014: 437).

While Czechoslovakia used devasted land to organize state farms, the GDR organized temporary "public agricultural enterprises" (ÖBL) that hired agricultural workers to cultivate it. Devastated land exacerbated the food supply problem due to low fertility (Bauerkämper, 2002: 170; Scherstjanoi, 2007: 172–189; Steiner, 2004: 67). An attempt of the SED leadership to turn the ÖBL into collective farms in 1952–1955 led to protests of agricultural workers, since this change meant the loss of guaranteed monthly wages and social benefits for workers: eight-hour working day, paid vacation, and paid sick leave (Bauerkämper, 2002: 386–389)[29]. Even with the guaranteed minimum of seven German mark per unit of work this meant a sharp reduction in their previous monthly salary in the ÖBL. All this proves how unattractive work at collective farms was compared to work at state farms in Eastern Europe. And the situation of the GDR collective farmers was better than in other East European countries without a guaranteed minimum payment per unit of work.

Instead of modernization — a tribute to industrialization

Following Stalin's strategy, all countries used collectivization as a means of rapid economic development by transferring capital from agriculture to industry. Even the GDR under Stalin's pressure chose industrialization instead of agricultural development. From 1951 to 1955, investment in agriculture were below 1948–1950 level, while investment in industry increased sharply, especially in the raw materials industry, which had fatal consequences for agriculture. Instead of financial support, collective farms suffered from "additional withdrawal of investment funds" (Scherstjanoi, 2007: 159–160, 348,

29. Many agricultural workers moved to industry in protest, which determined a shortage of labor in the ÖBL. In 1954–1957, the turnover rate among agricultural workers reached 15%–20% per year.

478–484)[30]. For Stalin's collectivization without state funding, Swain (1985: 28) introduced a good term "collectivization on the cheap"[31]. Although such capital transfers declined after Stalin's death, they continued under Khrushchev and finally ceased only in the 1960s after his removal.

Doubts about collectivization: From June 1953 to 1958

Collectivization as a "success model" was first questioned in the Soviet Union by new leaders refusing to continue Stalin's collectivization policy. Some Party leaders around Stalin were aware of the miserable economic situation of collective farms and believed that only a fundamental change in agricultural policy would save the situation but did not dare to act while Stalin was alive. After Stalin's death, they competed for succession and did not trust each other, realizing that the person who would implement a successful economic program would be the winner. Thus, everybody sought to hinder the implementation of their competitors' programs, which made it impossible to discuss the best agricultural policy to increase production.

The first attempt at policy change was the "New Course" developed mainly by Beria and Malenkov. In June 1953, the new Soviet leaders ordered the Party leaders of the GDR and Hungary to come to Moscow. Collectivization in both countries had significantly worsened the internal food supply, which is why they asked Stalin for help with grain. In Moscow, they were shocked that the new leaders questioned the correctness of Stalin's orders, i.e., claimed that Stalin was not infallible. Moreover, the policy of Ulbricht and Rakosi was harshly criticized although both had only followed Stalin's orders. The Hungarian delegates were afraid (as before with Stalin) to misunderstand or misinterpret "recommendations" and kept a stenographic record of the speeches of their Moscow colleagues, which gives us a unique opportunity to look into the essence of the discussion at the meeting and to understand the views of the new Soviet leaders (Transcript, 1953; Merl, 2002: 205–207)[32].

The critique focused on the central points of Stalin's industrialization and collectivization policy and on state violence used to implement it. Primarily Malenkov and Beria criticized investment in the raw materials industries, Stalin's orientation towards autarky, and forced nature of collectivization (mass repressions and arrests),

30. Moscow refused to make concessions in armaments, reparations and foreign trade.
31. A tribute for industrialization was also effective in Yugoslavia (Bokovoy, 2014: 299–300).
32. The transcript proves that Stalin used to give personal orders to the East European Party leaders, without informing other Moscow Party leaders.

which led to a reduction in agricultural production and a threat to food supply. The new leaders refused to provide help with grain, blaming the GDR and the Hungarian leaders for the situation, and ordered to immediately stop collectivization through mass repressions, to release ten thousand farmers from prisons and to introduce a policy ensuring food supply and an increase in agricultural production (Transcript, 1953; Merl, 2002)[33].

The new Soviet leaders refused to further tolerate the economic mismanagement of the East European countries under collectivization. Ulbricht and Rakosi stood at the center of criticism, so the new leaders demanded their replacement: Rakosi was replaced by Nagy, who introduced a different agricultural policy in Hungary; Ulbricht was not replaced due to the uprising of construction workers in Berlin on June 17, 1953 (Scherstjanoi, 2007: 552–584)[34]. Construction workers went on strike as they did not benefit from changes: an increase in working norms was not canceled, which meant a significant reduction in payment. Moscow clearly showed that collectivization was no longer an end in itself and that its economic effects had to be considered and justified. Beria and Malenkov claimed that further collectivization would depend on economic results (collective farms had to prove their superiority over small private farms) and, contrary to Khrushchev, insisted on intensification of agricultural production.

At the time of Stalin's death, it would have been possible to stop collectivization and liquidate Soviet collective farms with poor economic results; however, such a decision was not even discussed. Later China liquidated people's communes, and the success of this approach, which became the starting point of China's economic growth, suggests that the Soviet economy could have benefited from the liquidation of collective farms. In 1953, the situation of Soviet collective farms was so miserable that their liquidation would have released their members' activity. Already the liberalization of agricultural policy from 1953 to 1958 led to a significant increase in production on private plots and improved food supply in the Soviet Union. Most works underestimate this fact, uncritically following Khrushchev's propaganda about the success of his virgin land development program (Merl, 2002; Wädekin, 1974: 228).

After the new Moscow leaders' intervention, collectivization was stopped in the GDR and Hungary: some collective farms were liqui-

33. On the visit of the SED-delegation to Moscow on June 2, 1953, see: Scherstjanoi, 2007: 552–584. The delegation was to improve the situation in the GDR by stopping the collectivization campaign, returning the expropriated land to large farmers, and reducing norms of obligatory deliveries by 15%.

34. After the return from Moscow, Herrnstadt, a possible successor of Ulbricht, proposed to liquidate collective farms that were created by force and had no economic prospects without special subsidies and privileges.

dated and many enforced members left them. In the GDR, by February 1954, 564 collective farms were liquidated and 33,000 members left them; arrested peasants were released; expropriated land was returned to those former owners who returned from the West (Scherstjanoi, 2007: 570–584; Steiner, 2004: 79–81; Varga, 2021).

Stalin's death determined changes in the collectivization policy in many East European countries: everywhere collectivization slowed down and was freed from repression; without announcement, the Party leaders separated class war from collectivization; Hungary and Czechoslovakia stopped repressions against *kulaks*, which did not put an end to their discrimination. After Khrushchev ended the New Course in 1955 and replaced Nagy, Hungary restarted measures against *kulaks*, and only after the 1956 October uprisings, their discrimination finally ended; however, only in 1959 former kulaks were allowed to take leading positions in collective farms after two years of membership. In December 1954, the GDR allowed *kulaks*, albeit with restrictions, to join collective farms, but this measure gained significance only in 1957. In July 1956, Bulgaria allowed *kulaks* to join collective farms but not to take leading positions. In Poland, *kulaks* were allowed to join if they were loyal to the rule. Czechoslovakia allowed *kulaks* to take over the leadership (Swain, 2014: 506–507; Wädekin, 1974)[35].

Not all members of the new Soviet leadership supported the New Course. Khrushchev considered the Berlin uprising of construction workers as a sign of its failure and blamed Beria, its initiator, for the uprising. Khrushchev organized the July Plenum of the Central Committee in 1953 as a trial against Beria and managed to return supreme power to the Party, while Malenkov and Beria had tried to give it to government agencies (Merl, 2002; Merl, 2024b)[36]. At the Plenum, Malenkov was among the few party leaders who honestly distanced themselves from Stalin, while Khrushchev tried to blame Beria for Stalin's crimes (Merl, 2024b)[37].

In September 1953, Khrushchev took the initiative in agricultural policy: he announced that Stalin had not solved the "grain problem" but ordered to falsify the grain statistics: a fictive "biological" harvest was introduced in 1933 — a third higher than the previously (and usually) reported "harvest in the barn" (Davies, 2018: 321–322; Merl, 2002), i.e., 30% of the reported grain did not exist. Thus, in his struggle for power, Khrushchev focused on "solving the grain problem" by starting the Virgin Land campaign: by promising to increase grain and ag-

35. In Czechoslovakia, the New Course led to the stagnation of collectivization. About half of the members had left collective farms, before the Party under pressure from Khrushchev decided to restart collectivization on June 29–30, 1955 (Wädekin, 1974: 197–198).
36. At the Plenum, the need to change agricultural policy was the only point of common agreement.
37. On Khrushchev's policy see, e.g.: Merl (2002) and Kramer (2017).

ricultural production, Khrushchev hoped to become Stalin's successor. After getting rid of Beria, Khrushchev successfully blocked Malenkov's program to improve consumption. Other leaders could not imagine that Khrushchev would successfully implement a new agricultural policy (Merl, 2002). The fictitious "success" of his Virgin Land program strengthened Khrushchev's position already in 1954 (Merl, 2002; Merl, 2019)[38], while Malenkov failed to implement his program due to the resistance of other leaders, and in January 1955, Khrushchev managed to get rid of him. Khrushchev stopped the New Course and insisted on restarting the collectivization campaign in all East European countries. In Hungary, he replaced Nagy, who had successfully improved the situation in the countryside, with Rakosi, which led to the split of the Hungarian Communist Party and to the uprising in October 1956.

Khrushchev's insistence on completing collectivization

Despite the disastrous results, Khrushchev insisted on continuing collectivization. He did not demand from collective farms to prove their superiority, suggesting that a simple increase in the size of farms or a change to state property would ensure economies of scale and increase yields. In the Soviet Union, he restarted amalgamation of collective farms and supported their transformation into state farms. To praise fictitious achievements of Soviet collectivization, he ordered a special propaganda booklet for the 1958 World Exhibition in Brussels.

Czechoslovakia, Hungary (Varga, 2021: 78–83), Bulgaria and Albania took up collectivization at the turn of 1956; even Poland restarted collectivization in February 1956. Only Bulgaria and Albania did not stop collectivization after uprisings in Poland and Hungary. By opposing Gomulka as the successor of Bierut, which the Communists wanted, Khrushchev also contributed to the uprising in Poland. Gomulka's approach to collectivization differed from that of Khrushchev (Merl, 2002; Swain, 2014: 501–502, 525–526)[39]. Uprisings in Poland and Hungary were protests against collectivization. Some collective farms were spontaneously liquidated by their members. In Hungary, the number of collective farmers decreased sharply. In Poland, only 11% of peasants had joined collective farms, and in the fall of 1956 many members left them. In open contradiction with Khrush-

38. In the long run, this was a failure, since expenses were not justified: the huge supply of equipment would have had greater effects in the Central Black Earth regions without the enormous costs of grain transportation from distant regions. At the turn of the 1960s, wind erosion caused great damage, and since the mid-1960s the Soviet Union depended on grain imports from the West.

39. After the 1956 uprisings, collectivization pressure was also eased in Czechoslovakia and Romania. Yugoslavia stopped collectivization in 1953.

chev, Gomulka stopped forced collectivization and at the end of 1956 announced a national path to socialism. Like Tito before, Gomulka did not question the large-scale mechanized "socialist" agriculture as the final goal but refused to force farmers into collective farms by terror (Swain, 2014: 525–526; Varga, 2021: 83–97; Merl, 2002).

1957: The demand for open competition between collective and private farms

Despite Khrushchev's insistence to focus on collectivization, after June 1953, Hungary and the GDR tried to stabilize collective farms by improving their members' material situation and providing more agricultural machinery; Czechoslovakia changed its approach by providing investment and improving the material situation. I will consider first proposed strategic changes not implemented due to Khrushchev's insistence on completing collectivization and then on measures taken for stabilizing the situation despite Khrushchev's pressure.

The uprisings in Poland and Hungary made the leadership further review collectivization. Collective farms in all countries worked poorly: despite the state subsidies and privileges, they failed to outperform the small peasant economy, which updated the need to reconsider economic results of collective farms. In 1957, Hungary and the GDR started this revision, intending to stop special subsidies and privileges for collective farms: they were to prove their superiority over small private farms in open competition before collectivization would continue. This time collectivization was criticized by agricultural specialists, almost all of them were members of ruling parties. Were concerned about miserable economic results of collective farms and decided that if collective farms proved their superiority, this would impress and convince private farmers, and collectivization would be completed.

In the GDR, such a program of open competition was developed by K. Vieweg (Scholz, 1997), in 1956 the head of the GDR Institute of Agrarian Economics, who called for stopping subsidies for collective farms and focusing the future agricultural policy on increasing production at "optimal costs" (so that the state would not force agricultural reconstruction at any price). Vieweg insisted on providing equal opportunities for family farms — to buy means of production and to create traditional peasant cooperatives to improve farming. Thus, state subsidies should be used only to increase production and productivity, and agriculture should be economically regulated by prices. The Politburo member F. Oelßner held the same position and insisted on liquidating collective farms and MTS operating at a loss. Both Vieweg and Oelßner were repressed on the orders of Ulbricht: Vieweg lost his position as the head of the research institute already in March 1957 and was sentenced to twelve years in prison in May

1958; Oelßner was expelled from the Politburo in February 1958 (Bauerkämper, 2002: 176–181).

In Hungary, similar ideas were expressed by the "agrarian lobby": J. Fehér und F. Erdei followed Nagy's approach in 1953 and 1954 (Varga, 2021: 107–145). In Czechoslovakia, Zápotocký held the same position (Wädekin, 1974: 197–198)[40]. All claimed that Stalin's model needed certain changes and that a necessary precondition for a successful restart of mass collectivization would be stabilization of collective farms by means of mechanized agriculture, which would also convince farmers to join. The Party leaders recommended for the stabilization of collective farms to change the attitude to *kulaks* and other peasants not willing to join collective farms (Swain, 1985: 3; Varga, 2021). In 1957, Fehér with colleagues presented "agricultural theses" (Varga, 2021: 107–114)[41]: collective farms should improve their economic results without special state subsidies and privileges; the material situation of their members should be improved by the right to keep collective livestock on their plots, while the collective farm should provide fodder (Swain, 1985: 33).

In the Soviet Union, where collectivization was completed, there were primarily attempts to improve economic results of collective farms. The Soviet "agrarian lobby" (Venzher, Khudenko) demanded to liquidate the MTS and to distribute mechanized equipment among collective farms to make them "masters of their fields" (Merl, 2020b; Merl, 2021)[42]. In the mid-1960s, Khudenko proposed to release state and collective farms from the state command system, allowing their heads (directors) to organize production independently (Merl, 2020a).

Attempts to stabilize collective farms in Hungary after June 1953

After the meeting in Moscow, Nagy revised Hungary's agricultural policy: he tried to strengthen remaining collective farms, many of which did not have necessary means of production. In 1954, for the first time a significant share of national investment (23%) went into

40. Zápotocký spoke out against Novotny: after Stalin's death he insisted on organizing only cost-effective collective farms, whose members had the right to leave them. In March 1954, he repeated his proposals, but Novotny blocked suggested changes in June 1954.

41. In conflict with the Ministry of Agriculture, agricultural experts presented the final version of their theses in July 1957. They demanded to end the disadvantageous position of agriculture compared to industry, to improve the living standard of collective farmers and to partially revive the market. Large farms were to become primarily a means for developing agricultural production forces but reported little progress in modernizing agricultural production due to outdated machinery (Varga, 2021: 118–129).

42. Venzher's idea was ruined by Khrushchev, who demanded that collective farms pay the full cost of equipment directly to the state.

agriculture; collective farms got more tractors than during collectivization under Stalin — from 1950 to 1953 (Swain, 1985: 28). When Khrushchev ended the New Course he replaced Nagy by his Stalinist predecessor Rakosi. He restarted forced collectivization in 1956, which led to uprisings in October and Soviet military intervention (Varga, 2021).

The uprising and collapse of collective farms caused a new rift in agricultural policy. Kádár's approach was more careful. Nagy's "spirit of reconciliation" temporarily shaped the policy of his regime. In 1957, he stopped obligatory deliveries and focused on the "agrarian thesis" as a different concept for further collectivization. However, under Krushchev's pressure Kádár restarted forced collectivization in 1958, but after a new failure returned to a more careful approach (Varga, 2021). In any case, Kádár reduced "the costs of joining a collective farm" and ideological attacks on private plots. He introduced a rent for the use of implements and land of members (Swain, 1985: 31–33)[43]. Concessions for the use of family labor on plots were a decisive factor, since there was still no incentive to work on the collective farm that did not provide the same income as family farming (Swain, 1985: 33). Although only in the 1970s the Hungarian collective agriculture reached "a solid financial basis", concessions on private plots under Kádár played a decisive role in 1959–1961, when collectivization was completed. The government was ready "to provide sufficient funds to cover the costs of collectivization" and a solid productive base (Swain, 1985: 25–26, 29). Agriculture "was no longer considered a branch of the economy to extract surplus for industrial development": it got some funding to transform the production base and concessions to middle peasants and kulaks; collective farmers' material situation improved due to the "revised household plot regulations" (Swain, 1985: 26).

Hungary made political compromises: supported household production as compensation for meager wages on collective farms and tolerated the use of sharecropping (although subject to strong ideological criticism) first in 1954–1955, and since 1956 it was officially allowed to increase incentive to work[44]; paid attention to quality aspects — remuneration based on a significant amount of output produced and including market elements (collective members sold many of the received agricultural products) spread after 1957, when there was a lot of land per member Still in 1964, the share of wages paid in

43. In 1948, 0.86 hectares and livestock for personal use were allowed; in 1949–1950, the plot size was reduced to 0.43 ha and the permitted number of livestock was halved; in 1953, the plot size was increased to 0.57 ha.

44. See, e.g., Wädekin (1978: 191–192) on this "Nádudvár-system". Bulgaria and Romania used similar systems, but instead of payment in kind used wages in cash, depending on the value of produce

kind was high. Private plots helped to retain the labor force in rural areas (Swain, 1985: 48–49)[45].

Under Kádár "collectivization was no longer an end in itself but a method, whereby large-scale agriculture would bring about an ever-increasing standard of living" (Swain, 1985: 26). However, the continued progress in this direction was achieved only in 1967 — after the end of collectivization in 1961 and the replacement of Khrushchev in Moscow. In 1956, the government started to encourage the amalgamation of collective farms to increase their size and later rationalize production by funding through the agreed aid policy. After the liquidation of the MTS in January 1963, collective farms were allowed to own implements, including some agricultural machinery (Swain, 1985: 36–37; Wädekin, 1974: 174). Modernization was a difficult and lengthy process, which is proved by the fact that in the mid-1950s collective farms predominantly used horse traction and until the late 1960s — manual labor (Swain, 1985: 37–41).

Stabilization of collective farms in the GDR after 1953

The GDR also changed collectivization strategy after Stalin's death to stabilize collective farms. In 1954, the most important changes concerned payment and social security: at fully socialized collective farms (type 3), the state introduced the guaranteed minimum (7 German marks) per unit of labor and included collective farmers into the social security system. Due to the low price for obligatory deliveries, most farms could not pay the minimum payment, and the state had to provide subsidies (Bauerkämper, 2002: 166–167). The state raised producer prices, reduced obligatory deliveries and paid fees for the implements that collective farmers were to hand over upon joining the collective farm (Swain, 2014: 508, 525–530). In December 1954, the 3rd Conference of Collective Farmers proposed to accept large farmers (Bauerkämper, 2002: 174). After Khrushchev stopped the New Course in 1955, there were concerns again about kulaks; only since 1957 they were really accepted, and the SED even expected that they would contribute with their expertise to the stabilization of collective farms (Bauerkämper, 2002: 389–390).

In March 1956, the 3rd Party Conference underlined the need to economically strengthen collective farms with long-term effects: it allowed to organize new collective farms of type 1 or 2 with a lesser level of socialization of the means of production even in villages with the collective farm of type 3. This was a concession to reluctant farmers to ease their entry but at the same time saved the

45. See, e.g., Wädekin (1978: 191–192) on this "Nádudvár-system". Bulgaria and Romania used similar systems, but instead of payment in kind used wages in cash, depending on the value of produce.

state money as the state did not need to subsidize the minimum payment per unit of labor. Thus, collective farms of types 1 and 2 were allowed after the end of collectivization in the 1960s (Bauerkämper, 2002: 175).

Under Khrushchev's pressure to speed up collectivization, in October 1957, the 33rd Central Committee Plenum confirmed the goal of completing collectivization. Still believing Khrushchev's promise that collectivization would increase production, for 1958 the Plenum announced the abolition of food rationing and the reduction of imports. At the 5th Party Congress in July 1958, following Khrushchev, Ulbricht declared as the main goal to surpass West Germany's per capita food consumption within a few years, which caused significant pressure to act later (Bauerkämper, 2002: 181–183). After July 1958, the SED forced farmers to join collective farms and sent industrial workers to villages for agitation.

However, despite all efforts, the pace of collectivization slowed down by the end of 1958. The Party responded by attempting to make primarily underrepresented small farmers join collective farms. Ulbricht declared that collective farms should be strengthened to ensure the same standard of living individual farmers had before. As this did not happen, the SED returned to previously prohibited approaches and put pressure on farmers by demanding from local administrations "long-term plans for collectivization" in their regions (Bauerkämper, 2002: 384–389).

Stabilization of collective farms in Czechoslovakia

In 1958, the restarted collectivization in Czechoslovakia aimed at attracting middle and large farmers with authority in their village and at improving the situation of all collective farmers. Since 1957, members of collective farms were included in the public healthcare and social insurance systems and received old-age pensions. In exchange for handing over land that was in debt to the collective farm, farmers received state pensions: "Many kulaks took the chance to get rid of their farms for compensation". Collectivization was completed not because farmers were convinced, but because they understood that they had no alternative (Rychlik, 2014: 198–201).

After completing collectivization, Czechoslovakia provided significant state subsidies to stabilize collective farms and consolidate their production. A relatively high standard of living was achieved in rural areas. Professional managers took over the leadership and were interested primarily in weakening the state control and ensuring attractive prices. State subsidies and investments changed the face of the village. During the 1968 uprising, there were no attempts to return to private farming; however, in the spring of 1968, chairmen of collective farms required to reduce the strict state and party control

and to get the allowance to produce goods that could be sold on the market (Rychlik, 2014: 201; Merl, 2021).

Industrialization of agriculture started in the late 1960s: collective farms were turned into large agricultural complexes, sometimes including several villages. In the Czech part, the average collective farm grew from 610 hectares in 1970 to 2,459 hectares in 1980, in the Slovak part — from 832 to 2,720 hectares. As the standard of living at collective farms was satisfactory, their members became a social stratum loyal to the regime. In Czechoslovakia, the right of collective farms to engage in non-agricultural activities also played an important role: the 1975 statute even allowed to produce furniture, machinery and computers. At first these were rather exceptions, but since June 1988 such possibilities significantly expanded (Rychlik, 2014: 201–203). Due to significant changes in the Party policy after the end of collectivization, collective farms were finally accepted by all villagers, which is why in November 1989, collective farmers did not participate in uprisings — most of them were loyal to the regime and showed little interest in returning to private farming (Rychlik, 2014: 201–203).

Soviet Union: Khrushchev's disregard for the efficiency issues

When Stalin died, most Soviet collective farms were extremely weak: they paid hardly any money for work, and the available MTS machinery was significantly below the Western standard and the needs for large-scale production. Unlike the Party leaders in Hungary, GDR and Czechoslovakia, Khrushchev in his struggle for power focused on increasing grain production instead of improving efficiency: thus, instead of providing collective farms that were experiencing a shortage of machinery, he ordered to send almost all new machinery to the virgin lands (Merl, 2020b; 2021). Khrushchev's attempts to improve the extremely low wages on Soviet collective proved ineffective compared to the GDR, Czechoslovakia and even Hungary that compensated for low wages by allowing work on private land. The rise in agricultural producer prices was insufficient to even partially close the income gap for agricultural workers on state farms, most of which in the 1970s operated at a loss (Wädekin, 1978: Part III).

Khrushchev's ideas about socialist agriculture were simple: large-scale production should ensure economies of scale, thus providing similar living conditions in the city and the village. His idea of the final form of socialist agriculture can be seen from his concept of "agrotowns" (Jähnig, 1983). When starting the consolidation of mainly small collective farms in 1950, Khrushchev returned to the idea of building agrotowns, which first arose in the 1920s. After turning farms into large enterprises, this would be the final form of socialist agriculture — a new type of rural settlement for 5–10 thousand residents with all city amenities, the costs of creating which would be

borne by large enterprises (Jähnig, 1983: 42–44). Khrushchev ordered to build such an agrotown in the Cherkassy district, but the construction was stopped, when Stalin rejected the idea of agrotowns in 1951 and harshly criticized Khrushchev for it. In 1957, when Khrushchev came to power, he ordered to restart the project on the ruins left in 1951. The construction was completed in the summer of 1958 in the village of Khudyaki (Jähnig, 1983: 45–47).

In the mid-1950s, the plans for such settlements in rural areas were developed. The question was what to do with old villages and what the living conditions of collective farmers would ultimately be. In Khrushchev's imagination, the comprehensive modernization of rural economy and society would put an end to private farming and provide urban living conditions for rural residents. Thus, the size of the private plot was to be reduced to 0.1 hectare. Khrushchev's belief in "collectivization on the cheap" made him ignore the costs (as if covered by economies of scale). In December 1959, the Central Committee Plenum approved his plan, and the 1961 Party Program provided general guidelines for building agrotowns, which would replace simple farmhouses by modern apartments in multi-story buildings. After Khrushchev's removal from office, the program was stopped in 1968. The most fatal consequence of this project was the division of rural settlements into "perspective" and "non-perspective" (Jähnig, 1983: 51–68).

In the late 1950s, Khrushchev's failures reached their peak. He misjudged Soviet achievements in the field of mechanization: both the level and quality of machinery were significantly below the Western standard. At first, Khrushchev clung to the idea of "collectivization on the cheap", then he overestimated the effect of economies of scale in agriculture and started "mechanization on the cheap". After the liquidation of the MTS in 1958, he demanded from the economically weak collective farms to pay the full price for partially rotten machinery right away, as if it was new machinery, thus funding "his race to the moon". This overstrained the capacities of collective farms: they were unable to pay for the urgently needed additional new machinery and were even forced to reduce the already meager payments to their members, which had slightly increased after 1953 (Merl, 2020b; 2021; Bronson, Krueger, 1971). The worst part was that most tractor drivers receiving the status as workers in the MTS only in 1954 did not want to return to the miserable conditions of collective farm workers with uncertain wages paid in labor units (as in the GDR). Most tractor drivers decided to quit and move to cities. Thus, collective farms received tractors, but there were not enough trained drivers for them.

Khrushchev's campaign against private keeping of animals and private plots further worsened the situation by causing an outflow of those collective farmers who had hoped that that the softening of policy after Stalin's death would allow a return to private farming: more qualified and flexible people left the countryside in the late 1950s,

which greatly reduced the opportunities for a turn toward agricultural modernization after Krushchev's removal (Wädekin, 1974: 86).

Completion of collectivization at the turn of the 1960s

Pressure to complete collectivization increased in its final stage — in Czechoslovakia in 1959, in the GDR in 1960, and in Hungary in 1961. Khrushchev announced the restart of collectivization in Eastern Europe in November 1957. Bulgaria that had not stopped the campaign in 1956 was the first to declare the completion of collectivization in 1958. Czechoslovakia restarted collectivization at the end of 1957, after Novotny became president: in 1958, about 75% of land were collectivized, and collectivization in the Czech part was declared completed in 1959[46]. In the GDR, collectivization increased from 20% in 1953 to 40% in 1958, but the campaign intensified in 1958, when Grüneberg became the Central Committee secretary for agriculture. Finally, in January 1960, the "socialist spring" was declared to complete collectivization in a few months — before the start of spring sowing, which proves that the SED allowed for the possibility of forced collectivization. The harsh pressure on officials and violence against farmers reached their peak in March 1960 (Bauerkämper, 2002: 185–191)[47]. Despite Ulbricht's promise, forced collectivization once again threatened food supply, especially of animal products (Steiner, 2004: 116–119). Hungary restarted collectivization at the end of 1958, setting February 1961 as the end of campaign. In completing collectivization, "psychological factors" played a role: after 1956, Hungary was a demoralized country, most farmers recognized the inevitability of collectivization (Swain, 1985: 26). In Romania, collectivization continued until 1962. In Albania, collectivization was completed in 1960, in mountainous areas — in 1967; collectivization of livestock was separated from the general campaign and was completed only in the 1980s (Swain, 2014: 525–526; Wädekin, 1974: 21)[48].

All these countries under Khrushchev used violence in campaigns; however, unlike collectivization under Stalin, they made some concessions to farmers to make life on collective farms bearable. There was no "class war" going on; instead, *kulaks'* entry into collective farms was considered an advantage for their management. After

46. In Slovakia, collectivization was completed only in 1971–1974 (Wädekin, 1974: 41; 1978: 299–322).

47. At the agricultural conference in Moscow on February 2–3, 1960, Ulbricht claimed that food self-sufficiency was possible only through collectivization. The arrival of work brigades in the village had a psychological effect — they left only after all peasants had joined a collective farm. According to the SED-slogans, joining meant peace, not joining — war (Swain, 2014: 520–523).

48. The campaign in Albania was interrupted between 1959 and 1965,

a decade of collectivization campaigns, the situation changed, and some farmers looked to the future differently: the importance of education increased, and the threat of not giving one's children a higher education seemed worse than a ban on private farming; some farmers began to consider land as a burden rather than a source of prosperity and abandoned private farming (Swain, 2014: 525–530). In all countries completing collectivization, production remained significantly below expectations: from 1950 to 1960, agricultural production growth in these countries was significantly lower than in Poland and Yugoslavia, relying on small private farms (Wädekin, 1974: 71–72; 1978: 12).

In the GDR, collectivization was completed (except for some mountainous areas) in May 1960. In 1957, collective farms had 25% of land, at the end of 1960 — 84%, but integrated large enterprises were not created — often there were several small collective farms of different types in one village. The number of collective farms of type 1 and 2 increased from 3,000 to 13,000 in 1960, and they had a third of agricultural area. In both types, collectivization of livestock was not completed. In the early 1960s, only 7% of the LPG of type 3 managed to pay the guaranteed minimum per unit of labor without subsidies, which proves how economically weak most collective farms were even in the GDR. The fact that some collective farmers simply left them on notice was another indicator of their instability. The SED sent brigades to consolidate farms. After the border with the West was closed by the Berlin Wall, the situation in collective farms slowly stabilized in 1963–1964 (Steiner, 2004: 90–92, 116–119). In all East European countries completing collectivization, there was a shortage of machinery and implements, wages were meager, economic results of collective farms barely kept pace with small peasant farming, and until the early 1960s, the influx of capital into agriculture was insufficient to strengthen large-scale production (Wädekin, 1978: 12–15).

In the 1960s, after the completion of collectivization in Eastern Europe and the removal of Khrushchev in the Soviet Union, it was urgently necessary to stabilize collective farms. A new phase of socialist agricultural policy will be described in Part III: the turn towards modernization through somewhat different concepts of industrialized agriculture aimed at bringing agricultural production closer to the upstream and downstream industrial sectors (production of inputs for agriculture, processing, storage and trade of agricultural products), which required cooperation and integration of farms (in some countries up to agricultural-industrial complexes).

Conclusion

Stalin's combination of collectivization and class war was copied in Eastern Europe and led to the same fatal social-economic consequenc-

es in agriculture as in the Soviet Union and to the same threats to food supply. Stalin's approach was first criticized in the Soviet Union, when in June 1953, Beria and Malenkov questioned his infallibility. The revision of collectivization started in several East European countries, primarily in Hungary, GDR and Czechoslovakia, but was temporarily blocked by Khrushchev, insisting on finishing collectivization instead of stabilizing collective farms, which aggravated the catastrophe of Stalin's collectivization and determined the outflow of more flexible labor from agriculture. Only Khrushchev's replacement allowed stabilizing collective farms and starting agricultural modernization. Consolidation required what Stalin had refused to provide — huge state investments in agriculture, payment for work and efficient machinery for large farms.

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Коллективизация и социалистическое сельское хозяйство (1917–1992): пересмотр советского и восточно-европейского опыта.

Часть 2: коллективизация в Восточной Европе при Сталине и Хрущеве (1944–1962)

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Аннотация. Для переоценки коллективизации и социалистической аграрной политики необходимо рассмотреть весь соответствующий исторический период, выделяя в нем следующие этапы, принципиально различающиеся политическими подходами: (1) коллективизация при Сталине, основанная на идеях классовой

борьбы и подавления крестьян в целях изъятия капитала из сельского хозяйства для нужд промышленности; (2) коллективизация при Хрущеве, который стремился ее завершить, несмотря на возникшие в ней сомнения (в 1953 году в Советском Союзе, в 1957 году — в ГДР и Венгрии); (3) усилия по стабилизации экономически слабых колхозов в 1960-е годы — после завершения коллективизации и смещения Хрущева; (4) окончательный разворот к модернизации сельского хозяйства в надежде на экономию за счет масштаба и применения разных вариантов индустриализации в 1970-е годы; (5) провал этих вариантов, что стало причиной ловушки невозвратных затрат и вынужденного возрождения мелких частных форм хозяйствования в 1980-е годы. Первая часть статьи показала, как Сталин устранил модернизацию из стратегии коллективизации, чтобы обеспечить индустриализацию за счет сельского хозяйства. Во второй части статьи акцент сделан на коллективизации в Восточной Европе при Сталине и Хрущеве, включая временные попытки пересмотра политики коллективизации после смерти Сталина. Предложенное им сочетание коллективизации с классовой войной было взято на вооружение в Восточной Европе, что привело к тем же фатальным последствиям для сельского социально-экономического капитала и к тем же продовольственным угрозам, что в Советском Союзе. Сталинский подход был подвергнут критике в СССР: в июне 1953 года Берия и Маленков высказали сомнения в непогрешимости Сталина. Пересмотр коллективизации в ряде восточноевропейских стран (прежде всего в Венгрии, ГДР и Чехословакии) был призван стабилизировать коллективные хозяйства посредством консолидации, которую отвергал Сталин (государственные инвестиции в сельское хозяйство, оплата сельскохозяйственного труда, эффективная техника для крупного сельскохозяйственного производства). На основе работающих моделей коллективного хозяйствования множество частных фермеров постепенно вступили бы в колхозы, однако этот путь был заблокирован Хрущевым, настаивавшем на быстрейшей тотальной коллективизации. Этот идеологический подход усугубил разрушения, порожденные сталинской моделью, в частности, обусловив в Советском Союзе отток наиболее гибкой рабочей силы из сельского хозяйства. Только Венгрии удалось эффективно использовать потенциал семейной организации труда. В третьей части статьи будет показана стабилизация колхозной системы после смещения Хрущева и индустриализация сельского хозяйства, которая началась в социалистических странах в 1970-е годы — на два десятилетия позже, чем на Западе.

Ключевые слова: коллективизация сельского хозяйства, Сталин, Хрущев, Кадар, Ульбрихт, социалистическое сельское хозяйство, механизация, колхозы, индустриализация сельского хозяйства, модернизация, Советский Союз, Восточная Европа, Венгрия, ГДР, малые крестьянские хозяйства, экономия за счет масштаба, частные земельные наделы, классовая война, миф о непогрешимости Сталина, социальная дифференциация