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AGRICULTURE

Inadequate tractor repairs and maintenance and the uncertain progress of the livestock industry continue to get official attention as the two chronic shortcomings of Soviet agriculture. Unlike the previous output on this theme which dealt mostly with the Ukraine, most of the complaints about agricultural shortcomings are aired on the regional transmitters of the European part of the RSFSR. Ukrainian failings are discussed at a special session of the Republican Party's Central Committee called to look into the agricultural situation. The only reference to agricultural statute violation appears in a dispatch from Altai krai which was not broadcast.

Poor Tractors, Shortage of Drivers: The machine-tractor stations of at least three RSFSR oblasts--Vladimir, Kaluga and Kostroma--have made a very poor showing in the past year, according to a PRAVDA editorial broadcast on 6 January. Hundreds of tractors could not be worked more than one shift per day because of an acute shortage of qualified tractor drivers. Had the appropriate Party and agricultural officials thought of that eventuality in time, the paper points out, the emergency would not have arisen and the plan would have been fulfilled. The agricultural training program in those oblasts is said to have deteriorated to such an extent that many of the schools existed on paper only while many of the would-be students were never sent to school in the first place. Agricultural progress in four other oblasts--Smolensk, Velikie Luki, Kalinin and Penza--is just as unenviable this year as the performance in the above-named areas was last year. They are "far behind" (silno otstayut) in their tractor repair program and, besides, the quality of their work leaves much to be desired. In Tumen oblast, for example, it has been standard practice to keep all agricultural machinery "under the open sky" (pod otkrytym nebom) throughout the year with the result that a large proportion of it deteriorated and went out of commission.

CHERNOMORSKA KOMUNA says editorially (7 January) that despite the "over-all upsurge" in Odessa oblast agriculture, the machine-tractor stations of many oblasts "are lagging seriously" in their development and they adversely affect the harvest yields and productivity of livestock. The 1953 agricultural plan for tractor work and the livestock industry is already off to a bad start, and "decisive" measures to eliminate the accumulating shortcomings are urged on the oblast Party committee. Particular attention is called to the very unsatisfactory state of affairs in Tsebrikovskiy, Berezhovskiy, Shiryaevskiy and unnamed other rayons, but no further details are given.

A Biryukov report from Alma Ata carried by IZVESTIA on 6 January states bluntly that agricultural science in Kazakh SSR is backward (otstayet) for the simple reason that both the Republic's Academy of Agricultural Sciences and the Ministry of Agriculture are derelict in their duties. There is virtually no coordination between the Academy and its institutes and the experimental agricultural stations (opytnie stantsii) throughout the Republic. Scientific developments are few and far between, and lack of contact with the collective farms makes it all but impossible to disseminate the achievements of agricultural research. The "Williams" Agricultural Institute is said to be the largest and best equipped in Kazakhstan, but most of its activities have so far been confined to the study of weeds. Nothing has been done about improving the grass-crop rotation system, soil fertilization and similar important aspects of agricultural work. The Kazakh Institute of Stockbreeding has developed a new type of fine-wooled (tonkorunnaya) sheep but this scientific achievement has for some reason not been popularized and it still remains on the Institute's papers:

It is not accidental that the number of pedigreed sheep in the Republic, far from increasing, has actually decreased and their productivity has been reduced.

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Russian text:

Ne sluchaino kolichestvo chistoporodnykh ovets v respublike ne tolko ne uvelichilos, a sokratilos, snizilas ikh produktivnost.

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The same topic is referred to editorially by KAZAKHSTANSKAYA PRAVDA on 7 January in the context of equipment repair and maintenance. Reiterating the familiar complaint about the technical inefficiency in agriculture which is being eliminated "too slowly" and in some areas not at all, the paper criticizes a number of unnamed machine-tractor stations and sovkhoses of the Republic "who are continuing to oppose" the introduction of new technology while stubbornly clinging to the obsolete methods of machinery repair which has long since been rejected by practical experience. Agricultural plans are not being fulfilled, the paper goes on to say, because not all the available tractors and other machines are serviceable, and tractors supposedly in good working condition are put out of commission shortly after they are taken to the field.

A Karamyshev report on the "crudest violations of the agricultural statute" (grubeishie narusheniya Ustava selkhozarteli) carried by PRAVDA on 4 January speaks of the "backward section" of the collective farmers of the Gorno-Altai Autonomous oblast who seem to consider their personal interests above those of the State. Last year, it is revealed, the indivisible funds (nedelimie fondy) in many farms were tampered with, the failure of the livestock plan was further aggravated by the excessive slaughter and squandering of cattle for local consumption, and "log rolling" among local agricultural officials is still in evidence this year. In the "Trudovik" farm alone, for example, the number of pigs has been reduced to 44% of the planned minimum. The herd was then further reduced by the theft of 14 pigs and a "gift" of two young shoats that went to the chief of the grain procurement department (zagotzerno). Many of the oblast's farms are said to be heavily indebted to the state, and instead of paying off their debts by additional deliveries they manage to increase their deficits from year to year. These facts, says Karamyshev are well known to the oblast and kraj Party and Executive Committees but they do not seem to be overly perturbed about it, despite the fact that the Central Party Committee called their attention to the existing state of affairs as early as last April.

Good tractors and more of them is the gist of all official demands voiced on the regional transmitters. Broadcasts from Stalingrad, Chkalov, Kursk and other RSFSR oblasts highlight this issue in view of the reported growing incidence of machinery breakdowns. Typical of these is a CHKALOVSKAYA KOMMUNA editorial of 9 January discussing the "negative results" (otritsatelnie rezultaty) of the oblast's agricultural leadership. Citing Mustayevskiy rayon as an example of extreme inefficiency, the paper speaks in disparaging terms of what it calls the "campaign methods" (kampaneishchina) of administration which means in effect much ado about nothing. The drive for speedy and high-quality tractor repairs in the above-named rayons it appears, was conducted exclusively on paper in the form of "general instructions" to every collective and state farm and machine-tractor station:

The net effect is that not a single machine-tractor station of the rayon fulfilled the tractor-repair plan in the fourth quarter

It cannot be tolerated, the paper concludes, that some machine-tractor stations have barely managed to repair one-third of the cultivators while others have not even begun to repair the available trailing equipment. Indicative of the shortage of mechanical skill is the paper's critical reference to the machine-tractor stations which "have introduced the system" of repairing defects in tractors after

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they have been inspected by the control commission. Without referring directly to the inability of the mechanics to find all the defects while the machines are under repair, the editorial merely suggests that their methods are "absolutely incorrect" (sovershenno nepravilnie) and that they must try to eliminate all deficiencies before inspection.

What is wrong with Ukrainian agriculture is summed up in a 6,000-word decision carried out by a Plenary session of the Central Committee of the Ukrainian Communist Party (4 January). The plan for grain production and vegetable cultivation remains uncertain in Chernigov and Zhitomir oblasts, in the wooded (polesye) rayons of Kiev oblast and in the Western oblasts. In Kamenets-Podolsk, Vinnitsa and Ternopol oblasts the 1952 sugar-beet crops were poorer and their losses greater than in the preceding year. The "inadmissible delays" in cotton deliveries have already caused great damage to the State. Flax and hemp raising is extremely unsatisfactory in Chernigov, Volhyn and Lvov oblasts. The 1952 plan for fallow-plowing was completed by only 86.1% which is less than in the preceding year. That figure is much lower for Odessa, Poltava, Nikolayev, Sumy and Lvov oblasts. Tractor and combine repairs do not keep up with current demands, and this applies particularly to caterpillar tractors. There is continued reluctance to extend mechanization to every aspect of agricultural work. Despite the existence of special machine stations for the livestock industry, much of the work connected with fodder preparations and silaging is still done by hand. Far from being increased according to plan, there has been an actual drop in the number of cattle in Chernigov, Kirovograd, Odessa and Poltava oblasts. And these areas, it is intimated, are not the only ones where the livestock industry is not doing so well. Although the mentioned cattle losses are not attributed to any specific cause it is significantly pointed out that the plan for winter-shed construction for the livestock industry has in the main not been fulfilled. (It may also be recalled, in this connection, that the stock losses sustained in the winter of 1951-1952 were attributable almost exclusively to the freezing of cattle in remote pastures due to lack of winter quarters.)

The Central Committee even puts into question the plan-fulfillment figures of at least four oblasts which have reportedly made a good showing in the past year, and says that favorable average indices do not tell the whole story. The old trick of "hiding behind averages," it is intimated, will not work, and the plan will be considered as completed when every collective and state farm and machine-tractor station has filled its prescribed quota. Plan fulfillment, particularly in the livestock industry, is "all too often achieved at the expense of leading collective farms" (chasto-gusto zdiysnyuetaya za rakhunok peredovykh kolgospiv ...) Cited as a glaring example of performance-figure juggling is Zhitomir oblast where out of 830 collective farms 325 failed to increase their major livestock, 256 were behind plan in their development of swine herds and 230 made a similarly poor showing with their sheep. The same situation is said to exist also in Sumy, Volhyn and Voroshilovgrad oblasts. There are scattered references throughout the Central Committee decision to such malpractices as "all sorts of account padding" (vsyakogo rodu prypyski do zvitnosti), concealing the true conditions from the Party and the State and discipline violations, but they are not amplified.

A summarized ZVYAZDA editorial broadcast from Minsk on 12 January says that a great deal of talking (razgovory) and insufficient effort of agricultural officials and farmers are responsible for the fact that only 78.8% of the necessary manure has been brought to the fields, and only a little more than half of the required peat has been made available. Working behind schedule in this aspect of agriculture are Vitebsk, Gomel and Mogilev oblasts. A report from Kishinev, Moldavian SSR, (3 January) quotes MOLDOVA SOCIALISTA as listing five rayons where no seeds have been prepared for the sowing campaign at a time when all the machine-tractor stations have seed-cleaning machines. KRASNY KURGAN (11 January)

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names four rayons which failed to stockpile the necessary fodder, and three other rayons--Mishkinsky, Kurganskiy and Ukhysanskiy--where the old "petty-bourgeois leveling system" (melko burzhuaznaya uravnilovka) has been reverted to. It is learned that the less efficient farmers get more than they are entitled to, and that brings them up to the level of advanced workers. Reviewing the oblast agricultural progress, STALINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA (9 January) admits that

judging by the sowing of industrial crops and the harvest of vegetables and potatoes, we still have not reached the prewar level. Such a situation is not permissible.

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The paper discloses also that a number of machine-tractor stations (which are named) have completed the annual tractor-repair plan by only 18 to 20%.

INDUSTRY

The radio output on industrial activities reveals that the "fits and jerks" methods of production (shturmovshchina) is still a problem awaiting solution. Most of the available broadcasts on this topic deplore the waste of time and manpower involved in the process, to say nothing of the uncertain outcome of the plan itself. Steady, uninterrupted and rhythmic production is urged as the only assurance of plan fulfillment. Many industrial enterprises, it appears, have not been able to shake off the old habit of letting things slide the first half of the month or so and then concentrating all efforts to meet the production deadline, to take the job by storm as it were. Hence the opprobrious term "shturmovshchina." Production of faulty goods, particularly in the consumer industry, and the reluctance to push mechanization of manual labor processes continued to claim some attention.

MOLDOVA SOCIALISTA admits (6 January) that "one of the main reasons" for production failures in Moldavian industry is that the enterprises are not working steadily and smoothly throughout the month. And this in spite of the Party's repeated warnings against such chaotic methods of production. There are many enterprises, says the paper, which are producing about half their monthly quota in the last 10 days of the month. Among the other industrial failings referred to but not elaborated are the general poor quality of production and the very slow progress of mechanization. The failure of a large number of the oblast industrial enterprises to provide large quantities of goods for the national economy in 1952, says RADIANSKA ZHITOMIRSHCHINA on 7 January, cannot be overlooked. These same plants got off to an inauspicious start in the new year, and the outcome of their monthly and quarterly plans is now "in danger" (u nebezpeki). Their plans have already been disrupted and the production backlog is getting larger. The paper accordingly urges the local Party and industrial officials to look into the affairs of the slow plants with a view to eliminating the "only reason" for their failing production--unsystematic and uneven work.

A summarized version of a MOLOT editorial (8 January) refers to "shturmovschina" as a violation of technological rules and the State law, and says that short-cuts to plan fulfillment will not be tolerated. Agricultural machine-building, mining and other enterprises of Rostov oblast are said to maintain "a formal attitude" (formalnoye otnoshenie) toward production and to remain undeterred even by the unfavorable results of their operations. Such huge enterprises as the Rostov Agricultural Machine Works (Rostselmash), the Krasnaya Stal (red steel) plant and the Anthracite Mining Trust (Trust Shakht-Antratsit) have done a poor job in the past year and are already behind in their 1953 production plans. Again uneven work is blamed as the only bottleneck (uzkoye mesto). Emphasizing that "the state plan is law," the paper says that violations of production methods, which are part of the over-all plan, will henceforth be treated as an infringement of the State law and "leniency will not be permitted."

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The uneven work of many industrial enterprises is primarily responsible for mismanagement and squandering, according to STALINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA of 10 January. Under such conditions, says the editorial, great losses are inevitable, and that has in fact been the case all along. The Stalingrad Tractor Plant which has been under fire for inefficient production since last year is said to show no improvement, and the same applies to the Red October Plant which is using too much steel for too little production. The Stalingrad shipyard (sudoverf), it is revealed, has been working badly during the past two years while its production costs showed an inordinate increase.

IZVESTIA (8 January) discusses the "shturmovshchina" production method in 1952, and declares that the repetition of last year's mistakes shows that many industrial and Party officials have not learned their lesson. In the Donets Coal Basin, the paper asserts, some of the largest coal trusts are doing worse than last year for the simple reason that many of their executives spend the first 10 to 15 days of each month "in a state of unjustified repose" (v sostoyanii nichem ne opravdanogo pokoya). The entire monthly coal output is left for the second half of the month when the "storm signals" (avraly) are given to save the program at all costs. The Ural Chemical Machine Trust, among the largest of its kind in the USSR, is said to be addicted to that "vicious practice" (porochnaya praktika). That plant showed a 50% increase in "incompleted production" (nezavershennoye proizvodstvo) of chemical machinery at the end of 1952. The Makeyev, Zuyev and Snezhnyan Anthracite Trusts are reported to have registered lower production than in October of last year, and their "indebtedness to the State" (zadolzhennost gosudarstvu) is said to be piling up. Similar drops in production have been noted in the Belorussian Leather Footwear Trust (Belkozhobuvtrest) and in the light industry of the Lithuanian SSR.

PRAVDA's review of 1952 achievements points out that the gross volume of consumer production in that year was 60% higher than in 1940 but consumer production figures for that year are not indicated. The only specific items mentioned in the review--shoes, sugar and textiles--are cited in relation to 1913 and 1928-29 production figures. The Soviet consumer industry, the paper says, turned out 250 million pairs of shoes in 1952 as compared to 8.3 million (factory made) shoes in 1913. Sugar production was 2 million tons higher than in 1913 while the output of cloth, silk and other textiles was double the 1928-29 figure. The total number of shoes produced includes also the unserviceable footwear which is subsequently rejected as "unfit." If scattered regional broadcasts on that phase of production are used as a basis, the average amount of rejects is at least 10% of the total, and that would reduce the above figure to about 225 million. As for sugar, the indicated 2,000,000-ton increase over 1913, though in itself substantial, is quite misleading since it appears to be more than offset by the population increase during the period under consideration, from 139 million in 1913 to well over 200 million in 1952.

Detailed references to shoe production, however, are less flattering than PRAVDA's annual review. As RADYANSKA UKRAINA points out editorially on 8 January, too many shoes are continually being rejected as unfit for sale:

Factory warehouses are packed with so-called unsalable footwear from which the customer shies away.

Ukrainian text:

Sklady fabryky zabyti tak zvanym nekhodovym vzuttyam, vid yakogo vidmovlyaetsya pokupets.

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The Nikolayev shoe plant is in fact known for its low-quality output, but none of the plant officials, the paper complains, has ever been called to account for the unsatisfactory performance. Customers' complaints about poor quality, however, are not confined to footwear alone. Newspaper offices, it is disclosed, are flooded with letters from workers and farmers complaining about the quality of practically everything they buy. Thus "28 complaints against inferior quality" (28 reklamatsiy na nizku yakist) have been received by the Kharkov textile plant alone, and the Chernivets knit-goods factory is reported to be working on a similar "low level."

MISCELLANEOUS

The theoretical partnership between the Politbureau and the Moscow Committee of the Communist Party in the jurisdiction over PRAVDA appears to have been dissolved by the 19th Party Congress last October although there was no indication of it at that time. The inscription previously appearing under the title PRAVDA was "Organ of the Central Committee and Moscow Committee of the Communist Party." It now reads: "Organ of the Central Committee of the Communist Party."

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