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AGRICULTURE

Mechanization Still a Major Bottleneck: Most of the broadcasts on agricultural production in the period under review harp on the continued reluctance to extend mechanization to as many phases of field work as possible, on the one hand, and the inadequate maintenance and repair of technical equipment, on the other. Although in some instances the trade unions are said to be the chief culprits, the claim is made that it takes more than trade unions to prod the farmers and local agricultural officials into embracing the idea of complete mechanization and adopting a more scrupulous attitude toward the utilization of available equipment. Lack of mechanical skill in the rural areas presumably accounts for a great deal of the breakdowns and inept handling of machinery but that, it is frequently pointed out, is not always the case. "Indifferent attitude" and "under-estimation" (khalatnoye otnoshenie, nedootsenka) are the terms most often applied to local Party and Executive committees as well as to individual officials whose duty it is to encourage further mechanization of agriculture.

A KRASNY KURGAN editorial of 15 November is sharply critical of the antiquated methods of machinery repair employed by the oblast agricultural administration. The so-called centralized method of tractor repairs whereby different parts of the same machine are mended by specialized service men is said to be discarded in favor of the outmoded handicraft method. Nothing but this reluctance to introduce advanced technological methods, says the paper, can explain the failure of so many machine-tractor stations to cope with their assignments. What makes the situation "absolutely abnormal" (sovershenno nenormalnoye) is that new technological processes are always discussed, blueprinted--and left on paper. Progress in the meantime is "very slow" for the simple reason that the repairs never catch up with the breakdowns.

It is unfortunate, says SEVERNAYA PRAVDA (18 November), that many of the Kostroma oblast Party, Soviet and machine-tractor station officials are "repeating the mistakes of last year." Far from providing a sufficient number of mechanics for the oblast work shops, "they have not yet solved the problem" of training qualified tractor, combine and other machine operators. The result is that even the serviceable equipment cannot be used for two-shift work and "machines remain idle for long periods of time." The oblast mechanization schools for tractor mechanics, electricians and combine operators are said to have deteriorated to such a "low level" that in some instances the graduates know just about as much as they did before their enrollment. Many of the MTS directors are reported to be unwilling to send their workers to those schools for lengthy periods due to the manpower shortage at the stations, but that, says the paper, is a very poor excuse because the shortage of skilled mechanics and operators is more acute than anything else.

A report from Alma Ata (18 November) quotes KAZAKHSTANSKAYA PRAVDA as saying that the mechanization of agriculture and particularly the livestock industry of the Republic is "extremely unsatisfactory." That paper is said to have revealed, for example, that autumn plowing plans in the Republic "remain unfulfilled from year to year" and that a variety of violations of agrotechnical work schedules "have a negative effect on the crops." All this, it is explained, is due to the inadequate utilization of machines and tractors and the resultant "considerable idleness of machines." But inept employment of equipment, it appears, is only one evil and a lesser one at that, for it is disclosed that

there are many cases where technical means destined for the mechanization of labor-consuming work in the livestock industry ... are not used at all.

The plain truth is, according to the paper, that most (bolshinstvo) of the Republic's machine-tractor stations "are far from satisfying" (daleko ne udovletvoryayut) the daily requirements of agricultural production. The situation is said to have reached a new low in such large areas as West Kazakhstan, Aktyubinsk, North Kazakhstan and East Kazakhstan oblasts where largely for technical reasons but also for reasons of general inefficiency the MTS do not keep their agreements with the collective farms or stock-breeding enterprises.

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A summarized version of a STAVROPOLSKAYA PRAVDA editorial (18 November) reiterates the familiar official complaint that agricultural and other local officials are slow to derive any benefit from "last year's mistakes." The nature of those as well as the current "mistakes" is large-scale technical breakdowns. Again the "central method" of tractor repairs is referred to as the only means of proper maintenance, and the failure to apply it is said to account for a great deal of the trouble. (It may be of some interest to point out here that poor equipment maintenance and technical breakdowns, on the one hand, and the inadequate utilization of serviceable machines, on the other, although often discussed in the same context, are usually referred to as two apparently unrelated topics. The obvious purpose of this type of treatment is to draw the distinction between the unwillingness or reluctance to fully utilize the available machinery and the patch-up repair jobs which make such utilization impossible). Some MTS work shops, the paper continues, do not have the standard equipment necessary for better repair jobs on tractor and combines, particularly during the winter season, and "it is not surprising therefore" (neudivitelno postomu) that the mechanics' efficiency "remains at a very low level."

The autumn-winter repair of machines, as frankly admitted by RADIANSKA DONETSCHINA (19 November), "is causing serious alarm" (vyzyvayet serjoznuyu trevogu). Although the repair season began on schedule six weeks ago, less than one-fourth of the machines needing mechanical attention has been taken care of so far. Just how serious the situation is the paper does not intimate but this may be gathered from its suggestion that "only immediate drastic measures" will be able to clean up the existing mess, effect a thorough reorganization of "incorrectly organized" labor and intensify the tempo of work. Lack of interest rather than a shortage of skilled labor is cited by CHERNOMORSKA KOMUNA (26 Nov.) as "the basic reason" (golovna prychyna) for the failure in the Odessa oblast tractor-repair campaign. The machine-tractor stations "can and should" raise the level of their work especially now that they have been equipped with all the necessary paraphernalia for a good job.

PRIKARPATSKA PRAVDA (26 November) says that the agricultural equipment in Stanislaw oblast as a whole is in a sorry state of disrepair and that the rayon Party and agricultural officials "have forgotten" that the machines have to be repaired. Whatever repair jobs have been completed so far are said to be of "extremely low quality" but nothing is being done to eliminate the shortcomings despite the fact that "all this mess" is known to the respective Party Committees and their Secretaries. Lax supervision from above and the poor implementation of decisions at the lower levels, says the paper, have combined to produce a situation crying for "immediate and decisive" remedial measures. KRASNY KURGAN (29 November) bemoans the fact that so much "wonderful" (zamechatelnie) machinery is lying idle and getting out of order in the MTS and collective farms at a time when it is so badly needed. Some agricultural artels are said to have fodder steamers and a variety of cleaning and milking machines which were purchased last summer but never used. There are two reasons for this lopsided mechanization business, says the paper. One is that the collective farm chairmen who buy the machines "are hindered by their ignorance concerning machines" and therefore incapable of integrating them in production. Another familiar reason is that the oblast agricultural department itself has not manifested too much anxiety over the mechanization of the livestock farms--it is, in fact, "indifferent to violators of the plan."

Concentrated Attention On Stock-Breeding Urged: Always a target of official criticism, the livestock industry by and large is not registering the expected improvement. Regional broadcasts on the subject generally stress the two main aspects of the industry's activities in addition to a variety of minor ones, which have been consistently neglected, "underestimated" or both: fodder stockpiling and adequate winter housing for the cattle. These two chronic ailments are frequently said to account for most of the industry's reverses since the war. The scarcity of fodder supplies in 1951 brought about the enactment of special laws providing for additional pay and bonuses to farmers engaged in hay-mowing, silaging and the preparation of various types of fodder. The losses sustained by the industry through "undernourishing" the stock were augmented by further losses of cattle on the remote pastures where no adequate winter housing had been provided.

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ZAKARPATSKA PRAVDA (14 November) says that now that the grain problem, "the most serious and greatest of all problems," has been solved, the livestock problem is looming higher than ever before in the oblast. The Transcarpathian collective farms are not doing so well in their development of the stock-breeding industry, and isolated successes cannot conceal the serious shortcomings, the paper says. Meadows and grasslands have not been prepared and no measures have been taken to plant sufficient amounts of root crops or perennial grasses:

The main cause of low livestock productivity on most of the farms is the lag of fodder accumulation behind the expansion of livestock herds.

The upkeep and feeding of cattle in wintertime is also the object of a KOMMUNIST TADZHIKISTANA editorial (19 November). Assailing the Republic's livestock industry officials for their do-nothing policy in the face of "numerous and serious shortcomings," the paper warns that "a hard winter is expected, and livestock losses are therefore possible not only from undernourishment but also from cold and snow drifts." All the material resources for insuring adequate fodder supplies and winter quarters are available, it is claimed, and the only thing that is missing is a little initiative on the part of the Party Committees and agricultural officials. It is due to their inertia that "so many tasks have been left undone." Large quantities of cattle will be kept for some time in remote winter pastures, and great losses may be incurred if something is not done at once about building winter sheds for them. Garm'sky oblast and Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous oblast, two important cattle-raising areas, are said to have failed in their fodder-procurement plans, and "urgent and exhaustive measures" to prevent livestock losses are needed: "Time does not wait, and every hour is important."

Following are a few extracts from regional comment on the progress of the livestock industry:

Minsk--There is an unsatisfactory state of affairs in Baranovich and Molodechno oblasts. The (pasture and cowshed) plan has not been fulfilled in these oblasts, and thousands of hectares of land which could be used as pasture remain fallow (21 November).

Pskov--The collective farms of the oblast must take all measures to fulfil the State plan for increasing the number of cattle and raising their productivity.... In many rayons people forget this fact (23 November).

Stalino--In many kolkhozes of Pershotravnevy, Krasnolimansky, Dobropolsky and other rayons all the opportunities for obtaining fodder are not utilized (25 November).

Kiev--Chernigov, Zhitomir, Sumy, Kiev and Poltava oblast kolkhozes have not prepared a sufficient amount of juicy and coarse fodder. Many kolkhozes in these and especially in the steppe area oblasts have failed to fulfil the plan for construction of livestock buildings (27 November).

Agricultural Statute Violations: A short broadcast from Alma Ata of 20 November refers to the "empire building" activities of the director of the Kazakh Agricultural Institute and his principal assistant. These officials, the report says, were found to be "embezzling State funds, plundering products...." Ten members of the Institute who attempted to unmask the nefarious activities of these "unrestrained lords" (zarvavshiesya velmozhy) were dismissed from their post within a short time. This incident, it is intimated, is not so significant in itself but the element of complicity with higher Communist officials lends a more somber aspect to the picture:

At the Alma Ata town Party conference the delegates frankly stated that the Agricultural Department of the Central Committee of the Kazakh Communist Party had "shelved" (zamarinoval) the information on the unworthy behavior of the Institute leaders.

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A summarized version of a ZARIYA VOSTOKA editorial (21 November) asserts that uneconomic management and "squandering of socialist property" are incompatible with the resolutions of the 19th Party Congress. The struggle for the preservation of socialist property under the deposed leadership of the Georgian Communist Party "was weakened" (oslabla), and although much has already been done in the fight against "transgressors of agricultural orders and squanderers of public funds" the heritage of times past has not yet been eliminated. In a number of the Republic's trade organizations, it is disclosed, Party control is not sufficiently rigid to prevent abuse. Party and Soviet organizations must therefore concentrate their attention on "the complete abolition of bribery and squandering" (no further details are offered).

A long Tkachenko article carried by RADYANSKA UKRAINA on 25 November but not broadcast cautions the Ukrainian agricultural authorities against tampering with the collective farms' indivisible funds (nepodilyny fondy). The latter are "sacred" (svyaty) and are not to be used except as officially prescribed, that is for capital investment, the acquisition of pedigreed stock and similar forms of collective farm expansion. Not even a temporary shortage of payroll funds can justify a "loan" from the indivisible fund. Thus, the author reveals, for example, that in Tephtitsky rayon, Vinnitsa oblast, some collective farms committed a grave violation of the Agricultural Artel Statute by "borrowing" over 100 thousand rubles from their indivisible funds to cover a payroll deficit and administrative expenses. Curiously enough, comrade Tkachenko does not even suggest alternative measures to cover payroll or other deficits, the implication being that such deficits should not occur in the first place. The article states further that many farms are even less scrupulous in their attitude toward the indivisible funds than is the case in the mentioned Tephtitsky rayon, but they are too many to be listed. In Staligrad and Vinnitsa oblasts alone the funds are said to be over 15 million rubles short of the prescribed amount.

Better Agricultural Knowledge Needed: The Soviet Government's attempts to raise the qualifications and efficiency of the collective farmers in the postwar years have led to the institution of a large and ramified network of specialized agricultural schools designed to train and "retrain" farm children, brigadiers mechanization and ordinary workers. But just as in many other Soviet large-scale undertakings, the chronic inefficiency of both instructors and students seems to have got the better of the Party's sincere intentions. Enrollments are almost never up to plan, and the quality of instruction is often sharply criticized by Party and government bodies. Inadequate classroom facilities and study aids as well as poorly heated rooms undoubtedly have something to do with the farmers' reluctance to attend these schools although the official line is that local authorities usually "forget" or simply "neglect" to provide the required number of trainees or supervise their attendance. MOKOT's editorial on this subject (18 Nov.) is typical of most of the regional comment. In Rostov oblast, it says, mass agricultural studies have not been organized satisfactorily. The schools of Razvilezhny rayon alone were scheduled to train 857 farm workers but only 353 actually attended, and of this number only 200 managed to stick it out to the end and pass the required examinations. The situation is said to be still worse in a number of other rayons where low-quality instruction, lack of study facilities or both prevented entire groups of students from finishing their courses and passing the examinations. In Salsk, Oktyabrskiy, Akhsyevskiy and a number of other rayons the 3-year agricultural courses "are being delayed for no apparent reason" while in Orlovskiy rayon many kolkhoz workers "were unwilling to attend courses." (As indicated above, references to the farmers' unwillingness to attend school are infrequent, and the rare admissions to this effect are apparently prompted by large-scale absenteeism with which local authorities are unable to cope.) As one of the methods of attracting full attendance the paper suggests the employment of "qualified workers from scientific institutions and teaching establishments" as instructors for the 3-year courses.

CHERNOMORSKA KOMUNA (22 November) complains that the Odessa oblast agricultural schools are not doing their share in the introduction of scientific achievements and the experience of leading workers into agricultural production. Here the accent is on the quality of instruction at the 3-year courses which is reported to be conspicuously lacking in Frunzovskiy, Shiryaevskiy, Ovidiopol'skiy and a number of other unnamed rayons.

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INDUSTRY

Production Quality, Labor Efficiency & Economy Stressed: The familiar complaint that industrial management is striving primarily for impressive quantitative production indices to the detriment of quality is repeated on the radio and in the press with monotonous regularity. This race for quantity, it is claimed, invariably results in large percentages of the output being rejected as inferior, and in the end both quantity and quality are adversely affected. The rise in labor efficiency is said to be anything but systematic, that is not always according to plan in terms of percentage figures, and among some of the reasons mentioned are poor mechanization of work process and unsatisfactory "organization of labor" (organizatsia truda) in general. The perennial drive for rigid economy of raw materials and other resources is kept alive by repeated exhortations to industrial workers to become economy-conscious and eliminate the lavish use of materials.

A number of enterprises of the Kostroma oblast light industry, says SEVERNAYA PRAVDA on 22 November, "do not show any effort" to improve the quality of their production. This is particularly evident in the textile industry whose output is "of very poor quality." Referring to labor efficiency, the paper stresses "the paramount importance of rigid discipline" for which this industry is apparently not noted. A little cooperation between science and industry would help a lot but, as the paper implies, would not entirely solve the problem of lax discipline and low labor productivity. These should also be dealt with by an energetic management with the tried and tested "Bolshevik method" of criticism and self-criticism. An almost identical complaint was voiced by ZARYA POLTAVSHCHINY two days earlier (18 November). Labor productivity and therefore also production in the oblast's light industry "are lagging behind the plan," it was stated. Twenty-four Poltava enterprises, including the bread-baking combine, spinning factory (pryadihnaya fabrika) and a variety of unnamed others did not fulfill their labor-efficiency and production schedule in the first nine months of this year. SOTSIALISTICHESKIY DONBAS says (20 Nov.) that "the quality of products of our machine-building plants leaves much to be desired." This is mentioned in connection with the current drive among the plant engineers and technicians of the Kramatorsk Works to "reduce the weight" of machines and step up their output. Hinting that these two processes do not always go hand in hand, the paper suggests that "the struggle for excellent quality (borba za otlichnoye kachestvo) must supersede everything else, including the weight of the machines, and urges the Party and Soviet organizations to take the situation in hand with a view to achieving that purpose.

Established standards of quality "are being crudely violated" (grubo narushayutsya) in a number of Rostov oblast enterprises of the consumer industry, according to MOLOT (26 November). The coal produced at the Bogurayev-ugol Trust, for example, is of such poor quality that in some cases entire shipments were rejected by the consumers, returned to the Trust and "those responsible were held liable." Similarly defective is the output of other industries working for the consumer:

...defective footwear manufactured by the industrial council artels (arteli oblpromsovieta) can still be seen in the Rostov stores. Bad quality metal kitchen utensils, furniture and blankets also exist. The Novochoerkassk "Budenny" plant lost over 2,000,000 rubles through defective goods during the first nine months of this year. The machine-building and metallurgical enterprises of the oblast are suffering enormous losses from bad-quality goods.

NADDNEPRYANSKA PRAVDA (26 November) appeals to the Kherson oblast industrial management "not to show any liberalism toward producers of rejects" (ne liberalnichaty z brakorobami). The losses sustained by the footwear industry due to wastage of raw material are said to

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be enormous, and the same is reported to be true about the Kherson canning plant, steam engine works (lokomobilny zavod) and a number of others. A report from Smolensk (25 November) quotes RABOCHY PUT as criticizing the "disdainful attitude" (prezritelnoye otnoshenie) toward economy and thrift on the part of some oblast industrial executives "who have forgotten about the regime of economy." Losses and excessive use of materials, says the paper, characterize the work of the Smolensk lumber and metal-processing industry and other enterprises including collective farms and machine-tractor stations. The charge of "forgetfulness" in connection with enforcing greater economy in production is leveled also by VILNA UKRAINA of 26 November. The Lvov industrial plants, the paper declares, have shown very little initiative in the matter of utilizing internal reserves. Nor have they done much toward a rational exploitation of machinery. The city's automobile assembly plant (zavod avtomontazhnykiv), the spirits factory (spirtzavod) and the fats-producing combine (zhirkombinat) are cited as outstanding examples of sloppy and wasteful production.

Housing Construction And Welfare Activities: The retail trade organizations, says the 18 November PRAVDA editorial, must pay more attention to the Soviet consumer by studying his requirements and satisfying them. The procurement and distribution of goods among the oblasts, says the paper, is still being done in a haphazard way and in a number of localities the service to the customer is bad. The consumer, it is implicitly admitted, is frequently supplied with inferior quality goods of a very limited assortment. PRAVDA'S previous strictures against taking advantage of the consumer, it appears, have not always been taken too seriously:

It is inadmissible that the undertakings of the light industry still produce goods of inferior quality.

The housing situation is no less grim, according to the paper: "we are still suffering from an acute housing shortage." It is not the lack of building materials or other facilities that hinders the progress of housing construction but, as pointed out in previous CPW reports, the general attitude toward the consumer is not a high-priority object in the Soviet scheme of things. Nor is the failure to improve the lot of the consumer ever referred to as "anti-State" as is the case with ideological or political blunders:

It is regrettable that we still have administrative, trade union and Party leaders who regard the need of the workers for dwelling houses as a secondary affair (dolo vtorostepennoye)...

LENINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA (19 November) echoes the same sentiment. The oblast building trusts are said to be repeating last year's mistakes by delaying the construction of new houses and the reconditioning of old ones. Mismanagement and lack of responsibility on the part of the building executives are given as the chief reasons. Plastering, for example, is still being done by hand as are other aspects of the work despite the fact that special machines are available for those jobs. Housing construction, it is pointed out, has reached a new low in Vassilevskiy Ostrov, Kalininskiy, Petrogradskiy, Kirovskiy, Sverdlovskiy and Leninskiy rayons. Inadequate attention to the consumer is also the object of a KRYMSKAYA PRAVDA discussion (21 November). A large part of the consumer industry is said to have fallen short of the targets in the third quarter of this year, and yet "there has been no perceptible change in their work" in the fourth quarter. Food products, garments, knitwear, shoes and building materials are listed as "undersupplied" commodities.

Town communal service, says KAZAKHSTANSKAYA PRAVDA (21 November), is still far behind the increased demands of the population, and retail trade "does not satisfy the workers' requirements." In Leninogorsk the house construction plan "is not being fulfilled" while in East Kazakhstan oblast only 26% of the planned houses have been

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completed so far. RADYANSKA UKRAINA (25 November) says that the consumer is all too often abused by the retail trading organizations and it is high time to think of his welfare:

In a number of places, as for example Lvov, Odessa, Poltava and other cities footwear and garment-making and repair shops, metal goods repair shops and cleaning and dyeing establishments do not meet the people's demand.

Ukrainian version:

V ryadi mist, napryklad, u Lvovi, Odessi, Paltavi ta inshykh, maysterni dlya poshyttya i lagodzhennya vzuttya ta odyagu, po remontu metalevykh vyboriv, khimichnyi chysttsi i farbuvaniu ne zadovolnyayut potreb neselenia.

The trade network itself is reported to be shot through with "opportunists, unscrupulous people and thieves of communal property" (nevypadkovy, nechesty lyudy, rozkradachi narodnogo dobra). Evidence of such untried and unreliable personnel has been noted in the retail outlets of Voroshilovgrad, Chernigib, Drogobych and a number of (unnamed) other oblasts. The above-mentioned "evidence," however, is not amplified.

Critical editorial comment on consumer services is heard also from Transcarpathian oblast (21 November), Stavropol krai (25 November), North Ossetia (26 November), and Tbilisi, Georgia (30 November).

Miscellaneous: The use of radioactive isotopes in treating malignant tumors and malignant growths on thyroid glands, says Prof. Kuzin, has been singularly successful and is preferable to X-ray and radium which inevitably affect the live tissue around the growth. (Home Service, 22 November).

A sun reflector designed by astronomer Bukhman is said to have produced good results in the treatment of rheumatism, neuralgia and skin diseases (30 November).

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