

ROBERT OWEN AND THE SOVIET KOLKHOZY

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ABSTRACT

The writer has drawn a parallel between the co-operative agricultural communities proposed by Robert Owen in England during the nineteenth century and the "kolkhozy" or collective farms of Soviet Russia.

Both the co-operative communities and the collective farms were offered as solutions to the problems of unemployment, food scarcity, and general dislocation following war and the beginning of industrialization. Both solutions were based on the development of large-scale, scientific, co-operative agriculture. An examination of the measures employed in these solutions - for example, the allotment of land, the organization and payment of labour, the roles of government and education - illustrate further the parallel between Owen's "Home Colonies" and the Soviet kolkhozy.

This similarity may exist for a number of reasons, but it is the writer's opinion that Robert Owen's proposals for co-operative agricultural communities had an influence on the shaping of the Soviet collective farm system.

PREFACE

Material necessary for a full development of the parallel presented in this thesis was not always available, and I must apologize for the uneven discussion of certain questions. For example, on such important aspects of life in the Owenite communities as the organization of production and the payment of labour, material was scarce; though the role of education was much described. As a consequence I have developed the parallel fully where material was available, but where it was scarce the discussion is slim indeed.

The similarity between Owen's communities and the Soviet kolkhozy was first sketched by Professor M. Ronimois of this university, and I would like to thank him for his interest in and criticisms of my development of the theme. I would like to thank too, Margaret G. Andrew for her suggestions and encouragement, and Mr. P. Isaak for his help.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| Chapter | Page |
|---|------|
| Introduction | V. |
| I Historic setting of the two problems and solutions | 1 |
| II A description of Owen's solution | 8 |
| III A description of the Soviet solution | 12 |
| The kolkhozy or collective farms | |
| The Machine Tractor Stations | |
| The Sovhozy or State farms | |
| IV Comparison of the two solutions | 17 |
| Part I. Aims of the proposed solutions | 17 |
| economic: | 17 |
| raise the standard of living by united labour, science and machinery. | |
| render surplus to the state and facilitate tax collection. | |
| cultural: | 24 |
| civilization, happiness, the disappearance of the difference between town and country life. | |
| political: | 26 |
| definite aim in Soviet plan, lack of political aim in Owen's solution. | |
| Part II. Methods of Implementation | 28 |
| Owen's experience: | 28 |
| voluntary co-operation, difficulties encountered, communities fall apart. | |
| Soviet experience: | 32 |
| voluntary co-operation, difficulties encountered, resort to compulsion. | |

TABLE OF CONTENTS
continued

| Chapter | Page |
|--|------|
| IV cont. | |
| Part III. Measures Employed in Actual Solutions | 40 |
| government: | 40 |
| role of the State, paternalism, administration. | |
| land: | 51 |
| ownership, area, garden plot. | |
| labour: | 56 |
| membership, expulsion, industry and agriculture, labour standard of value, the labour note and the labour-day, non-productive labour, labour waste, organization of work, role of women, social pressures. | |
| capital: | 81 |
| government funds, the MTS | |
| production: | 83 |
| the Gosplan. | |
| distribution: | 84 |
| uncertainty of income, the surplus, labour income and the standard of living. | |
| education: | 94 |
| importance and methods, nurseries, schools, education and labour, military aspect, adult education. | |
| urbanization of agriculture: | 109 |
| Owen's parallelograms and Soviet Agrograds. | |
| V Similarity of solutions: how can it be explained.... | 116 |
| Soviet view is that Stalin is the creator. | |
| Some Russian experiences with large-scale agriculture. | |
| Owen is a forerunner and had at least an indirect influence. | |
| Possible influence of other socialists. | |
| Similarity of Marx-Owen ideal and philosophy. | |

TABLE OF CONTENTS
continued

| Chapter | | Page |
|---------|---------------------------------------|------|
| VI | Conclusion | 130 |
| | Addenda to Chapter IV, Part II. | 131 |
| | The Resort to Compulsion | |
| | Addenda to Chapter IV, Part III. | 156 |
| | Interview with former Soviet peasant. | |
| | Bibliography | 160 |

ROBERT OWEN AND THE SOVIET KOLKHOZY

INTRODUCTION

In his New View of Society, written in 1813, Robert Owen elaborated a plan for agricultural communities (which he later tried to establish); a plan which bears a striking resemblance to that of the Soviet collective farm system of our own day. Strangely enough, the existence of this interesting similarity has been ignored. This study then, is an attempt first: to demonstrate the parallel between the agricultural plan of Robert Owen and the kolkhoz system of the Soviet Union; second: to show in what way or ways these plans differ; and third: to determine the influence of the ideas of Robert Owen on the planners of Soviet agriculture.

Chapter I

HISTORIC SETTING OF THE TWO PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

What were the situations in England and in Russia that brought forth the respective solutions of Owen and the Soviet planners? We may safely take the years around 1815 and 1918 as comparative, and we see at once that the problems of food and unemployment were paramount.

In England, during the Napoleonic war, the government had purchased annually millions of pounds worth of food, clothing, weapons and ammunition from the farms and factories of the country. With the close of the war the government as a consumer of such goods had practically disappeared. As a result

Barns and farm yards were full, and warehouses were weighed down with all manner of productions, and prices fell much below the cost at which the articles could be produced. Farm servants were dismissed, and no employment could be found for them, the manufacturers being in the same situation as the farmers, and obliged to discharge their hands by hundreds, and in many cases to stop their works altogether.¹

Within two years the labour force available had been increased by an additional three hundred thousand men who had been

¹ Robert Owen, The Life of Robert Owen, London, Effingham Wilson, 1857, 1:121.

discharged from the army and navy, who found no chance to get employment on the land and even less to find work in the mills.¹ Such was the distress by 1819 "that thousands upon thousands of the working classes were out of work and starving, and the smaller tradesmen were involved in ruin...."²

Fluctuation of the currency added to the distress. Such was the demand for money, caused by the Industrial Revolution in England, that where in 1750 there were not a dozen bankers outside of London, in 1793 there were nearly four hundred. These dozens of little banks issued "their miserable rags" in great quantities, and in the panic of 1793 one hundred of them stopped payment. Crises and price fluctuations continued until in 1797 another run on the country banks caused them to apply to the Bank of England for relief. The government then ordered the Bank to issue only inconvertible paper money, and by 1810 a £100 note was worth only £86. 10s. in gold. "The depreciation of money and the fluctuation in the price of gold ... produced high prices and violent variations, each of them a catastrophe for the working classes."³

At the same time the price of the basic food commodity, grain, was kept artificially high by the operation of the Corn Laws. During the war shipping rates had pretty well

1 J. L. Hammond, and Barbara Hammond, The Town Labourer, London, Longmans, Green & Co., (1917) 1936, p.105. This section on the historical setting in England follows the Hammonds' book. pp. 104-110.

2 Owen, Life, p. 233

3 Hammond, Town Labourer, p. 107.

prohibited the importation of grain into England, and English landlords had brought under cultivation much land that in ordinary times would not pay for itself. But after 1815, shipping rates fell to their peacetime level and America began to export grain. The great population of workers and townspeople stood to gain by this new state of affairs but Parliament was, to all intents and purposes, the landlords' and took the landlords' view.

Dreading the effects of a violent fall in prices, and arguing that the way to steady prices and to secure adequate supplies was to be found in the encouragement of home resources, the Government passed a law designed to make perpetual the conditions created by Armageddon, and to do by import duties what had been done by restraints on exports due to the war. Imports were shut out by prohibitive duties until the home price was 80s. ¹

Scarcity of food, currency fluctuations, and severe competition among labourers for the available jobs depressed the population to depths beyond description. Owen and others described the "white slavery" in England's factories as far worse than the lot of negro slaves in the United States. Employers in certain cases could have had adult labour for a pittance and yet chose to employ youngsters who would work for even less. Witness for instance the words of a man whose two children were at work in a mill although he himself had not been able to get work for over a year

That little girl has to go a mile and a half very early, to her work, and she comes home at half-past eight, and all that I see of her is to call her up in the morning,

¹ Hammond, Op. cit., p. 108.

and send her to bed, and it almost makes my heart break. We cannot get any work, and I know that I am living by the death of that child.¹

From the time that Owen first made public his plan and throughout the remainder of his life as he developed and promoted it, the English poor continued to lead a degrading existence. The reports of Sanitary Commissions testify to the terrible conditions in the towns where people lived in "back-to-back houses", the yards and alleys around which were piled with human excrement and other refuse, and water so scarce and dear that people had to steal it.² Owen's lifework was an attempt to reduce the misery he saw around him. The pitiful lot of the factory workers, overworked, starved and brutalized, kindled in him a passionate desire to help humanity, to make men "rational" and "happy". And as we have seen, the disorder, waste, and uncertainty of life consequent on the struggle with Napoleon and the violent Jacobin revolts made still more necessary the task which Owen set himself: to design a new society.

To build a new society was also the aim of the Russian revolutionaries of 1917. In particular, the Bolsheviks dreamed of an ideal communist state in which all class struggle would have ceased and all life would be organized on the collective principle. Conditions of poverty and ignorance faced these planners too; conditions aggravated by the appalling sacrifices

1 Quoted in Hammond, Town Labourer, pp.32-3.

These were the times when a man might be transported for life for stealing a handkerchief worth sixpence.

2 J. L. and Barbara Hammond, The Age of the Chartists, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1930, Chapter 7.

made during, and the dislocation resulting from, the war with Germany (1914-1917) and subsequent civil strife.

We are closer in time to this great upheaval and we are familiar with the chronicle of dislocation and ruin that is Russia's story in the four or five years after the Revolution. The whole State structure had begun to topple during the war: medical supplies, weapons and ammunition, transportation, all were completely inadequate. Loss followed loss, the wounded were left uncared for, morale sank and the Revolution was a reality. But by the time peace had been made with Germany, all Russia was tangled in the new disaster of civil war. During this period the country was drained of reserves and very little productive work was done. Meantime all private trade had been abolished and the peasants had to give up their grain without payment. The peasants in answer to the arbitrary confiscation of a large part of their crops, cut down production. The circle of seizure and retaliation ended in famine, which, when it came, "was on a staggering scale".¹ People left the towns in hordes to search the countryside for food and fuel. Those who stayed behind often had to live in the filthiest surroundings since some towns were without water or sanitation. The breakdown of transport and a great drought added to an already disastrous situation. Bernard Pares says that in the grain-growing provinces of the Volga and the Ukraine, "whole masses of the population broke loose

¹ Bernard Pares, A History of Russia, New York, Alfred Knopf, 1947, p.487.

from their moorings in their hunt for food, and cases of cannibalism were reported".¹

At the same time as it declared private trade illegal the State tried to abolish money. But the workers had somehow to be paid and there was as yet no bread nor goods with which to pay them.

Paper-money factories were created all over the country and printing presses set to work to print billions and billions of notes. At the end of July 1921 the paper money in circulation amounted to 2,346,139,000,000 roubles. The Bolsheviks seriously believed that this frenzied inflation was providing them with the shortest cut to the abolition of money. And meanwhile they hoped that the situation would be saved by one of two eventualities: either industry would develop and then a great fund of goods would be created, or the World Revolution would come to their rescue.²

Inflation was fantastic and by 1921 Soviet authorities realized the need for some fairly stable exchange media. The State Bank was revived and one of the new paper roubles was exchanged for ten thousand roubles of previous issues. The next year, 1923, another rouble was issued and exchangeable for one million of the old Soviet roubles, or 100 of the previous year's issue.³

It is hardly necessary to speak of unemployment in the knowledge of this colossal confusion and the complete disorganization of productive work and exchange.

Both England and the Soviet Union in the periods of

1 Loc. cit.

2 Lancelot Lawton, The Russian Revolution, London, Macmillan and Co., 1927, p. 91.

3 Ibid., p. 456.

their history described above were in the process of industrialization. Both had just suffered an exhausting war. Both presented to their governments the problems of food scarcity, high prices, and vast unemployment.

Chapter II

A DESCRIPTION OF OWEN'S SOLUTION

Robert Owen, who was born in 1771 and died in 1858, lived in that period of England's history when the Industrial Revolution was turning upside down the old patterns of economic life and bringing grinding misery to England's poor. Owen, himself a wealthy manufacturer but in sympathy with the destitute, carried on a "social experiment" at his cotton manufacturing establishment in New Lanark, Scotland. Being the principal proprietor of the factory and its appendages, he was responsible not only for the machines in the factory but for the men, women, and children attached to the enterprise. He was for these people both employer and magistrate ... dispenser of justice for every hour of their day. The whole population of New Lanark, factory hands, carpenters, butchers, shoemakers, "a mixed society of trades", was completely under his direction and he took his duties seriously and conscientiously. He undertook, by the power of his position, to lift the villages from the low level of existence in which he found them. The obstacles which confronted him, ignorance, drunkenness, falsehood, filth, tremendous prejudices both political and religious, he overcame to his satisfaction and to the amazement of other men. New Lanark became a show place and was visited by princes and travellers from many countries.

Owen's plan for "Villages of Co-operation" was based on his experience at New Lanark. It started out as an answer to the problem of unemployment but it developed into a scheme for the regeneration of society. The communities which Owen proposed were to maintain themselves chiefly by working the land, but they were to run certain workshops and small manufacturing establishments in connection with their agricultural economy to satisfy the needs of the villagers. Members of the villages were to work on the co-operative principle and were to be paid with the produce of their labours. As the number of villages increased they were to trade among themselves their surplus products. Grouped in the centre of the land area which they tilled were to be large dwelling apartments with common reading and recreation rooms, a common kitchen and a large separate dormitory for the children. About 1200 men, women, and children were to inhabit each village. Owen suggested as well how the communities would be governed, how labour would be organized and paid, how the children would be educated. A full description of Owen's plan for agricultural communities is given in a later chapter.

Incidentally, Owen did not claim that his was an original idea. During an address at New Lanark in 1816 he said:

The principles on which this practical system is founded are not new; separately, or partially united, they have been often recommended by the sages of antiquity, and by modern writers.¹

¹ Robert Owen, A New View of Society and Other Writings, (1813-1817) London, J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1947, p.111.

When a friend called to his attention the existence of a plan very like his own written by one John Bellers more than a century earlier, Owen completely disclaimed any originality in his own plan, and, in fact, had Bellers' paper republished along with some of his own writings. He now had the assurance that another man had carried the same lantern as himself, though apparently without success.

Want of publicity was not to kill Owen's idea however. He spared neither money nor energy to popularize his plan.¹ He sank fortunes into furthering the idea of communities and bored everybody to death talking about it. He published by the thousands pamphlets explaining the purpose and the details of his scheme. He bought land in America where he hoped his communities would thrive - and paid the losses when the settlements failed. Several "villages" were formed on Owen's principle, the chief among them being New Harmony in Indiana, and Orbiston and Queenwood in Scotland. Owen throughout his long life remained convinced of the desirability of founding similar communities all over the British Isles because he wanted the whole nation, indeed the whole world, to share in the bounty an organized community could provide. As. G. D. H. Cole says, Owen was "essentially a man of one idea, which he preached tirelessly, in and out of

¹ "Owen was ingenious enough to propitiate the press as a customer and propagandize the country as a prophet at a single stroke by buying 30,000 copies of the papers containing his plan and distributing them to the clergy of every parish in the kingdom" C.E.M.Joad, Robert Owen, Idealist, Westminster, the Fabian Society, 1917, Tract 182, p. 9.

season, through the whole of his public life".¹

Owen believed the only way to form a "rational society" was through the "Villages of Co-operation" which he advocated. It is the plan for these villages which so resembles the organizations of the collective farms in the Soviet Union.

1 Owen, A New View, introd. xvii.

Chapter III

A DESCRIPTION OF THE SOVIET SOLUTION

The Soviet planners have groped toward an ideal of organization in both industry and agriculture stimulating now one aspect of the economy, now another; abandoning certain methods, adopting others. The pattern of the kolkhoz system developed by this trial and error method is the special interest of this study.

The kolkhoz, or collective farm, ostensibly a co-operative of farmers, is by far the most important of the units of Soviet agriculture. It is the kolkhoz we study here with reference to the ideas of Robert Owen. The kolkhozy have not been all of one type, however, and certain aspects of Owen's plan are present in one but absent in another. The gradations of the kolkhozy as they approach the ideal or "highest form" of kolkhoz, the commune, approach also the ideal organization of agricultural life envisaged in Owen's plan.

The most loose form of kolkhoz which has existed in the Soviet Union is the TOZ or the Co-operative for the Working of the Land. In this association much of the work was done co-operatively, often the machines and implements were collectively owned. Cattle and other livestock were held individually, the land was generally privately owned, and there was little communal living.

Although this form of kolkhoz was favoured by the peasants it was considered by the Soviet government to allow too much room for personal initiative and action. The TOZ has been discouraged in favour of the intermediate type of kolkhoz, the "artel". By mid-1933 over 96 per cent of all kolkhozy were the artel type.¹

The field of collective action is much broader in the artel than in the TOZ. Work on artel land is undertaken collectively; the produce of the land is collectively owned (but without right of dispossession); much of the livestock belongs to the kolkhoz although the kolkhoznik is allowed to keep a cow, a pig or two, and chickens (the so-called "subsidiary economy"). The kolkhozniks are collectively responsible for the tasks set their kolkhoz by the government.

The farm in which the collective ideal reaches its culmination is the commune. Here the principle of collective living is carried to its logical end. All land, all livestock, all implements and all produce are communally owned. Meals are cooked and eaten in a common kitchen. The principle of equal shares for all applies too in the distribution of the produce. However, in the Soviet Union today, equality of reward is considered to be a "petty-bourgeois stupidity" so no true communes exist there. In spite of this, the commune is still considered to be the highest form of kolkhoz.²

1 Naum Jasny, The Socialized Agriculture of the U. S. S. R., Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1949, p. 320. No data on the type of kolkhozy existing is available after 1933. Ibid.,

2 Jasny, p. 321.

p.322.

Kolkhozy may not own heavy agricultural machinery, but are obliged to rely almost entirely on the services of Machine Tractor Stations. The MTS are depots of heavy farm machinery, State owned, with which the kolkhozy make contracts for the performance of certain tasks: plowing, sowing, threshing, and so forth. These contracts are not free agreements between the collective farmers and the MTS. The prices of the work to be done are set by the government and the contract entered into has the force of law.

The study of the MTS is a most interesting one in itself. The MTS are not only centralized depots of machinery, they are the "political eyes and ears" of the Soviet government among the peasantry, and because the collective farms may not own tractors, combines, and other necessary equipment, the MTS possess as well a great potential of economic coercion. They are connected with each other by a network of main roads and each MTS in turn has a radiating road system which connects it with every kolkhoz it serves. Thus the MTS comprise a system of transportation readily mobilized. The network of Machine Tractor Stations plays many parts, and as we shall discover, its every role is designed to ensure the full and prompt delivery of the kolkhoz grain "surplus" to the State.

The third component of the Soviet agricultural system, along with the kolkhoz and the MTS, is the Sovhoz or State farm. The Sovhozy were originally intended to lead the way to agrarian socialism. Large tracts of land were to be cultivated by

scientific methods - combining the use of machines with advanced techniques of soil cultivation and plant breeding. The farms were to educate the peasants by example, to give guidance and instruction in agricultural methods and organization. They were to act at the same time as food warehouses for the city populations, specializing in the production of grain only, or of meat, or of fruit, or of vegetables, to the virtual exclusion of other produce. They were to be models of efficiency.

The size of some of these State farms was truly enormous, the prevailing idea being, apparently, that "biggest is best". In 1930 many a visitor to the Soviet Union included in his itinerary a visit to the "Gigant", a Sovhoz in the Salsk region of the Northern Caucasus which covered some 220,000 hectares.¹ Unfortunately, returns from these gigantic enterprises fell far short of the planners' expectations. Managers could not be found competent to organize them efficiently, the land was often inferior, machines were made available but the workers lacked "know how". Excessive specialization and "Gigantomania" were also contributing factors to the early failure of the Sovhozy.² Concurrent with government disappointment in the role played by Sovhozy was the recognition of that more fruitful organization in agriculture, (at least for the State) the kolkhoz,

1 a hectare is 2.47 acres.

2 cf. Jasny p. 249, Jasny insists that simple ignorance was the dominant factor.

whose members were not paid set wages but in shares of the crop. From this time on increasing attention was given to problems of kolkhoz organization. The State investment in Sovhozy is still considerable and the Sovhoz form of organization has remained as the ultimate goal of socialized agriculture, the "factory in the field".¹ To date, the kolkhozy are the main Soviet solution to the age-old problem of grain in Russia.

¹ Most Sovhozy are located near large cities in order to supply the inhabitants with garden produce, meat, poultry, and dairy products. Some engage in the production of technical crops such as flax and cotton.

Chapter IV

COMPARISON OF THE TWO SOLUTIONS

Part I. Aims of the Proposed Solutions

Economic

It was foremost in Owen's mind that his communities should produce a happy breed of men. The economic well-being that his system of agricultural co-operation was to afford would allow the development of individual talents otherwise squandered in the hard battle for mere existence under then prevailing conditions.

Owen recognized the importance of scientific agriculture as well as the advantages of co-operative effort. He believed his communities would facilitate the application of science to land production. Added to the huge savings of work which would result from united labour in the fields, would be the tremendous increase in output which chemical discoveries might allow. Said Owen, "The cultivation of the soil is capable of being made a beautiful chemical and mechanical process, conducted by men of great science and highly educated minds."¹ It is interesting to note here that Owen considered spade cultivation to be more scientific than the use of the plow, and in his "Report to the County of Lanark" (1820) he urged that spade cultivation be used in his

1 G.D.H.Cole, Robert Owen, London, E. Benn Ltd., 1925, p. 138.

proposed communities, giving the argument in some detail.¹ Just how Owen meant to make the cultivation of the soil a beautiful mechanical process while fostering spade cultivation is not explained. However, his primary object was to relieve unemployment and he thought the spade method would absorb great numbers of labouring men otherwise idle and living in great distress. The standard of living of the poor should be raised without the burden falling on the rich. The poor would get in return for their labour "more valuable, substantial, and permanent comfort" than had ever before been theirs. The need for charity and for poor-rates would be abolished and the distress of the working poor would be obtained without interfering with the existing institutions of society.² Owen believed that economic well-being was necessary in order to permit the sweeter development of man's nature and repeated that his plan "had solely for its object to raise from abject poverty, misery and degradation" those sunk in the depths of wretchedness.³

Owen did not fail to indicate one or two other advantages his system of communities could afford - other than direct improvement in the condition of the poor. There would be advantage as well to the state, both military and economic. Because unpopulated areas could be opened up and settled, and because the methods of cultivation would so improve, a much larger population could

1 Owen, A New View etc., p. 259

2. Ibid., p. 168-9

3. Ibid., p. 218.

subsist. The communities would also contribute their "fair share" to the expenses of the state, increasing yet further the political power of their country. Owen stated that the country which adopted his system should increase its military and political strength tenfold.¹ This aspect of Owen's plan has a particular interest for us in our study of the Soviet kolkhoz because it is by means of the "surplus" rendered the state that the age-old problem of grain in Russia has been solved by the Soviet government.

The Soviet Union too has elaborated the economic advantages of collective farms, but unlike Owen, has inserted a political element - the class struggle. In the Standard Articles of Association of the Agricultural Artel, the aims and purposes of the kolkhoz are set out in the first paragraph thus:

The toiling peasants of the village ... voluntarily band together in order to build up, with common means of production and with common labour, a collective, i.e. socialist farm to ensure complete victory over kulaks and all exploiters and enemies of the toilers, to ensure complete victory over poverty and darkness, over the backwardness of small individual farming, to create a high productivity of labour, and to ensure, by this means, the wellbeing of the members. 2

It is extremely doubtful whether the wellbeing of the kolkhozniks has in fact been achieved, but there is no doubt that returns from the strips of land formerly cultivated by almost primitive methods could not be as great as the amalgamation of these same

1 Owen, A New View, p. 168.

2 Legislation, A selection of decrees and documents, Slavonic Review, Vol. 14, p. 188. (hereafter referred to as S.R.)

lands would permit.

In Owen's time, common holding in land meant the common application of labour; in the Soviet, it meant as well a chance to use machinery. Stalin does not advocate spade cultivation. On the contrary, the task of Soviet farmers is to replace the wooden plough by the steel plough, preferably a steel plough that turns over three furrows at once. Western progress has become symbolized by and deified in the machine, especially the BIG machine. Stalin saw in kolkhozy the solution to the grain problem, because "concentrated, large-scale social farms, equipped with machinery and armed with a knowledge of science would be capable of producing the maximum quantity of marketable grain".¹ Collective farms "are in a position to apply the achievements of science and technique, they are more profitable and sound, they have a greater productivity and a marketable output ... of from 30 to 35 per cent".² Whereas "what does petty-peasant production imply? It is the least commodity-producing, the least profitable, and the most natural self-sufficing form of production, with a marketable output of only about 12 to 15 per cent."³ Other writers agree with both Owen and Stalin as to the economic saving which might result from pooling land and effort. The question is, to what will such a saving be devoted?

1 Joseph Stalin, Leninism, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd. 1933, 2:105.

2 Ibid., 2:131.

3 Ibid., 2:130.

In 1817, Owen believed that the communities would "maintain themselves first, and afterwards contribute to bear their proportions of the expenses of the State".¹ In 1820 he re-phrased the idea. The cultivators would be allotted enough land to enable them to raise an abundant supply of food for themselves "and as much additional agricultural produce as the public demands may require from such a portion of the population.... The surplus produce from the soil will be required only for the higher classes, those who live without manual labour, and those whose nice manual operations will not permit them at any time to be employed in agriculture and gardening."² This question of a "surplus" is a vital one in the Soviet plan for kolkhozy. In fact if we study the decrees of the Soviet government it appears that the collective system of farming has been fostered primarily in order that such a "surplus" will be available and easily collected into State grain bins.

The method of collecting for the State its share of agricultural produce has varied. In the beginning, contracts were made with each kolkhoz by which that kolkhoz undertook to pay so-and-so much meat, grain, etc. in lieu of money taxes. A law passed in March 1931 makes clear the nature of this contract:

One of the chief instruments regulating the relations between the kolkhozy and the State and cooperative organizations is the "contract agreement". [The "contract agreement" is] a mutual obligation, i.e. not only an

1 Owen, A New View, p. 174.

2 Ibid., pp. 266-7

obligation on the part of the State to render necessary assistance to the kolkhozy, but also an obligation on the part of the kolkhoz to surrender all their saleable products to the State. The "contract agreement" is an inseparable part of the production program of the kolkhoz (and must be) observed strictly and conscientiously." 1

In July 1931 another decree was issued which made definite that the State was to receive not a surplus but was indeed to have first claim on all the kolkhoz income either in cash or in kind. The kolkhozniks were to receive what was left. Out of the gross income of the kolkhoz the members were to receive "grain and other products left after the delivery" to the State organizations and to the seed and other funds; "fodder left after the delivery to the State" and to various fodder funds; "money funds excluding sums due for the payment of taxes", purchase of machinery, allowance for depreciation, etc.²

In spite of the plain language used and the explicit directions given in this decree, three months later the Soviet authorities found it necessary to issue a further decree on the same subject. Many collectives had established the required funds before surrendering grain to the State, an action which the State regarded as an "inadmissible surrender to the kulak influence". The decree emphasized "that the first and foremost duty of all the kolkhozy and kolkhoz unions is the fulfilment of their obligations in regard to the delivery of grain."³ The

1 Legislation, S. R. Vol. 10, p. 35.

2 Legislation, S.R. Vol. 10. p. 713. (my emphasis)

3 Legislation, S. R. Vol. 11. p. 196. (their emphasis)

obligation to surrender grain according to plan is called by Soviet authorities the "First Commandment" of the kolkhoz.

Thus it seems that an aspect of Owen's plan which was apparently to render only a subsidiary advantage, has in the Soviet plan become of prime importance. What in Owen's plan was a "fair share" of State expenses has become in the kolkhoz plan something which requires a "struggle" on the part of the government. Says Pravda:

The struggle for grain, for the fulfillment and over fulfillment of the grain-collection plan, remains with us a component, inseparable part of our entire work aimed toward the completion of the foundation of the socialist economy....¹

Owen's remark, previously quoted, to the effect that his communities should raise "as much additional produce as the public demands may require" freely interpreted could mean to those communities what "obligations" mean to a kolkhoz. Stalin in 1935 confirmed the fact that the needs of the producers were to be considered secondary to the State requirements. Said Stalin:

It is better to proceed on the assumption that there is a kolkhoz economy, social, large, and decisive, needed for the satisfaction of social needs, and there exists along with this a small individual economy, needed for satisfaction of the personal needs of the kolkhozniki." ²

Owen pointed out as a further advantage of his plan that taxes would be collected much easier and therefore the government would

¹ W. Ladejinsky, "Agriculture in the Soviet Union", Political Science Quarterly, Vol. 49, p. 225.

² Jasny, p. 32.

be saved time and trouble in yet another way.¹ A propos of this admitted advantage in Owen's plan, that the Nazi invaders of the Soviet Union made no attempt to break up the collective farms, but in fact opposed their liquidation, is perhaps indicative of their recognition as useful grain collection agencies.² In the Soviet Union collectivization has meant, among other things, a great reduction in taxable units - from 25 million peasant households to under 250,000 kolkhozy - with evasion being made almost impossible when the Machine Tractor Stations gather the harvest.

Cultural

The ultimate ideals of both the Soviet and the Owenite plan - cultural elevation, happiness, the complete disappearance of the difference between town and country life - were to grow as a natural consequence out of the economic well-being and the new education of the people. Owen believed that his plan would in every way promote these ends, since the children in the Villages of Co-operation were to be prevented from acquiring bad habits and were to receive useful training. Adults too were to be removed from unnecessary temptations and were to be provided with proper

1. Owen, A New View, p. 291.

2. cf. Economist, Jan. 27, 1951 p. 202 and Russian Review, Vol. 10 #2, p. 82.

labour. Their work and their expenses were to be supervised in such a way as to benefit both themselves and society.¹ "From the hour they are born, treated with uniform kindness, directed by reason, ... trained and cultivated to attain their natural strength and health.... Children so trained, men so circumstanced, would soon become ... beings full of health, activity, and energy. ... endowed with the most kind and amiable dispositions."² Owen's villages would afford as well "all the advantages of the largest town" without its disadvantages at the same time as they would provide the benefits of country life without the numerous inconveniences that "secluded residences" entailed.³

Communist theorists hoped for a similar transformation of the peasant culture - from ignorance to enlightenment. "The task of the Communist Party," wrote Bukharin and Preobrajenski, "is to establish a communal system of agriculture which shall deliver our rural population from the barbaric waste of energy inseparable from the prevailing system of 'dwarf' agriculture, to save Russia from barbaric exhaustion of the soil and Asiatic methods of cattle-keeping and from barbaric methods of individual cookery".⁴ Thus we come to the conclusion that both Owen and the Bolsheviks aimed first at economic improvement, out of which cultural advancement could grow, until those undefinable peaks - civilization and happiness - were reached.

1 Owen, A New View, p. 160

2 Ibid., p. 178-9

3 Ibid., p. 214.

4 Lancelot Lawton, An Economic History of Soviet Russia, London Macmillan and Co. Ltd., n.d. vol. 2, p. 263.

Political

The chief difference in the motive behind Owen's scheme and that of the Soviet arrangement is the presence of a political principle in the latter. Owen was not interested in politics in the ordinary way and was careful to point out to those with wealth and power that his communities were meant primarily to relieve the distress of the industrial population "without violently or prematurely interfering with the existing institutions of society".¹ In the Soviet Union, on the contrary, collectivization of agriculture was carried out in the name of "socialism" and involved a "ruthless class policy" which found expression in the confiscation of goods belonging to the least poor peasants and the deportation of these peasants from their farms, if not from life itself. With Lenin, collectivization was certainly envisaged as a step toward a socialist system. Lenin believed that the domination of the bourgeoisie rested partly upon the strength of the small producers "who gave birth to capitalism ... daily, hourly and all the time" and that the way to extinguish them was to transfer the economy of the country "to a technical base of large-scale production". In agriculture this meant the establishment of co-operative organizations for collective cultivation.

1 Owen, A New View, p. 169.

2 W. Ladejinsky, "Agriculture in the Soviet Union" Political Science Quarterly (hereafter PSQ), New York, Academy of Political Science, Columbia University, Vol.49, Mar-June 1934, pp. 3-4.

According to Timoshenko, "political" considerations were foremost in causing the Soviet government to pursue its policy of collectivization. The towns were not being supplied with grain and there was no grain for export. Difficulties were caused by the more well-to-do peasants who refused to sell at the low prices being offered by the government and refused also to expand their production in view of these low prices. It was possible to develop agriculture through allowing peasants to use their initiative, says Timoshenko, but since this was considered capitalistic it was rejected. It is Timoshenko's opinion, therefore, that collectivization was not adopted primarily for economic and cultural reasons, but for "political" ends.¹

¹ Timoshenko, Vladimir P., Agricultural Russia and the Wheat Problem, Stanford Univ., Published jointly by the Food Research Institute and the Committee on Russian Research of the Hoover War Library (1932) p.98.

Part II. Methods of Implementation

Voluntary action was a first principle with Owen, but he was so sure that his communities would be attractive to men that perhaps he never was led to consider any other way of bringing mankind within reach of the millenium. To those who would become impatient for the goal he preaches patience and tolerance.

Continue to obey the laws under which you live; and although many of them are founded on principles of the grossest ignorance and folly, yet obey them, until the government of the country ... shall find it practicable to withdraw those laws which are productive of evil ... 1

There is to be a wide range of communities from which to choose, reflecting all shades of political and religious opinion. Each man will choose that community which he thinks best coincides with his own convictions, or he may choose to stay outside the communities altogether.

It will not be necessary to FORCE anyone to go into these parish establishments, or to retain them there for an hour against their inclination.... Should any individual, after the trial of residence in the village first selected, have his mind changed on the subject of Class, Sect or Party, he may at any period remove into another in which the occupiers of it will agree with him in all these respects; or he may retire with his property into common society. 2

Owen seems to have been perfectly sincere in his espousal of the voluntary principle even though he was no democrat. He no more believed in the use or wisdom of elections for instance, than did Carlyle; but more of that later.

1 Owen, New View, p. 118

2 Ibid., p. 228

Once people had joined themselves together in his villages, Owen was convinced that they would acknowledge the superior organization of their lives and be content in "these delightful associations of unity". He himself confessed that " ... the utmost bounds of my ambition is to become an undistinguished member of one of these happy villages ..." ¹ One would think a band of enthusiastic men and women supported by ample funds could carry out almost any plan - and surely such a plan as properly executed promised material wealth and mutual happiness. But although certain communities were begun by Owen or his followers none lasted any length of time.

The New Harmony venture, of which we have spoken, began under the most auspicious circumstances. The colonists took over land and buildings previously owned by the industrious Rappite brotherhood in Indiana. They were not burdened by oppressive laws or high rents. Certainly there were many fine and enlightened men among them who had come into the community because they believed in the Owenite ideal. Even so, difficulties existed. And within the short space of three years these difficulties had conquered. The New Harmony Gazette in an editorial summed up the failure of the community thus:

... the deficiency of production appeared immediately attributable in part to carelessness with regard to community property; in part to their want of interest in the experiment itself - the only true incitement to community industry; and these, again, were to be traced to a want of confidence in each other, increased by the

1 Owen, New View, p. 201

unequal industry and discordant variety of habits which existed among them. 1

Visitors to the community had noticed signs of dissension while Owen was still claiming that all was well. The travelling Duke of Saxe-Weimar noted that the Owenites lived very frugally, and members themselves complained that they had not enough to eat. It is possible that Owen was unaware of this grievance, since, whenever he visited at New Harmony, he was always lodged at the village tavern and was there regaled with food and drink in plenty. The Duke also noticed that certain villagers displayed feelings of social superiority.

(In the evenings) the working men did not join in the dances in the public hall, but used the newspapers scattered on the table.... the young ladies turned up their noses at the democratic dancers who often fell to their lot. 2

Even those who, one would think, would be most attached to Owen's plan seem to have early drifted away from the community. Saxe-Weimar tells us that Mr. Jennings, one of the editors of the community paper, the Gazette,

... intended to leave the place and go to Philadelphia. Many other members have the same design, and I can hardly believe the Society will have a long duration. Enthusiasm, which soon abandons its subjects, as well as the itch for novelty, have contributed much to the formation of the Society. In spite of the principles of equality which they recognize, it taxes the feelings to live on the same footing with others indiscriminately, and eat with them at the same table.... 3

But Owen was blind to the symptoms of discord. When the parent

1 Joad, p. 13, in 1827.

2 Joad, p. 12, The observations and the style of the Duke of Saxe-Weimar are interesting but coloured.

3 Podmore, 1:309, Duke visited in April, 1826.

community split into segments he saw this as a positive gain, as the spread of his idea, rather than a signal that all was not working smoothly within the original community. The first to split off had formed itself on religious similarities; the second, which consisted of English country-folk, seems to have isolated itself on racial grounds.¹ Other sources of discontent, minor thefts of community property, the complicated system of accounts, added to the barriers of social rank, custom, and religion only served to hasten the unhappy day when Owen was obliged to take stock of his experiment.

I supplied land, houses, and the use of much capital ... but experience proved that the attempt was premature to unite a number of strangers not previously educated for the purpose, who should carry on extensive operations for their common interest, and live together as a common family.²

As a further example of disappointed promise, we read the record of the Owenite experiment in Queenwood. In 1842, when it was three years of age, it was described as being in a flourishing condition.

Amid a poor population they are creating and enjoying wealth; amid an ignorant population they are dispensing education; amid an imperfectly employed population they are spreading employment....³

Neither did the Queenwood socialists spend their money on sumptuous living, yet by 1844 they were faced with a deficit of £2,900 for that year. By 1845 the villagers had melted away

1 Podmore, 1:306. By May 1827 there were 10 communes. p.321.

2 Quoted in Podmore, 1:323.

3 Joad, p. 14.

and the enterprise ended.

Podmore says that it is not for want of a will to make Owen's plan work that it did not. It was Owen's ideal which held the villagers together, and which caused them to make the most strenuous efforts to achieve success.

When mismanagement abounded; when disaster succeeded disaster; when more and more of the hard-earned pence of the working members were called for to save from total loss all that had been spent before, when the resident members were asked to sacrifice one little comfort or luxury after another, the Socialists rose again and again to the demands made upon them. 1

People had banded together to follow Mr. Owen's plan and had found the task too great. In America scores of co-operative communities lived through but a brief existence. Even the Fourierist communities, where differences of status, accommodation and reward for work were recognized, although they had a relatively greater success than Owen's communities, lasted only a few years at most.² In Noyes' study of American Socialisms there is a list of forty-five communities of non-religious principle. Of these, not one was still in existence in 1870.³ Owen's voluntary associations, lacking the common denominator of a religious faith, were doomed to fail in the opinion of a veteran member of the Oneida community, C. A. Burt, who said: "There are only two ways of governing such an institution as a Community; it must be done either by law or by grace."⁴

1 Podmore, 2:573.

2 Podmore, 1:334.

3 Noyes, pp. 15-20

4 Ibid., p. 54.

Owen's villages, without either the compulsion of law or the cement of religion, disintegrated.

Soviet Union

As we have already discovered, (p.25 above) the collectivization program in the Soviet Union was pursued for political as well as economic reasons. By all socialists the public ownership of the land has been considered a requisite for the building of socialism, and large scale agricultural enterprises have been a part of the socialist goal.

The Soviet government nationalized all farm land as one of its first acts. Although co-operative farms were encouraged, the government did not immediately attempt to organize farming on a large scale. Instead it rented out the land to peasants through their village soviets in payment of a tax on the harvest. But that the U.S.S.R. would eventually attempt to organize agriculture was clear from Lenin's words:

If peasant production is to develop further, we must definitely secure a further transition, and this transition must inevitably consist in the extremely unprofitable and extremely backward petty, individualised peasant production gradually combining and organising into public, large-scale agricultural production. This is how all Socialists always pictured it. And that is also the view of our Communist Party. 1

Most socialists had maintained as well that although the socialist form of agriculture was desirable, farmers should not, nor would they be, forced into accepting it. Lenin, whose

1 Quoted in Stalin 1:130 from Lenin's Works, Russ ed., vol.26. p.299.

words Stalin quotes as Christian ministers quote the words of the Bible, insisted that no force should be used to convince the peasantry to form collective farms.

Our task is now to pass to communal cultivation of the soil, to large-scale common farming. But there must be no compulsion on the part of the Soviet Government. There is no law which enforces this. The agricultural commune must be founded voluntarily, the transition to communal cultivation of the soil must be exclusively voluntary. There cannot be the slightest compulsion in this respect on the part of the Workers' and Peasants' Government, nor is it permitted by law. 1

Again:

While encouraging co-operatives of every kind, as well as agricultural communes of middle peasants, the representatives of the Soviet Government must not permit the slightest compulsion in their creation. Only such combinations are valuable as are brought about by the peasants themselves, by their own free will, and the advantages they have are proved to themselves in practice. Excessive haste in this matter is harmful, since it can only intensify the prejudice of the middle peasants against innovations. Any representatives of the Soviet Government who permit themselves to apply, not merely direct, but even indirect compulsion, with the object of bringing the peasants into the communes, must be called to most strict account and removed from work in the rural districts. 2

As Stalin says: "Clear, I should think." !!

Why, we might well ask, did the Soviet leaders eventually take so contrary a course? In spite of the "clear" command of the master strategist of the Bolshevik party, why did the Soviet authorities resort to compulsion?

The answer is three-fold. In brief: voluntary associations had been tried in the early years of Soviet rule, but had failed as a means of building socialism; Sovhozy,

1 Stalin, 1:290, quoting Lenin's Works, 24:43.

2 Stalin, ibid., 24:174.

which are still considered to be the "truly socialist" form of agricultural organization, had been a disappointment economically; and to allow the continued growth of capitalism in agriculture was to retreat from the principles of socialism. (p.26 above). The Soviet commanders therefore abandoned the voluntary principle and ordered the wholesale collectivization of agriculture. It is to our purpose to study in more detail the reasons for this drastic step.

All private property in land had been abolished by the Constitution of July 1918, and the government had encouraged peasants to form collective enterprises by granting to such bands of peasants credit for farm machinery, tax reductions, and the like. It turned out that very many of the collectives so formed were delusive; they had made a pretense of community ownership in order to get the government benefits. Prokopovitch has reported the results of an investigation of the collectives in 1920, and here describes one of the fake collectives.

A merely outward and fleeting examination of such a settlement will reveal to the eye of the observer no boundary lines, no fences and hedges; on the contrary, one will notice a common enclosure for cattle, and a common barn. But after somewhat closer examination one will perceive that among the houses (in the very centre of the settlement) there is a big pole, whereas on the outer boundary of the enclosure there are small stones. If we draw mental lines from the pole in the centre of the enclosure to those boundary stones, we will get the boundary lines between the separate households.... Only ploughing ground is common ... threshing in the common barn is done separately by each family; all the cattle is divided between the families notwithstanding the common stables.... In fact it is nothing but an agglomeration of individual enclosures which only await the arrival of more favorable conditions,

when they are going to throw away the swaddling clothes of collectivism. 1

In the opinion of B. N. Knipovitch, a Soviet writer on land questions, this early attempt to collectivize had been a failure. Working from data gathered by Soviet statisticians, Knipovitch, writing in 1921, had come to the following conclusions:

1. The collectivist movement is not a consistent process of economic collectivisation....
2. The absolute number of collective farms is not very large.
3. The evolution of collective farms differs according to type. The number of communes grew until the summer of 1919; since then it remained more or less stationary, whereas associations were growing continually.
4. There has been some improvement in management ... but none is of high standard ...
5. They are organised mostly on former private property. ... Peasants do not seem to want to give their lands for collectives.

The general conclusion from the above is that the collective movement is but one of the tendencies in the peasants' farming; there is no substitution of collective farming for individual. All hopes to draw the peasantry over to Socialism by means of collectivisation, as well as to raise the technical standard of their farms, must be abandoned. 2

From this time until 1927, the government, although it gave certain encouragement to producers' cooperatives, considered them of less importance than the Sovhozy or State farms into which it poured capital. The kolkhozy were not then considered to be "trunk roads" to socialism, they were "branch roads" only. 3

1 S.N.Prokopovitch, The Economic Condition of Soviet Russia, London, P.S.King & Son Ltd., 1924, pp.92-3. Cf. Lawton, p.464-5, who quotes a report made in 1922 by Pershin.

2 Ibid., p. 95.

3 Timoshenko, 101.

Even when collectivization had been ordered, great hopes were still held for the Sovhozy. Soviet planners thought these huge specialized farms would make the government independent of the peasant in the all-important production of grain. Enormous amounts of time and effort were spent both in the planning and in the building of them. Sir John Russell in 1930 paid a visit to the largest of them all, the Gigant. The Director of the Gigant was, says Russell, "a youthful politician who treated myself and my friends to a long discourse on the principles and practice of Communism." Such a man, of course, was hardly likely to curb the planners with grandiose ideas. It was useless for anyone to point out that too large an enterprise may become unwieldly and inefficient. It was equally futile to suggest a diversification of crops or to advise mixed farming.

In 1930 the chairman of the Grain Trust insisted that:

The problem of an optimum size [of a Sovhoz] in Soviet conditions is only a problem of correct arrangement of mechanical power; or a proper configuration of land subdivisions of the farm and of efficient intra-farm transportation..., under the conditions outlined, the larger the farm, the smaller the cost of production.... Talk concerning the transformation of our state grain farms into diversified farms must be stopped. 1

Stalin, too, was optimistic. "Let the bourgeois scribblers and their opportunistic understudies keep on chattering that it is impossible to fulfill and overfulfill the Five Year Plan of state farm work in three years." 2

1 Ladejinsky, PSQ., 53:69 and 74.

2 Ibid., 53:71.

In the light of these authoritative remarks the planners pursued their task. The Gigant was laid out on a grand scale. When Russell visited it in 1930 a town was being built along the railway line which ran through the farm, a town planned complete with huge blocks of workers' dwellings, a hospital, implement shops, workshops and grain elevators.¹

But by 1934, Stalin had reversed his opinion of Sovhoz performance. The farms were too huge, too specialized...

If we compare the enormous sums the State has invested in the Soviet farms with the actual results they have achieved up to now, we will find an enormous balance against the Soviet farms.... It is obviously necessary to divide up the state farms and liquidate their undue specialization. 2

Stalin in his cautious way had waited until then to announce what had been admitted, if unofficially, two years before. When Leonard Elmhirst visited Russia in 1932 for a conference on agriculture, one of the Soviet men told him there had been a great deal too much specialization, too great an attempt to do things on an industrial scale. "Please don't talk to us about giants", he said.

We are tired of playing with giants. We favour now in poultry, units of 10,000 birds, in sub-units of 2,000, with 400 to a house. We have reduced all our livestock units and are anxious to build up general farms.... Weeds have ruined many of our special farms. You will see plenty of them, even five feet high, and this has prevented the use of the combine harvester, so that in many places harvesting by hand has been necessary. 3

1 Russell, S. R., 16:325.

2 Internat. Conciliation, Dec. 1934, #305, p.417.

3 Elmhirst, pp.5-6.

After 1935 a good deal of Sovhoz land was turned over to collectives. The Sovhozy had absorbed so great an amount of capital (grants of credit which did not have to be repaid, tractors and heavy machinery in quantities) but had delivered to the State so correspondingly little produce that the authorities turned to that form of organization which would ensure full State grain bins. At the same time, if the government had to pay out to support agriculture it would not have had enough funds for the industrial investment which was all-important. The kolkhozy now became a "trunk road" to socialism.

... from the Communist point of view, the crowning achievement of the collectives was the voluntary [sic] and timely discharge of the grain obligations to the government. The opposite was true of the state grain farms; notwithstanding the great pressure put upon them, they failed to set the pace ... and they did not provide the required amount of grain. 1

For poor peasants, who had no horses, machinery, or seeds, the kolkhoz held great promise, because the government promised kolkhozy these things. Other peasants recognized the advantages which large-scale cultivation could afford. But all the same, peasants did not flock into kolkhozy. They showed the same reluctance to part with their land and property as they had ten years earlier. Victor Kravchenko tells of Lazarev, an old and trusted Party worker who had been called to Odessa after local leaders had been dismissed for failure to accomplish collectivization. Peasant resistance was strong and bitter and the situation was considered so serious that Molotov went to Odessa

1 Ladejinsky, PSQ., 53:214.

on behalf of the Politburo.

'Comrade Molotov called the activists together,' Lazarev said, 'and he talked plainly, sharply. The job must be done, no matter how many lives it cost, he told us. As long as there were millions of small landowners in the country, he said, the revolution was in danger. There would always be the chance that in case of war they might side with the enemy in order to defend their property. 1

There was no room for softness or regrets. We did not misunderstand him. After such a warning, Victor Andreyevich, there could be no limit to horror.' 2

For many, compulsory collectivization represented the abandonment of socialism, because it meant the abandonment of the voluntary principle. For many, collectivization and the end of the NEP meant a re-statement of the old revolutionary goals and a reaffirmation of the revolutionary ideal. To them the NEP had been a bitter pill, they had seen signs of the old exploitation, and the first Five-Year Plan restored their faith. But when Soviet leaders insisted that collectivization had been voluntary, they had warped the meaning of the word. 3

1 As Professor Ronimois points out, this problem remains unsolved. The Soviet Union must expand, must control the countries around her that by their existence under a capitalist system remain a threat to the Soviet system.

2 V. Kravchenko, I Chose Freedom, New York, C. Scribner's Sons, 1946, p. 87.

3 See Addenda to Chapter 4, Resort to Compulsion, (Part II).

Part III. Measures Employed in Actual Solutions

In discussing the measures which have been used by Owen and by the Soviet authorities to solve the problems which confronted them, we will deal with the organization of the factors of production, with the problems of production and distribution, and with the non-economic measures proposed in the two solutions. Underlying all these measures is the impulse and direction of the State, which, in combination with the local administration, implements the plan.

Government

The role of the State in the affairs of both the Owenite community and the kolkhoz is an extensive one. State action was to give the initial impetus to Owen's "villages" just as it did to the kolkhoz movement, though in both there was to be voluntary participation of the members. As we examine life within the kolkhoz we shall see just how deep is the State interference. At the same time, although we associate Owen with the growth of the co-operative movement in England, we discover that he too favoured State action, and along with the "elective paternal system",¹ State control. It was Owen's belief that people were in such a state of ignorance that they could not be expected to

¹ Owen seems to have meant that the governing age-group of a voluntary society would choose the leader of the community - and in this system would be "elective". Once the leader was chosen he was to be the ruler and final authority - in this the system would be "paternal".

make wise decisions. People must therefore submit themselves to authority and thus allow the unity of purpose and action which was so necessary to carry out great changes in society. Some such reasoning as this motivated certain other reformers; Carlyle and Lenin not the least of them.

Owen proceeded with his whole scheme in the belief that "the character of man is, without a single exception, always formed for him.... Man never did, nor is it possible he ever can, form his own character." Owen believed that in this knowledge he had the key to all human ills and that by controlling man's environment he would make him wise, gracious and good. Men were to be removed from the ordinary tumble of industrial life and to be gathered into villages under the rule of a just and benevolent despot. Society would work with less friction, the anarchy of unemployment would be erased, food would be more than plentiful, children growing up in the communities would be trained in what Owen believed to be a rational way, and as much as possible, free of parental influence and prejudice. Shed of bias and ignorance these new men and women would be capable of building and defending "a new society", co-operating in peace, with confidence in one another, with sweetness and light abounding. Before men could reach this perfection however, they had to be educated out of all their old bad habits and their false beliefs. Owen expected that in this transition stage difficulties would arise, therefore unity of principle and unity of action must be the motto of those who tried to change society. "Nothing should be allowed to dis-unite them".

1 Robert Owen, An Address to the Socialists, London, Home Colonization Society, 1841, p. 13-14.

Owen's system was frankly paternalistic because he believed everyone living to be filled with erroneous ideas. Only divided counsel and inaction could ever come out of the democratic method. He informed the public in a letter to the Poor Man's Guardian, October 31, 1835, that were they to have a Parliament "chosen next year by universal suffrage and vote by ballot, it would be most probably the least efficient, most turbulent, and worst public assembly" that had yet ruled the country.¹ In his Report to the County Lanark in which he bid for government support for his scheme, he affirmed his objections to representative government and elections, urging that in order to avoid faction and friction the government should be entrusted to all the Village members between certain fixed ages who would apportion among themselves the various functions. By this method, says Owen, "all the numberless evils of elections and electioneering will be avoided".² And, "as the parties who govern will in a few years again become the governed, they must always be conscious that at a future period they will experience the good or evil effects of the measures of their administration."³ However, if landowners or capitalists⁴ or governments established these communities, the communities "will, of course, be subject to the rules and regulations laid down by their founders" and will

1 B. and J. Hammond, The Age of the Chartists, London, Longmans, Green & Co., 1930, p. 269,

2 Owen, A New View, p. 287.

3 Loc. cit.

4 Owen used the word "capitalist" before Marx.

be obedient to the directors appointed for them.¹

Owen felt that he, since he best understood human nature and how to mould it, was most qualified to judge the proper ways and means of reorganizing society, and he took a strongly bureaucratic attitude toward his followers. He was sublimely unaware of logic in any opponent's argument, believing that all opposition was caused by the opponent's unfortunate inability to understand, having been previously taught wrong things. When the child cannot understand, the wise and benevolent father must have infinite patience. As Owen on one occasion said, he needed to carry out his ideas through people who were "thoroughly tractable" and willing to follow unreservedly his instructions. On this occasion Owen was searching for a schoolmaster who would teach exactly according to Owen's prescription. The best Owen could find was a poor simple-hearted weaver, James Buchanan by name, "who had been previously trained by his wife to perfect submission to her will."² Many of Owen's followers could not stand such complete governance and were deeply disappointed by his arbitrary direction. One of them, a Mr. Morrison, expressed his sorrow thus:

It gives us pain to write our free untethered thought, for we do love the man, because he loves his species; and yet we fear him for that self-same love. The sweetest despotism is that of universal love, and this we yield to Mr. Owen; but even this has thorns and briers growing in its path, and, looking forward with boundless

1 Owen, A New View, p. 287.

2 Owen, Life, 1:139.

hope to lands of promise, would drag the human race through slough and bramble to a distant paradise, before the half of them are ready for the journey. 1

It is not incongruous to consider Owen among the enlightened despots, at least in his philosophy. He is said to have explained his own high-handed conduct on one committee - "We must consent to be ruled by despots until we have sufficient knowledge to govern ourselves."² Owen even praised the Holy Alliance, saying it was "a wise measure to prevent premature changes in each state - changes desired by the people before they had acquired wisdom to give such changes a right direction."³ Owen was supremely conscious that all other persons were still lacking in the requisite knowledge; his paternal attitude is painfully evident.

Knowing the immense difference that there yet is between the knowledge which you have acquired, and the knowledge to be patiently worked out before you can be prepared to comprehend what the new world is to be, much less how it is to be worked out.... 4

You all know that my course has been, to be at all times in advance of you, to bring you onward toward the state of knowledge when the practice of this system would be safe and easy, and that when I have discovered that my step has been too long for you to take at once, that I have waited for you to take it at twice, or even with three efforts. 5.

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- 1 Pioneer, June 7, 1834, quoted by Cole Life of R.O. p. 239.
 - 2 Quoted in Joad, p. 28.
 - 3 Quoted in Sargant, p. 331.
 - 4 Owen, An Address, p. 7.
 - 5 Ibid. p. 9.

In the same speech Owen repeated his conviction that democratic methods were useless for his purpose, and the failure of the New Harmony experiment strengthened his argument.

The democratic principle is not applicable to the forming and bringing into practice a new discovery, much less an entirely new system.

The despotic, aristocratic, and democratic, modes of government are proved by experience to be most imperfect; and can never produce a virtuous or happy state of society. ... To devise and execute any great object new to society, it is necessary to be directed by an elected paternal head, who shall appoint his own officers. 1

Owen's benevolence was attested to by all who knew him, and there is no doubt that he believed in the voluntary principle as much as anyone. But he was the director of a large and successful business, accustomed to obedience, and unmindful of the opposition of persons he considered less enlightened than himself. Cole makes an interesting comment in this connection. "Owen regarded a debate simply as affording a platform from which he could repeat his unvarying version of the truth. He was a most persuasive lecturer when he had the platform to himself; but he was always worsted in debate."² Bertrand Russell also noted the curious duality of Owen's attitude, in a way most significant for this study. Says Russell of Owen:

In some ways he is curiously modern. He considers industry from the standpoint of the wage-earner's interests, while retaining the dictatorial mentality of the large employer. In this he reminds one of Soviet Russia: it is easy to imagine him entering with zest into the preparation of Five Year Plans, and coming to grief through failure to understand agriculture. It would, however, be misleading to

1 Owen, An Address, p. 11.

2 Cole, p. 225.

press the analogy. Owen was not quite a sage, but he was quite a saint.... 1

To students of Lenin and Stalin, whether they be inside the Soviet Union or outside, Owen's whole philosophy of government must ring familiar bells. It is an accepted fact that members of the Communist party for example, are subject to the strictest discipline and must be perfectly obedient to those within the Party who are their superiors. In the Soviet novel Virgin Soil Upturned, we have one instance of this discipline. Many others could be found. Sholokhov here describes an attack made on a Party member who disagreed with the Party line:

"Comrade Stalin's article, comrade Nagulnov, is the line of the Central Committee. Do you mean to say that you don't agree with the article?"

"No, I don't agree with it."

"But do you admit your mistakes? I admit mine, for instance.... I not only admit that we put too much salt in the porridge by socialising the smaller animals and the calves, but I shall correct my mistakes. We've been too interested in the percentage of collectivisation ... we've worked too little on making the collective farm a success. Do you admit that,..?"

"I do"

"Then what is your point?"

"The article is unsound...."

"You're a block of oak, you devil! In other places they'd have sent you flying out of the party for those words! Fact! Have you gone out of your mind? ... We've stood enough of your declarations, and if you hold to them seriously, right-ho! We shall officially inform the District Committee of your attack on the party line."²

The same culprit was rebuked with these words:

"Now you've galloped ahead of your squadron like a captain! ... you keep to the rank, or we'll soon pull you up!" 3

1 Russell, Bertrand, Freedom and Organization, London, Geo. Allen and Unwin, 1934, pp. 173-4.

2 Sholokhov, p. 312-13

3 Ibid., p. 311.

This game of 'follow the leader' extends into other phases of Soviet life too, although an attempt is made to disguise it. Unlike Owen, the Soviet authorities pretend that their agricultural communities are democratic, that kolkhozy are "voluntary social unions of peasants, organized with the capital of the peasants themselves, with all consequences arising therefrom."¹ Yet other voices and wills direct the kolkhozniks in pursuit of the State Plan . Democracy in the kolkhoz is a sham. The auditing commission, the "political face" of the MTS, and the local Communist cell put the Plan before the kolkhoz, and over these groups the kolkhozniks have little control.

Although the auditing commission is elected by the general assembly it must be approved by the district executive committee of the soviets. It must audit the kolkhoz books four times yearly and by the extent of its powers is able to maintain the strictest supervision of kolkhoz funds. The commission "exercises control over all economic and financial activities of the directors" (my emphasis) and checks to see that all State regulations are being observed.² "The report of the auditing commission is to be confirmed (my emphasis) by the general meeting."³

A second control of the kolkhoz is obtained through

1 Italics of the source, quoted from Most Important Decisions on Agriculture, 1935, in Jasny, p. 326.

2 Standard Articles of Agricultural Artels (SAAA) in Legislation, Slavonic Review, 14:198.

3 Loc. cit.

the Machine Tractor Stations, to which there has already been a brief reference. This control is of dual nature, economic and political. The kolkhozy cannot own heavy agricultural machinery but must rent such things as combines, tractors and heavy ploughs, with the personnel, from the MTS. On the political side there is direct supervision of punitive measures by the Party through the MTS against kolkhozy which fail to carry out government orders. Unity is wanted but it must be a unity based on the "supremacy of the Bolshevik nucleus". MTS personnel must take the lead in political and educational matters as well as in the technical side of agricultural organization. The Political Department must secure a lasting influence over the kolkhoz members by educating them ideologically and holding authority among them. It must also "cleanse" Party organizations of unstable elements and "must conduct a decisive struggle against attempts to limit the work of the Party...."¹

Finally, the Party itself tries to establish a cell in every kolkhoz to leaven the organization; to give guidance and leadership. The election of the kolkhoz chairman is of prime interest to the Party as Stalin frankly admits:

As long as the peasants were engaged in individual farming they were scattered and separated from each other.... The situation is altogether different since the peasants have adopted collective farming. ... anti-Soviet activities may be much more effective... therefore who stands at the head of the collective farms and who leads them is of the greatest importance. 2.

1. Legis. S. R. 11:704-10.

2. Quoted by Baykov, p. 209.

There are many instances where chairmen have not even been "elected" by the kolkhoz. Outside administrators and agronomists have been sent in to govern the kolkhoz in the way that Owen thought the founders of his Villages would send in their directors. Sir John Maynard made an interesting observation on this practice.

Chairmen are transferred from post to post at the discretion of the Government. I myself have met one who had been in charge of a glass factory before he joined the collective, and had just received orders transferring him to a brick factory. His successor, a woman, had been in charge of a Co-operative shop before she joined her new post as Chairman. Neither knew anything about agriculture. Their duty was to supply organising and driving capacity, and both appeared quite fitted to do so. The case may be taken to be typical of Bolshevik methods. There was no apprehension that the General Meeting of the collective might elect someone else to the chair. 1

Another writer, Nicolaevsky, reports that a thorough purge of kolkhoz administrations was carried out in 1945-46 in all the interior regions of the Soviet Union. In the Kostroma region more than half the kolkhoz chairmen were dismissed and in other regions the purges were even more extensive. News of these wholesale replacements was revealed by Andreev in his Report to the Politburo in February 1947.² It is obvious that self-government for the kolkhoz is very limited in any case, and recent trends suggest that appointed chairmen will become the rule.³ This is necessary from the State's viewpoint because

1 Maynard, Flux, p. 398

2 Nicolaevsky, Russ. Rev. 10:85.

3 After 1950, according to Schwartz, "The method was to replace local chairmen by agricultural specialists recruited from elsewhere". p. 271

the double loyalty of the chairman to the State on the one hand, and to the kolkhoz assembly on the other, has often resulted in manifestations of loyalty in which the State took second place. Chairmen and directors have often been accused of falling under the influence of anti-Soviet elements, of "bourgeois degeneration", and of ignoring the orders of the Soviet government.

As in the Party, criticism is not directed against the upper echelons from the lower. "Self-criticism" pursued in the interest of "socialist competition" is at most criticism operating on the horizontal and is generally directed against kolkhozy which lag behind the Plan. Pravda carried this story about a collective farm chairman whose neighbour collective invited him to its meeting and then overwhelmed him with questions such as these:

"Why have you delivered to the elevator only one-third of the planned amount? You could have carried more by hand!

When are you going to finish the mowing?... Your labour is badly organised....

Haven't some of you forgotten the meaning of that holy word - grain?

.... a certain woman mows hay for her cattle on collective farm land. And now that she's finished mowing, she sits making lace all day.

Why have robbers of that kind got such individual vegetable allotments that you can't see from one end to another? " 1

This criticism is understandable when we realize that all kolkhozy within a given area must fulfil the government's demands for grain before any one of them can sell any of the remainder on the "free market". Because they are jointly responsible

1 Quoted from Pravda by Rothstein, p. 214.

they are interested in the affairs of each other, for if grain was not forthcoming from one kolkhoz the others would probably have to surrender even more from their own stores.

Democracy in agriculture is supposed to reside in the general meeting of the kolkhoz. The province of criticism and decision, however, is limited mostly to the details of work, ways of increasing efficiency, and, within the limits of the "first commandment" to the distribution of the produce. All government orders to the kolkhozy are binding even without preliminary discussion by the members.¹ The general meeting is supposed to elect chairman of the kolkhoz as well as from five to seven, or even nine, directors. The Standard Articles of Association for the Agricultural Artels (1935) set the term of these directors at five years and entrusted to them the internal administration of the kolkhoz. Only the chairman of the kolkhoz represents it in outside dealings.² Evidently paternalistic direction of some sort was the rule in both the Owenite and Soviet solutions. In all phases of the Soviet system in particular the firm grip of outside authority is apparent.

Land

Owen's problem was to settle a population without land whose only resource was its labour. He therefore proposed that

1 Yugow, p. 63.

2 Owen proposed the oldest member of the governing age group be the final arbiter and judge in disputes as well as conductor of the external business. The internal government would be directed by seven sub-committees, e.g. health, education, agriculture, manufactures, etc.

the government should buy lands after having the country surveyed with an eye to obtaining the most suitable sites for the establishment of his agricultural-manufacturing villages.

Such as can be the most easily procured, in various parts of the kingdom, should be fairly valued, and purchased by the nation, on perpetual lease or otherwise, and be properly laid out....

The land and houses would not only possess their original worth, but, as the plan advanced, both would materially increase in value; and all the districts in the neighbourhood of these communities would partake of the general amelioration.... 1

Owen thought an area of some 1000 to 1500 acres would be sufficient for each community, depending on the soil type and the number of co-operators. However, as some communities concentrated more and some less on agriculture, their areas might be as great as 3,000 acres or as small as 150 acres. The idea was to get in each case the most productive use of resources.

Thus, when it should be thought expedient that the chief surplus products should consist in manufactured commodities, the lesser quantity of land would be sufficient; if a large surplus from the produce of the soil were deemed desirable, localities of the situation should render it expedient for the association to create an equal surplus quantity of each, the medium quantity, or 1,200 acres, would be the most suitable. 2

Owen's words sound like a leaf from the Gosplan, not so much in the planning itself but in the implication that it is not the villagers who decide how their community will run or what it shall produce, or even how much it shall produce - it is an outside authority.

1 Owen, A New View, p. 167

2 Ibid., p. 267

Land for the Soviet kolkhoz was to be had from the holdings of the peasants who joined. They were to pool their land and to use it in common. Land seized from kulaks also went into the common lot as the share of pauper peasants and it was possible also to expand the kolkhoz land area by receiving parcels of State land.

At first the collectives were very small, with perhaps a dozen families joining together and pooling their land and implements. In 1928 kolkhozy which owned less than 100 hectares numbered 44 per cent of the total, but as the collectivization drive rolled on, whole villages entered kolkhozy until by the end of 1933 only 7 per cent of all kolkhozy were smaller than 100 hectares.

| | per cent | | |
|----------------------------|----------|------|---|
| | 1928 | 1933 | |
| Not more than 100 hectares | 44 | 7 | Size of kolkhozy at the beginning and the end of the First 5-Year Plan. 1 |
| From 101 to 400 hectares | 28 | 23 | |
| From 401 to 800 hectares | 14 | 26 | |
| From 801 to 1200 hectares | 12 | 23 | |
| 1201 or more hectares | 2 | 21 | |

Because the village was a natural unit for a kolkhoz the number of households in each kolkhoz increased to include all or most of its families. Thus by 1938 in the north western regions there were hundreds of kolkhozy each with about forty households and 160 hectares of land under cultivation. In the heavy wheat growing regions of the Volga the average area under cultivation

1 From Soviet sources cited in Ladejinsky, Pol. Sci. Q. 49:24.

was over 1600 hectares.¹ Taking into account the difference in the amount of land available in the two countries, the size of Owen's communities to be established in the British Isles and of the kolkhozy of the Soviet Union, the comparison rests about even. In the U.S.S.R. for example, in 1938 the average number of households per kolkhoz was 78, and these families cultivated about 1200 acres of land.² Owen thought that about 1200 acres of land would allow the most advantageous combination of agricultural and manufacturing pursuits, and, allowing from a half to one and a half acres per man, woman and child, that this acreage would support from 800 to 1200 persons. On the one hand if we allow for the greater use of human labour in Owen's scheme with its spade-cultivation, and, on the other, for the larger area per person available to kolkhozy in the Soviet Union, we account in part for the greater density of population in the Englishman's plan.

Under the kolkhoz charter, peasants who have pooled their land in the kolkhoz are not permitted to take it back if they discontinue their association. The Model Statute reads:

... the land enclosures cannot be decreased, but may be increased, either out of the free State land-fund or out of the superfluous land occupied by individual peasants....

It is forbidden to parcel out allotments out of the artel's land enclosures to those members who may withdraw from the artel. The withdrawing members may receive allotments only out of the free lands of the State land-fund.

3.

1 Jasny, p. 318, area in "cropped plowland". In the north-west there is a flax economy. Smaller units are much easier to organize in such an economy.

2 Jasny, p. 318.

3 SAAA (1935) in Sl. Rev. 14:188-9

In Owen's villages, the members not having contributed land when they joined, were naturally not entitled to receive any if they withdrew from their voluntary association.

Owen expected the villagers to live in central dwelling apartments and to enjoy their own produce prepared for them in a central dining kitchen. He believed they would produce food and manufactured goods in so ample an amount that after their own needs were fully satisfied there would still be a surplus for the State. Since the wants of all members would be provided for by co-operative effort, additional land was not allotted to each family.

Soviet planners had the same hope. The commune, with complete collective effort and reward, was the first choice of enthusiastic Communists. Gradually however, it was recognized that since the State took so huge a proportion of the collective output, the peasant needed a subsidiary allotment which he could work in his spare time for his family's needs. The size of these homesteads at first varied greatly. "In White Russia they assumed the dimensions of real farms" and as a consequence the Agricultural Commissar of that region, along with his assistants, was arrested.¹

The limited homestead allotment was officially recognized (though as a privilege from the kolkhoz to its members) in the Model Statute of 1935. The area of this private plot is very small and punishments for "stealing" public property are

¹ Solonevich, Sl. Rev. 14:94.

incurred by kolkhozniks who cultivate more than their legal limit. In areas where land is plentiful and less valuable, a household may possess up to one hectare, but the average allotment is about half that size (i.e. about $1\frac{1}{2}$ acres). As a result the family plot is worked intensely for high value produce such as fruit and vegetables. The kolkhozniks also may keep chickens, bees, and cattle, though only one or two of the latter. Mandel, eager to prove that the kolkhoznik has a high level of income, says that "as recently as 1938, half of all the cows, sheep, goats and hogs in the country were in the individual possession of collective farmers."¹ It is in fact mainly because of this little homestead that the peasant manages to exist.

Labour

Entrance into both the Owenite communities and the Soviet kolkhozy was to be voluntary, and members were expected to bear their share of duties and expenses just as they would share in the profits. In the kolkhoz, members are admitted by the general meeting, and according to law at least, may be expelled only by the general meeting. An entrance fee of from twenty to forty rubles is required. This fee cannot be returned. Up to one-half of the value of cattle and implements the member brings also goes into the "indivisible fund" and if he withdraws he may receive not the remaining portion of his goods, but only

¹ Mandel, p. 403. The individual peasants and many town workers also own livestock.

their "value" as estimated by the kolkhoz management.¹ Even so, many kolkhoz members have been arbitrarily expelled as various Soviet decrees indicate. One decree of April 19, 1938 states:

... the administrative boards and chairmen ... are themselves the perpetrators of illegal actions. It has been verified that in an overwhelming majority of cases the expulsions are totally unjustified and are carried out without any serious cause under the most insignificant pretexts. 2

The kolkhoz boards failed to use the "intermediary preventive measures of an educational nature" but simply expelled peasants for slight transgressions.³ Apparently the legal and social consequences of voluntary withdrawal are so grave that it is next to impossible to leave the kolkhoz, and Molotov himself has stated that expulsion from a kolkhoz is a death sentence.⁴ To such a pass has the "co-operative" come in the Soviet Union, yet in the beginning membership in Soviet agricultural co-operatives was as voluntary as in Owen's.

Members of Owen's communities did join voluntarily, and if they grew dissatisfied they withdrew with their original contribution intact. At New Harmony members could quit the association with one week's notice. They could take with them not only the value of what they had first contributed, but

1 SAAA in Sl. Rev. 14:192

2 Legislation in Sl. Rev. 17:219

3 Loc. cit.

4 Baikalov, monograph, p. 24, Legis. Sl. Rev. 17:220.

whatever profit had been accredited to them at the end of the preceding year. Members who failed to work in harmony with their fellow-communists could be dismissed on the same terms as those who withdrew voluntarily.¹ In order to lessen friction within the community, bickering and backbiting were expressly forbidden. All members signing the constitution promised therein "never, under any provocation whatever to act unkindly or unjustly toward, nor speak in any unfriendly manner of, any one either in or out of the society."²

The membership of the Owenite co-operative was to supply the whole labour force of the community. "Each association, generally speaking, should create for itself a full supply of the usual necessities, conveniences, and comforts of life" and all members would take their turn in the workshops alternately with work in the garden or fields.³ The communities would have their own teachers, storekeepers, doctors and skilled workers, but a minute division of labour would be avoided. In the factories there would be no mere "headers of pins" and the man who dug the soil would not be just a dull clod hopper.

The industrial approach to agriculture is a dominant feature of the kolkhoz, but there is not the same insistence on the combination of industrial with agricultural production.

1 Dos Passos and Shay, Atlantic Monthly, Vol. 166, p. 606.

2 Loc. cit.

3 Owen, A New View, p. 283.

Kolkhozy are still definitely considered producers of food above all else and kolkhozy which have branched out into manufactures connected with the food plan have been severely criticized. In 1939 the Soviet of People's Commissaries issued an order to "liquidate all business enterprises in the kolkhozy not connected with agricultural production".¹

Numerous articles in the Press explain that many collective farms, or their officers, have been engaged in such non-agricultural business ventures as the manufacture of iron furniture, fire-works, insect-powder, or dyes. Another collective farm was publishing a fashion magazine and selling patterns "in every large city in the Union". Many of these ventures proved disastrous to the finances of the collective farm involved, but even where they yielded a profit, the Government holds that they distract farmers from their proper tasks in productive agriculture.²

Even those complimentary activities which one might logically expect to be carried on in conjunction with a large-scale agricultural enterprise are missing from the kolkhoz. Tanneries, slaughterhouses, and cheese factories are State-owned enterprises and forbidden to kolkhozy. The planners have instead emphasized industrial techniques in agriculture, deified machines, and introduced piece work and specialization.

Owen on the contrary never believed that specialization of labour in agriculture or even in industry was an unmixed blessing. To him the minute division of labour and the division of interests accompanying it only degraded man and kept him in ignorance of whole concepts. They were only "other terms for poverty, ignorance, waste of every kind, universal opposition throughout society, crime, misery, and great bodily and mental imbecility."³

¹ Chronicle, Sl. Rev. 17:713

² Ibid

³ Owen, A New View, p. 283.

They kept men ignorant of his relation to the past, of his present, of his future. They limited his knowledge of the circumstances in which he was placed and hindered his understanding of his fellows. Yet a certain specialization of labour in both agriculture and industry Owen recognized as economical and he recognized that work requiring more skill and time deserved higher returns. Therefore some way of calculating labour's reward must be found which would take into account differences in labour yet which would secure to labour its full due. Owen's answer was the "labour note".

Owen believed one cause of the bad times in England was the use of an "artificial" standard of value. Metals had long been used, said Owen, but had been found inadequate, and now English currency was in the control of a "trading company, which, although highly respectable, was itself, in a great degree, ignorant of the nature of the mighty machine which it wielded".¹ Now the government wished to return to the old inadequate metal standard, and the slight progress made toward such a return had already caused an "unparalleled depression of agriculture, commerce, and manufactures".² Owen proposed to "let prosperity loose on the country" by the adoption of the "natural standard of value" - human labour. This standard would be the basis of exchange within the Owenite communities even if

1 Owen, A New View, p. 249.

2 Loc. cit.

the whole country failed to adopt it. In the granaries and storehouses of the co-operative villages

proper persons will be appointed to receive, examine, deposit, and deliver out again the wealth of these communities.

Arrangements will be formed to distribute this wealth among the members of the association which created it, and to exchange the surplus for the surplus of other communities...

A paper representative of the value of labour, manufactured on the principle of the new notes of the Bank of England, will serve for every purpose of their domestic commerce or exchanges, and will be issued only for intrinsic value received and in store. 1

Workmen should receive paper notes signifying the value of the labour they had performed in "units of value". They would exchange these notes for the goods they required, goods which would be priced in similar labour units of value.

In Owen's New Harmony community an experiment seems to have been made on this principle. A most minute and complicated system of accounts was kept in order that all goods and services should be fairly valued. Paul Brown, who joined the New Harmony group in 1826, complained that a number of intelligent persons were occupied in the "sterile and tasteless drudgery" of keeping these accounts. People spent their time jotting down every hour of work performed and recording "every pennyworth" of produce consumed when, thought Brown, they might have been better employed in productive labour.²

Later on, Owen established a Labour Exchange in England at Gray's Inn Road. To this Exchange farmers, tailors, and

1 Owen, op. cit., p. 290

2 Podmore, 1:317-18. Soviet authorities make similar complaints about the costly kolkhoz administration.

other small producers of goods took their wares. They were credited with purchasing power in the form of the "labour notes" described above and could obtain in return for the notes commodities which were valued at a like amount of labour time. Cole has described the peculiar method used at the Labour Exchange to estimate the value of goods.

The price of an article was calculated by adding together the money value of the material, the current time-wages for the hours spent on the work, and a penny in the shilling for the expenses of the Exchange. The total in pence was then divided by 6, 6 pence being taken as the average price of an hour's labour. 1

Unfortunately for the Exchange, the goods were often not worth what was asked for them. Money had made the exchange transaction so easy, and price had been arrived at by the constant balancing of supply and demand in so subtle a way that Owen failed to understand the vast complications that would be necessary to arrive at a fair fixed price. As just one example, it was easy to fix a rough time allowance for some articles, but for others only the producer had an exact knowledge of the time, skill, and effort needed to produce his wares.

Thus some articles were priced too high and some too low. ... People bought what was cheap and left what was dear on the hands of the promoters.... It took time however for these defects to appear and for a time the Exchange seemed a triumphant success. 2

Had the populace had to buy in the Exchanges only, it is obvious that the defects would have taken longer to appear, and that the populace would have had to bear the losses by paying too high a

1 Cole, p. 198.

2 Ibid., p. 199.

price for some of their goods. As it was, Owen had to pay for the result of his imperfect understanding of the nature of value.

A concept of value similar to Owen's seems to underlie the system of labour reward on Soviet kolkhozy. The work of each member is estimated in "trudodni", or labour-days, and at the end of every year members receive shares of their produce in proportion to the number of labour-days they have earned. As the kolkhozy have had more experience with this measure of value, they, like the Owenites, have had to estimate more minutely the value of work performed.

At first the harvest was divided among members on the basis of "mouths" but since industrious peasants received no more than lazy ones, and ploughmen received no more than herdsmen, there was no incentive to work hard or to accept the more arduous tasks. So in June of 1930 payment was ordered to be made on a piecework basis (order of the Kolkhoz Centre of the U.S.S.R.).

The distribution of the kolkhoz income according to the principle - who works more and better, gets more; who does not work, gets nothing - is to be the rule for all kolkhozniki and kolkhozy. In conformity with this, piece work, estimated in trudodni, is to be applied on a large scale in the basic farm operations - plowing, sowing, weeding, harvesting, and threshing. 1

There was no overall standard of remuneration for the various kinds of work, no one had skill in estimating the comparative use or difficulty of farm tasks. No wonder a "terrible confusion" reigned in the kolkhoz accounts. In July 1931 closer

1 In Jasny, p. 402-3, see title page Bellers' pamphlet -- He that will not work; shall not eat. In Owen's autobiography Vol. 1A, p. 155.

control was ordered. All peasants were to be organized into working groups called brigades. The foreman of the group, the brigadier, would calculate the worth of each peasant's work and assign to it a certain value in trudodni. All work had to be accurately checked, all advances in money and kind carefully recorded. Kolkhoz bureaucracy grew.

Every month control commissions were to audit the workday accounts.¹ The government insisted that equality of reward must be completely eliminated, but did not give the inexperienced brigadiers much help in suggesting ways in which labour days could be fairly estimated. As a result the peasants were apathetic and discontented. Said one

We have no respect for our brigadier and we pay no heed to him. Those who like, go and work, those who do not, remain at home lying on the floor. I wish I had my own farm back again. 2

By 1933 norms established for all kinds of work were divided into seven basic groups according to the "complexity, difficulty and importance" of each operation. The lowest grades of work, which were paid at the rate of .5 trudodni for an ordinary day's work included such tasks as guarding, cleaning, and carrying messages. The seventh group, which included tractor drivers³ and chairmen of large kolkhozy, was to be paid 2.0

1 Legislation, Slav. rev. 10:712.

2 Quoted by Elmhirst, 1932, p. 130.

3 Soon after, the rates of tractor drivers' pay rose until by 1940 the drivers of row-crop tractors, Internationals, and crawlers were receiving 4.0, 4.5, and 5.0 trudodni respectively, for fulfilling the shift norm. They receive premiums as well for various accomplishments (overtime, exceeding norms, economical use of fuel etc.). Jasny, p. 284-5.

trudodni. "Each operation, as, for instance, to plow up one hectare, to sow one hectare, to hoe one hectare of cotton plantation, to thresh one ton of grain, to dig out two hundredweights of sugar beet, to pluck one hectare of flax, to moisten one hectare of flax, to milk one litre of milk, and so on" had to be calculated in trudodni.¹

Each peasant's chores are evaluated according to established norms. There are fixed norms for the quantity of milk expected from a cow, the increase of weight expected in young animals, the size of litters, area of beets to be weeded, etc. In 1933 the following norms were established equal to one labour day: for spring plowing with a 1-share plow drawn by two horses .6 to .8 hectares; sowing with a drill 4 to 5 hectares, sowing by broadcasting 2.5 to 3 hectares.² By 1948 it was found necessary to spread the work tasks into nine basic groups in order to make easier the calculation of income, a result of the strict piecework and specialization.

In the kolkhoz, as in Owen's New Harmony community, the attempt to estimate labour's reward by infinitesimal calculations has caused the growth of a costly administration. A whole army of bookkeepers and office workers is now employed in the keeping of kolkhoz accounts. Echoes of Paul Brown's lament can be detected in the Soviet authorities' criticisms of large administrative personnel in the kolkhozy. A decree of 1948 required

1 SAAA in Slav. Rev. 14:195

2 Volin, For. Ag. 11:151.

all administrative staff with the exception of the top echelon, to put in at least 25 per cent of the labour-days in the field which were required of the ordinary collective farmer.¹ Freedom is lessened of course when labour-days become compulsory. Volin has described the results of a survey made in 1939 which covered 6,000 members of kolkhozy - coachmen attached to the kolkhozy offices received on the average 1.3 labour-days per day of work and barbers 1.42, while those engaged in crop production got on the average only 1.18 labour-days. Naturally many men who are capable of doing heavy outside work prefer to take the higher-paid jobs indoors or attached to the administration.²

As Jasny points out though, the profusion of administrative personnel in the kolkhoz is only one factor which contributes to the underemployment which exists. Foremost is the overall inefficiency of labour and the terrific waste of human labour in all phases of kolkhoz enterprise.

The low incomes received by the kolkhozniks for ordinary labor (apart from their tendency to weaken the kolkhozniki's will to work and thus to increase the labor-time needed for a given task) led to a more lavish use of manpower than would have been required under another system, simply because men were so cheap. The work of the peasants, paid for in trudodni, constituted relatively the lowest cost-of-production item in the kolkhoz economy. It was not the kolkhoz land that was squandered ... it was the trudodni and the work of the peasants. These were and are still squandered in the

1 Schwarts, p. 278

2 Volin, Lazar, The Kolkhoz in the Soviet Union, Foreign Agriculture, 1947, p. 156.

most prodigal way. Gleaning the fields, for example, may yield about 5 kilograms of grain a day. Farmers of the poorest European countries find such labor input scarcely worth while. But the kolkhozy can afford to follow this practice, as they have long done and are still doing, because their gleaners receive little more than half the value of the grain they salvage. 1

Along with this waste of manpower in the kolkhoz, is the terrific effort spent in the cultivation of the approximately 20 million little enterprises of the kolkhozniks. These plots of land "are necessarily operated by the most primitive methods, typically with spade and watering can as the only implements of production, while the selling of their tiny surpluses in the kolkhoz markets requires a vastly disproportionate outlay of their time".² A Soviet survey of the kolkhoz market trade which was published early in 1940 furnishes Jasny with proof of this:

... the kolkhoznik women of the suburban areas who had milk to sell travelled to the city markets regularly every second day. In more distant areas they took the milk to market every fourth or fifth day. More than 7,000 kolkhoz women were bringing milk to Moscow daily, 2,500 to Lenin-grad, and about 2,000 to Dnepropetrovsk ... 3

However, within the limits of their equipment and technique the small plots were fully utilized. There is a number of personnel listed generally as non-administrative, but who do not in fact engage in productive work. Kuibyshev province reported for instance that the proportion of labour-days earned for administrative work increased from 8% in 1940 to 14.6% in 1945, and in some of the kolkhozy the percentage was as high as 44.⁴ But it is

1 Jasny, p. 54. Cf. Russell, SR. 16:333

2 Ibid., p. 37.

3 Ibid., p. 385.

4 Mills, Theodora, Soviet Collective Farm Decree, Foreign Agriculture, April 1947, 11:65.

unlikely that these figures included such "field-workers" as guards. Yet guards are not expected to engage in the actual work of production. Jasny thinks there may be over a million persons on kolkhozy who are employed as guards although "no summarized data are available".

An order of ... June 21, 1933, prescribed guards for crops in the fields during sowing, threshing, and carting. In[a certain] MTS the personnel of each tractor brigade, consisting of 3 to 4 tractors, included a guard (1939). At this rate over 100,000 guards were needed merely for guarding the machinery of the MTS.... Guards are also provided in ... livestock farms, at warehouses, and so on. 1

In conclusion we have the Soviet's own examples of farms with "excessive" personnel. One Sovhoz livestock farm in the Moscow region had, for example, 91 employees to take care of 147 cows with their calves. The employees were grouped as follows:²

| | | | |
|----------------|---|----------------|----|
| Administration | 9 | Milkmaids | 31 |
| Technicians | 5 | Barn workers | 33 |
| Brigadiers | 4 | Transportation | 9 |

One report in Pravda told of a certain kolkhoz called New Life in Novosibirsk. Of the 17 peasants in one of its field brigades, 12 were doing the job of cooks, watchmen, firemen, and so forth, and never went to the fields at all.³ Another kolkhoz, in Krasnodar province, with a total of 967 persons capable of work, had 7 bookkeepers, 10 timekeepers, 12 production specialists, 15 foremen, 12 blacksmiths, 3 mechanics, 2 tinsmiths,

1 Jasny, p. 424 n.

2 Ibid., p. 437, data taken 1939.

3 Rothstein, p. 204. (probably 1946).

48 guards, 4 chauffeurs, 1 garageman (for 2 machines), 3 club workers, 1 agriculturist, 1 horticulturist, etc. Altogether 136 members of this kolkhoz were in administrative or service jobs.¹ Sir John Maynard says there are not less than twelve working members of each collective to every 100 acres of cultivation, while in Britain, except on glass and market gardens, there are three to five agricultural workers for every 100 arable acres, including permanent grass. Even if the number of bookkeepers, doctors, etc., is subtracted, the figures still indicate "rural under-employment". Labour on kolkhozy is badly organized to say the least.²

The organization of peasants into working gangs assigned to special tasks was a natural outcome of the large-scale operations resulting from collectivization. At first, such gangs or brigades consisted of (in large kolkhozy) from 40 to 50 peasants more or less permanently attached to a certain group and under the command of a foreman or "brigadier". During the winter these brigades, or the smaller units, the "links", were set at such tasks as sorting and cleaning seed, repairing harness, wagons and implements, and building and repairing field camps. During harvest time when all hands were needed in the field the work was still done in teams. In one model kolkhoz described by Yanyushkin there were seven "links" of kolkhozniks

1 Volin, Foreign Ag. 11:155-6.

2 Maynard, Flux, p. 394 and 427.

attached to one combine for the harvesting operations. Each link had some specific task to perform such as cutting the standing grain on the corners, sacking grain, loading and unloading the sacks, cleaning and drying the grain, and saving the straw.¹

Owen's communities were so short-lived that the experiment did not fully develop in any one of them. Details of their internal administration, their organization of labour, and so forth are therefore not plentiful. It is known, however, that in the Orbiston community near Glasgow the working membership was broken up into brigades similar to those in the kolkhozy. After an attempt to maintain a policy of "non-interference", Abram Combe, the leader of the Orbiston co-operators, divided the membership into "squads" of ten to twenty families. There was one squad which set up and ran an iron foundry which produced machinery and many other articles. The Garden Squad planted an orchard of a thousand apple and pear trees. One squad tended the dairy, another the farm, while another squad, the Building Company, did construction work. There were twine-spinners, net makers, tailors, weavers, cartwrights, and seven shoemakers in the community of 300 and "at harvest time ... all members of the community left their ordinary occupations to take their share of

¹ Jasny, p. 471.

This example also illustrates the specialization and piecework mentioned previously as well as the phenomenon of underemployment.

the farm labour".¹

The system of work organization in the kolkhoz has varied from the big brigade, to the link, to emphasis on the individual and strict piecework, and back again to the large brigade. In large kolkhozy the permanent brigades are now assigned a piece of land on which they perform the year's entire work. In cattle-raising kolkhozy, brigades (about half the size of crop brigades) are assigned a definite herd to care for and, since 1932, pay has been affected by the actual production obtained by the brigade.² The logic of such piecework in combination with compulsory fulfilment of the basic grain plan leads to rewards for those who exceed the norm and penalties for those who fall short of the goal. The bonuses are paid in kind apparently, which makes them even more attractive. A milkmaid, for instance, receives 15% of the milk above her assigned milking task; hog breeders receive every fifth suckling pig above the plan; poultry raisers get 15% of the extra eggs, and 50% of the "unplanned" chicks.³ Krushchev, when he was director of all Soviet agriculture in the Ukraine, applauded this bonus system.

Thousands, tens of thousands of people set an example by doing exemplary work. We know them, respect them, applaud them. And now, in addition to praise, they will get a dozen suckling pigs - that's very good. ... In serving his own interests the kolkhoz member will

1 Podmore, 2:364, also Sargent, p. 288, chap. 24. The community had 291 acres of arable land of which 40 acres was under wheat, and some under spring corn, Sargent, 290.

2 Ladejinsky, Pol. Sci. Q. 49:218. Not only must a kolkhoznik tend a certain number of milk cows, but he must get from them a certain amount of milk or the norm of the labour day is not filled.

3 Yugow, p. 77. cf. Jasny, pp. 406-8.

work better for the kolkhoz and thereby, through his own private interest, he will be strengthening the kolkhoz economy.... 1

If, on the contrary, a link or brigade of peasants falls below the planned target the number of labour-days credited to it will be reduced a corresponding percentage. (up to 25 per cent).²

Andreev favoured the smaller links over the brigades because, he said, "the complete equalization and depersonalization of farm workers in large brigades is the primary obstacle to the future growth of productivity of labor in the collectives".³ The Soviet periodical Bolshevik also praised the link form of labour organization

It facilitates keeping account of both the quality and quantity of work put in by each kolkhoznik, furthers the introduction of the most progressive forms of piece-work, draws the greatest possible number of peasants into active participation in the creative battle for higher yields, brings forward and develops new cadres of talented leaders from among the youth and the women of the collectives, and, in general, indoctrinates a new socialistic attitude towards work. 4

Links generally consisted of half-a-dozen persons, (quite often relatives or friends, for peasants were allowed to choose their own team) and were assigned to a specific plot of land for an agricultural season. Each worker in the squad might, on the principle of piecework, be given "a few rows of cotton, sugar

1 Yugow, p. 77.

2 Schwartz, p. 262

3 Nicolaevsky, R. R. 10:87.

4 Ibid., May 1947.

beets, or potatoes" for which he would be held responsible.¹ Whenever a squad exceeded its norm, its members and sometimes its brigadier and the kolkhoz chairman, would receive a premium in kind. (These premiums, of course, lessened the amount of produce to be divided for payment in trudodni at the end of the year; in other words, because they decreased the value of every earned trudoden, they inflated kolkhoz currency.²)

In 1950 the labour unit was abruptly switched from the link to the large brigade of 100 to 150 persons. This change occurred at the same time as a drive began to enlarge kolkhozy. The move does not suggest the specialization one associates with conversion to an industrial technique, so it must be that the link system presented certain unacceptable facets. Nicolaevsky suggests that the greater incentive to work for oneself or one's small group was far from indoctrinating the desired "new socialistic attitude"; it was in fact developing "an anachronistic tendency within the collective bosom of the peasants" and the bogey of individualism was seen creeping into the collective "by the back door".³ Because the links were often formed of close friends or the working members of a family, they worked effectively, and spurred on by bonuses, they "developed a tendency to draw away from the collective organism.... The interests of the 'link' became paramount and often proprietary".⁴

1 Jasny, 337.

2 In the late 'thirties the kolkhozy started to buy manure from their members with payment in trudodni. Jasny, p. 404.

3 Nicolaevsky, R. R. 10:88

4 Loc. cit., cf. Schwartz, p. 271-2.

Underneath the reward and penalty system of the piece-work method in Soviet kolkhozy there is an overall minimum of compulsory labour-days required of each kolkhoznik. Returns for labour on the kolkhoz are so low that kolkhozniks prefer to work on their own plots tending their own vegetables and livestock, and working at homecrafts. In 1939 therefore, the government established obligatory work which varied from 60 to 100 labour-days annually, depending on the region. In 1942 a new order set the minimum at from 100 to 150 labour-days annually. At the same time the obligation was extended to include 50 trudodni for kolkhoz young people between the ages of 12 to 16. Schwartz, writing in 1950, said that these laws were still in effect.¹ Kolkhoz members cannot leave for work elsewhere without a contract with a State economic organization; if they do leave they will be expelled. Another compulsory feature of kolkhoz work is the special gangs that must be supplied for roadwork twice a year. The kolkhoz must also allow their wagons and animals to be used during this period of road construction.²

These compulsory features of labour organization of course, never appeared in Owen's communities, though whether the Owenites would have been able to avoid compulsion and make their communities last is doubtful. In New Harmony when all the members had their say nothing much was accomplished, but when they chose Owen as dictator for a year the hive began to hum. The

1 Schwartz, p. 274.

2 Legislation, March 3, 1936. Sl. Rev. 15:217.

New Harmony Gazette reported:

Our streets no longer exhibit groups of idle talkers....
Our public meetings, instead of being the arena of con-
tending orators, are now places of business. 1

In both the Soviet kolkhoz and the Owenite village it was intended that women should undertake definite work outside the home contributing to the general community welfare. In order to release women from a large part of their household chores there were to be nurseries and kindergartens to take care of the children, and common dining and cooking areas. In the Soviet Union only the "highest form" of kolkhozy have the common eating arrangements but nurseries and creches are now the rule in all kolkhozy, at least for that part of the year when field work is heaviest and the women's labour is most required.

As far back as 1931 orders were issued to kolkhozy to use women in harvest time as fully as possible: "It must be borne in mind that female labour plays a very important part in this work; in order to utilise female labour more fully, the net of creches and other institutions for children should be established and common feeding must be introduced".² The limitation of women's work only to weeding and similar tasks, was forbidden "because women can and do want to work at all other jobs at which the men are usually employed".³ Each artel

1 Dos Passos and Shay, Atlantic Mo., vol. 166, p. 608.

2 Legis. Sl. Rev. 10:708.

3 Ibid. 10:710.

through its charter undertook a specific obligation "to draw the women into the kolkhoz work and the social life of the artel, to appoint capable and experienced women-members to managerial posts, to free women, as far as possible, of domestic work by means of establishing creches, playing grounds for children, and so forth".¹ The authorities hammered away at the theme in yet another decree of January 1934:

The hopes of enemies of the Soviet Union to destroy the kolkhozy by means of making use of the backwardness of peasant women have been crushed by the actual practice of kolkhozy life. Millions of women take part in building up the kolkhozy; not only the women keep pace with the men, but very often they leave the men behind. There are hundreds of thousands of women shock-workers, thousands of women-brigadiers, members of kolkhoz boards of directors, chairmen of kolkhozy.

Nevertheless, the promotion of women to the responsible posts in kolkhoz administration fails to correspond with their participation in productive and political activities. The Central Executive Committee of the USSR instructs local soviet organizations ... to be more bold in promoting the best women shock-workers to the responsible posts of foremen and members of kolkhoz boards of directors. To consider it to be inadmissible where there is not a single woman sitting on the board of directors of a kolkhoz. 2

A Soviet source gives the following statistics about the number of women in agriculture: in 1929 there were 441,000; in 1932 only 394,000; in 1937 - 545,000. The last figure represents 25.7 per cent of the agricultural workers.³ But kolkhozniks are not numbered among these agricultural workers. Only those men and women who work on the Sovhozes and MTS are paid wages

1 SAAA., Sl. Rev., 14:192.

2 Legis., Sl. Rev., 12:623-4)

3 Baykov, p. 348.

and they are the people who are called agricultural workers. In addition to the women agricultural workers therefore, there are all the kolkhoz women who spend a great deal of their time in field labour, and these number some 25 millions.

During the war, in the Soviet Union as in other countries, women entered into productive work in great numbers. In 1944 women kolkhozniks earned over 80 per cent of the trudodni credited for kolkhoz work.¹ Where in 1940 only 4 per cent of the tractor drivers and 6 per cent of the combine operators were women, in 1944 the corresponding percentages were 81 per cent and 62 per cent.² In the Urals, Volga, and Siberian regions "only one-eighth of the managers of livestock farms in 1940 were women, but nearly three-fifths in 1943".³ It is not to be supposed that this state of affairs continues nowadays, but certainly efforts are made to retain the interest, enthusiasm, and support of women kolkhozniks. Sir John Maynard believes that this partly accounts for the Bolshevik success in collectivization, because the women lead a more free and independent life than in the old days. The first separate dividends "in solid rye and eggs" to women for their own work were received with "rapture" according to Sir John, "when each gazed on each with a wild surmise".⁴ The Bolsheviks by insisting that women receive

1 Rothstein, p. 182.

2 Loc. cit.

3 Ibid., p. 183. Many more examples.

4 Maynard, S. Rev. 15:60

their due equally with the men, had ensured the women's support, for even in Czarist times apparently such support was necessary to introduce changes in agriculture. To quote again from

Maynard:

A Smolensk landlord tells us that in introducing any agricultural novelty, such as flax cultivation, it was essential to look closely to the interests of the women. Woman had her separate pecuniary interest, because the "woman's box" as it was called, was by custom her inviolable property, and even the husband was punishable by the practice of the rural Court, if he took anything from it without permission. The wages earned by a woman in summer, when she worked in the field alongside of her husband, belonged to the household: but winter earnings went into the "woman's box". Englehardt got the women on his side over the flax cultivation, because the kneading or stripping of the product to extract the fibre was done after St. Philip's Day, in the winter. One of the factors of the Bolshevik success in collectivization is similar. It secures a separate dividend to the woman for the work which she does. 1

In Owen's plan too, women were to be relieved of domestic chores to some extent, though not specifically in order to increase the community's production. After they could walk, the children were to attend nurseries and schools, eat in the common mess-room, and sleep in the dormitories, "the parents being permitted to see and converse with them at meals and all other proper times".² The women would spend their time in taking better care of their babies and "in keeping their dwellings in the best order".³ They should be employed as well

In cultivating the gardens to raise vegetables for the supply of the public kitchen.... In attending to such of the branches of the various manufactures as women can

1 Maynard, Flux, p. 34.

2 Owen, A New View, p. 163

3 Loc. cit.

well undertake; but not to be employed in them more than four or five hours in the day.... In making up clothing for the inmates of the establishment.... In attending occasionally, and in rotation, in the public kitchen, mess-rooms, and dormitories; and, when properly instructed, in superintending some parts of the education of the children in the schools. 1

Owen based his plan for a public kitchen, nurseries, and schools on establishments that he had founded in his factory town at New Lanark. Visitors to the New Lanark factory were one and all impressed with the improved sanitation, moral level, and general sense of well-being they found among the inhabitants of the place. Descriptions of the school and kindergarden reflect the visitors' admiration of the novel methods used by Owen to educate the children and at the same time give an inkling of the expansive generous nature of Owen himself. Even the public kitchen at New Lanark, was designed to do more than relieve the factory women from home drudgery, or to provide cheap meals for the workers.

The building was 150 feet by 40 feet, and was finished but not yet fitted up; having kitchens and storerooms on the lower story, and an upper story consisting of a large elegant eating-room, with a gallery for an orchestra at the end, and a library, with lobbies in the centre; and of a room, of equal size, at the other end, constructed for a lecture and concert room. The intention was to furnish a dinner at a fixed price, to all who chose to come. 2

This public kitchen and the "baby school" did enable the mothers as an American visitor observed, "to shut up their houses in security, and to attend to their duties in the factory, without concern for their families",³ but they do not seem to have been

1 Owen, A New View, p. 163

2 Quoting a Leeds deputation, Sargant, p. 205.

3 Quoted in Podmore, 1:143 from John Griscom writing, 1823.

designed primarily for that purpose as is definitely the case in the Soviet Union.

Without communal eating facilities in kolkhozy the collective effort of the women is applied chiefly in field work. Pooling of women's labour in the kolkhoz has therefore not aided the women because beside the compulsory minimum of labour-days which women must earn, they have as well the heavy responsibilities of the home and garden. Since the Soviet peasant still lives primitively, work around the home is arduous and time-consuming. "All baking, sewing, and even some weaving, not to mention cooking and washing, are done at home with only the simplest equipment. For example, the woman raises water from the well by hand and carries it, frequently a considerable distance into the house."¹ She grinds her own flour on home mill-stones, tends to the household garden, and, frequently, spends much time marketing the produce thereof. All this labour is uncounted as far as remuneration from the kolkhoz is concerned, yet as we have seen, the women's share in kolkhoz work is large.

Outside of raising overall real wages, no stone has been left unturned in an effort to increase kolkhoznik exertion. Besides the incentives of piecework, bonuses in kind, and penalties for laziness or shoddy work, there is public recognition and praise for the hard workers. The best of these are rewarded with the name "Stakhanovite" and its accompanying benefits and privileges. Even this method of encouragement is curiously

1 Jasny, 394.

reminiscent of Owen's own practice at New Lanark. Beside each worker in his factory Owen hung a little board painted on each of its four sides with a different colour - black, blue, yellow, and white. The colour which faced outward indicated the attitude of the factory hand and the quality of his work. If he was lazy and worked badly, the black side showed. A model hand could boast of the white-painted board hanging above him. Apparently this public censure or praise along with Owen's other regulations had the desired effect. Owen says

It was gratifying to observe the new spirit created by these silent monitors.... At the commencement of this new method of recording characters, the great majority were black, many blue, and a few yellow; gradually the black diminished and were succeeded by the blue, and the blue was gradually succeeded by the yellow, and some, but at first very few, were white. 1

The equivalent in the Soviet kolkhoz is the wall newspaper which is used to admonish shirkers while the best workers often have their photographs displayed.² In one kolkhoz in the cotton area described by Sir John Russell another method is used.

In the office ... hangs a chart illustrating the speeds at which the brigades are working; there is a picture of a man riding on a tortoise representing the slowest; then in order of increasing speed come a donkey, a bicycle, a train, an auto-bus and finally, as the most speedy, an aeroplane: the last being marked as 150 per cent efficiency. Six of the seven brigades were in the aeroplane column. 3

The desired end of all these material and moral incentives is, in the Soviet Union, increased production and better quality. As we shall discover, the actual returns to labour in

1 Owen, Life, 1:81.

2 Russell, Science, July. 17, 1942.

3 Russell, Slav. Rev., 16:336.

the Soviet Union are too uncertain to guarantee good steady labour, and in the Owenite communities, without a discipline, they were insufficient to hold the membership.

Capital

Owen, although he was obliged to use private capital, wanted the government to take a large hand in the promotion of his villages. The necessary money could be got, he thought, by consolidating the funds of the public charities, and "by equalizing the poor rates and borrowing on their security."¹ The government could also borrow funds from wealthy individuals, from its own Sinking Fund, or obtain the needed capital "by any other financial arrangement" that might be deemed preferable.² The important thing is, in the comparison of the Soviet and the Owenite solutions, that the government would supply the capital and direct the founding of the co-operative establishments, for in the Soviet Union, too, it is the government which sparked the co-operative by supplying capital in the form of credits, advances of seed, and the renting out of machinery.

During the first days of collectivization the granting of loans and seed to kolkhozy was a real inducement to the peasants to form collectives. The sale of farm machinery was also at that time limited to kolkhozy.

Machines constitute an important part of capital investment in agriculture, and the government has now concentrated all

1 Owen, A New View, p. 166.

2 Ibid., p. 167.

the heavy agricultural machines in the Machine Tractor Stations. By retaining a monopoly of machines, the government exerts a deep control over kolkhoz production. Over ninety per cent of all kolkhozy now use the MTS and it is being made increasingly difficult for kolkhozy to avoid dealing with them. Before the war deliveries of grain, sunflower seed, and potatoes, for example, were heavier for the kolkhoz which refused the services of the MTS.¹

| 1933 | served by MTS | not served ² by MTS | | | |
|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|----------|-----|---------|
| In the Ukraine (grain) | 2.5 | 3.1 | quintals | per | hectare |
| " " " (Sunflower seed) | 3.0 | 3.3 | " | " | " |
| In White Russia (potatoes) | 9.0 | 12.0 | " | " | " |

Since then, stricter measures have been applied in order to bring all the kolkhoz under the surveillance of the MTS. An order of August 1940 restricted the sale of new binders of all types to the MTS only.³ A Party order of February 1947 set the grain delivery rates at 25 per cent more for those kolkhozy which do not use the MTS. Jasny says this policy was probably introduced not only for the sake of the profits to the government, but because "the serving of the kolkhozy by the MTS is believed desirable on political grounds".⁴

Any capital now in the possession of the kolkhozy, seems to be in the form of machinery which is of a simple kind and probably obsolete. The kolkhoz seems to be becoming even more

1 Jasny, passim, pp. 372-7.

2 Loc. cit.

3 Loc. cit.

4 Loc. cit.

dependent on the will of an outside authority - the Soviet government.

Production

Both Owen and the Soviet planners believed that large-scale work with the aid of machines and science would greatly increase agricultural production. Production seems to have been little planned in Owen's scheme, perhaps because no large scale community was long established and the importance of the planning that would have to be done was not fully realized. In the Soviet Union however, in agriculture as in every other branch of economic endeavour, the production plan is very important. Indeed, without planning of agriculture in a country which was, at the time of the Revolution, eighty per cent agricultural, there could be little talk of planning anything at all. After various industrial experiments amid the chaos following the Revolution, Soviet leaders finally realized that they needed first of all a steady, sure, food supply upon which base they might plan production in other spheres. Accordingly the first of the famous Five-Year Plans aimed at complete reorganization of agriculture under the aegis and direct control of the government bodies - reorganization of millions of peasant farms into kolkhozy - was started. The new forms of organization, increased application of science, and the use of the great god Machine would so increase production that a large surplus would be available to the State enabling it to plan successfully in industry.

When the great surplus was not forthcoming, the planners strove to make their plans more efficient and more all-embracing. The authorities ordered strict obedience to the plans and sought to enforce them by strict accounting, checking, revising, policing. But even if production could not always be satisfactorily increased, the government might secure almost enough of what was produced to carry out its other planned programs, at the expense of the peasant producers, unfortunately for them. This has happened. Now every kolkhoz has its production goals sent down to it, accompanied by plans for sowing, plans for saving, and plans for distribution of the harvest.

Hints of a "Gosplan" exist in Owen's formula when he says that "when it should be thought expedient" to have a greater surplus, the proportions of land and labour would be so fixed as to yield it. But in the Soviet kolkhoz, the surplus taken by the State is not the "fair share" vaguely described by Owen, it is a heavy toll, because production is not as great as is either hoped or planned for. The planned targets are not often enough fulfilled.

Distribution

The so-called "First Commandment" of the kolkhoz is its obligation to fulfil the State Plan in regard to deliveries of grain and other produce (at very low prices) to the State. The kolkhoz production, as we have already discovered, is meant first of all to satisfy the requirements of the State and the

peasants are to receive for their labours only what happens to be left. This means that the peasants bear the risk of bad weather or other natural misfortunes which may damage or reduce the crop. No doubt some account of the actual harvest must be taken, but since crop yields are estimated for tax purposes while the crop is standing, the peasant still stands to lose in the final distribution of the grain, because the State takes its share first.

A similar method of grain distribution was used elsewhere in earlier times, and the description of the practice so fits the Soviet case that it is useful to recall it here:

One part of the peasants' crop was due to the State as payment for the seed grain, another as the rent of the land, and the rest was taken and paid for by the State. The aim of the valuation which is taken on the standing crop is to calculate in advance how much given fields would yield, how much of the yield is due for seed and for the land rent, and how large a part is due to the peasant.... In making the valuation before the harvest the State probably tried to make impossible any tricks by the peasants during the harvesting and threshing. The system was unfair, as the valuation of the yield of a field before threshing is always problematical, and in making the contracts the peasants were not the stronger party. 1

This description, which so closely resembles the Soviet situation, was written about the methods of distribution of the harvest on the Egyptian estate of a certain Apollonius in the third century B.C.!

In addition to the uncertainty of the peasant's food supply caused by his bearing alone the deviations of the harvest, (the peasant's margins of safety are made slimmer because of

1 M. Rostovtzeff, "A Large Estate in Egypt in the Third Century B.C.", Wisconsin, Wisconsin Univ. Studies in Social Science and History, 1922, Vol. 1, #6, p. 77.

compulsory deliveries) he also has to accept whatever changes in the delivery rates that the State decrees. There is no guarantee that the rates will remain stable from year to year, indeed, the rates may be changed at short notice for the Council of Ministers is empowered to increase and to reduce rates according to a kolkhoz's production.¹ Contradictory decrees add to the confusion and undermine the peasants' confidence in the authorities. For instance, in June 1933 Molotov and Stalin signed a decree forbidding "all Government authorities, without any exception, including the grain-collecting organizations, to demand any extra or additional deliveries of grain from kolkhozy and individual peasants"; and warned all party and Soviet organizations that persons responsible for demanding extra deliveries would be "prosecuted as criminals".² But in August of the same year they issued a decree saying that part of the kolkhoz grain must be put into special funds such as seed funds, and insurance funds, which meant that the kolkhoz had less to distribute to its members. In the same decree it was repeated that "no extra deliveries to the State could be allowed".³ The previous year, as Molotov himself admitted, "Frequently regions and collectives which had fulfilled their grain quotas were given additional quotas to fulfil and occasionally this was repeated three and four times."⁴ Obviously the variations of the produce left to be divided among kolkhozniks

1 Jasny, p. 368.

2 Legislation, S. R., 12:45.

3 Ibid., 12:460

4 Quoted in Ladejinsky, PSQ, 49:229-30. Molotov is referring to the decentralized deliveries.

do not depend only upon the vagaries of the weather.

Estimates made by western writers of the share of the harvest which the State takes, differ, since it is extremely difficult to measure the exact distribution of the harvest when Soviet statistics are incomplete as well as weighted. From the Dnepropetrovsk Provincial Land Office we have a report made in August 1933 on the results of the fifty best collective farms in that area.

| | Metric tons | Per cent | |
|-------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------------------|
| Oblig. Deliveries | 12,630 | 26.6 |) to the government. |
| M. T. S | 4,043 | 8.6 | |
| Refund Seed Loans | 1,203 | 2.5 | |
| Seed Fund | 6,886 | 14.5 | |
| Forage Fund | 6,550 | 13.8 | |
| Labour Day distribution | 16,144 | 34.0 | |
| | <u>47,456</u> | <u>100.0</u> | ¹ |

From these Soviet statistics it is clear that some peasants had to give up to the State over one-third of their grain (37.7%) and that only one-third was distributed among them (34.0%) in trudodni. As Baikalov says, "We must assume that in a bad year and in less efficiently-operating farms the final results are bound to be worse".²

Yugow's estimations of the State's share run even higher. In the late '30's, he says, the State took sometimes as high as

1 Baikalov, Monograph, p. 28

2 Ibid., p. 29.

forty per cent of the grain production,¹ and Jasny's estimations are as follows:

| | % of total distributions of grain ² | | |
|-----------------------------|--|---------|---------|
| | 1937-38 | 1938-39 | 1939-40 |
| Obligatory deliveries | 12.2 | 15.0 | 14.3 |
| Payment to MTS | 13.9 | 16.0 | 19.2 |
| Seed loan repayments | 1.5 | 2.0 | 4.0 |
| Total to Government | 27.6% | 33.0% | 37.5% |
| Distribution to kolkhozniks | 35.9% | 26.9% | 22.9% |

The State has evidently taken a large and increasing share of the crop. The prices it pays for this grain are so low as to be token payments only. Maynard states that the price paid for these compulsory deliveries is from one-seventh to one-eighth of what amounts to the wholesale price (i.e. the State is credited with seven or eight times the price paid when it deposits the produce with a distribution centre).³ In 1934, according to Baikalov, the peasants were paid only one-tenth of the "wholesale" price.⁴ The next year, when bread rationing was abolished, there came "an enormous increase in the retail prices of grain and grain products", and the State raised the procurement prices ten per cent.⁵ But the gap between the Government's price to the kolkhoz and the price paid by the consumer was even greater than before. For oats, the government now paid 4 to 6 kopeks per kilogram, and it charged 55 to 100 kopeks. It charged at least sixty times as

1 A. Yugow, Russia's Economic Front for War and Peace, New York Harper and Bros., 1942, p. 65.

2 From tables by Jasny, p. 738, Emphasis on the MTS as a channel of grain deliveries to the State has greatly increased since 1933.

3 Maynard, "Collective Farming in the USSR", SR, 15:63)

4 Baikalov, Monograph, p. 26.

5 Jasny, p. 375.

much for poor quality farina as it paid the kolkhoz for wheat. Things are no better today because the State "still pays producers about 10 kopeks per kilogram for delivered wheat ... while charging the consumer 13 rubles for a kilogram of wheat flour ... more than 100 times as much in terms of grain".¹ The peasant seems still to be caught between the blades of the "scissors" and his standard of living remains low.

The value of the trudoden is most uncertain. It varies with the amount of produce remaining in the kolkhoz's possession after deliveries (in itself impossible to forecast); the amount of premiums in kind which have to be deducted from that remainder; and the number of labour-days which have been credited for work performed for that kolkhoz. The resulting labour-day has been worth little in most years, although with a bountiful harvest such as that of 1937 it may be adequate. Maynard describes a "rich" collective in which each member for his total payment in labour-days for a whole year received 2400 rubles, a half-ton of wheat, 600 pounds of vegetables and 30 litres of wine. Maynard adds "That the average is something immensely less than this is an inevitable inference from known facts".² The Soviet press of course is full of accounts of the good life on the "millionaire" kolkhozy, but these number only .33 per cent or less, while pauper kolkhozy are twenty times as numerous.³

1 Jasny, p. 375.

2 Russia in Flux, 405

3 Yugow, p. 467.

There are within the kolkhozy wide differences of income which, in the light of the generally low standard of living, serve to depress still further the living standard of those peasants who have the lower-paid jobs. Even Mandel admits that huge differences exist in the rewards for labour within the kolkhoz:

The manager is credited with 45 to 90 labor-days monthly, plus 25 to 400 rubles in cash, depending on the size of the farm.... His earnings are several times those of the average member, but may be exceeded by Stakhanovites. 1

Mandel tells as well of a kolkhoz chairman who donated from his own resources 100, 000 rubles in cash and 2¹/₂ tons of grain to help equip a tank column during the war.² The tractor-drivers and combine-operators, as we know, are also much better paid than the average kolkhoznik, and Stakhanovites may earn 750 or 800 labour-days in contrast to the common number of 250.³ What this means in shares of the harvest and in relation to the labour-days of the "rich" collective, we can easily grasp.

There is a difference of opinion among western writers too, in respect to the conditions in which the peasant exists, and the living standard he enjoys, although most writers agree that the State extracts from the peasants a large portion of meat, grain, and other products. Russell, writing in 1942, said that the peasant villages are usually built along a dirt road, or about an open space; that the cottages are small, made with wood, or of adobe; that some villages have electric light, few have sanitation, most

1 Mandel, p. 402.

2 Ibid., p. 414.

3 E. John Russell, "The Farming Problem in Russia", SR, 16:334.

use a common well.¹ But Yugow, writing in the same year, said:

The old hut, built of clay, without a chimney, with its sleeping bunks and tiny windows, has disappeared. New houses with more light and space have been built in large numbers.... In many regions the villages have electric light, a pump, and paved streets. Public buildings have been erected for the village Soviet (council), the kolkhoz administration, the school, a hut reading room and frequently a club, a day nursery and a hospital.... The villages have radios, receive newspapers, and have traveling motion pictures. 2

Finally, we have the following account of life within a kolkhoz, given by a peasant who left the Soviet Union in 1943. This peasant was a member of a kolkhoz family of seven - the parents and five sons - whose garden plot was about five-eighths of an acre. The family had two sheep and five chickens of their own, but they had no cow and no pigs. They did not get any milk but they did get some cheese, wheat and barley yearly as shares of kolkhoz income. They were also given four pounds of fat each January as the family ration for the year. According to Soviet authorities, the life of the kolkhozniks is "a splendid one", but this "splendid" life must have passed these kolkhozniks by. Our peasant says:

My family lived in a one-room, windowless, stone house and slept on the floor, as it had for generations. We had to go a mile to a brook for water.

My father worked every day, winter and summer, and often 12 hours a day.... My mother worked about 270 days a year on the kolkhoz. We children worked when not at school. But that altogether was evaluated at about 250 days for the family. We got rations on the basis of 250 labour-days.... Clothes were a terrible problem and most of us didn't have shoes. I even graduated from high school

1 "Collective Farming in Russia and the Ukraine", Science, July 24, 1942, pp. 74-5.

2 Yugow, p. 218.

barefooted. By selling eggs and other things we could buy kerosene, salt, soap, but only in very small quantities.... About all my family ever bought was matches, salt, soap and kerosene.... There were many schools. The Bolsheviks built schools. I myself went to the university. I remember the day I entered, because I had my first new shoes; they were made of cloth with rubber soles....

How can we be hopeful?... We work as commanded, receive what others care to give us, and enjoy equality only in distribution. In my village very few people have benefited except favored leaders of the Communist Party. I am sure that nine of my kolkhoznik neighbours out of ten were against the system. They felt repressed, humiliated, and exploited. 1

Jasny, who has estimated the income of the peasants in 1938 at about 20 per cent less than in pre-collectivization times, says that the Soviet claim that collectivization has greatly raised the standard of life of the peasants, can only be considered as one of the "greatest lies in history".²

Whatever may be the exact level of production on the kolkhozy, it is certain that it is not enough to ensure the kolkhozniks and the State as much as they want, and it is far short of what Communist theorists hoped for.

Although evidence on the topic is not plentiful, it appears that Owen's communities did not enjoy an increased standard of living either, at least not through their own efforts. For a time, no doubt, life in those communities may have been better than life outside, but we must remember that the co-operators were in fact living off Owen's capital, and that all his communities were dissolved with a deficit. The New Harmony Gazette itself

1 Extracts from an interview conducted by R.H.Markham, "Life on a Communist Kolkhoz", Christian Science Monitor, Sept. 4, 1948.

2 Jasny, p. 703.

attributed the failure of the New Harmony community directly to "the deficiency of production". As for the "surplus" which Owen had confidently expected to develop, (which was to help support the State and those whose "nice manual occupations" would not permit them to engage in productive labour,) the "surplus" never appeared.

Distribution at Orbiston was done by two different methods, but Owen's labour-notes were never used. In the beginning Combe insisted that everyone be paid according to his labour, but the rates current in the competitive world were used as the standards - each member's labour "being reckoned as worth 12s. to 30s. a week according to its value in the world he had left...."¹ However, the most zealous of the Orbiston co-operators denounced this as being "the very germ of the competitive system... which system has ever hitherto produced, and will ever while it lasts, continue to produce, such divisions of interests, such dissensions, animosities, insatiable desires, and consequent miseries."² These less-experienced co-operators insisted on equal-sharing principles, and although many members left the community, for a time all seemed to be going smoothly. However, the losses were mounting and soon Orbiston, too, was another dream lost.³ The communists had not produced enough to provide an ample amount of food and goods for themselves, let alone a surplus with which to pay rent and taxes.

1 Sargant, p. 288

2 Ibid., p. 281 (from the Co-operative Magazine, 1, 339.)

3 For a good account of Orbiston see Sargant, Chapter 24.

Education

The root of all Owen's teaching was his belief that "the character of man is without a single exception, always formed for him".

THE WILL OF MAN HAS NO POWER WHATEVER OVER HIS OPINIONS; HE MUST, AND EVER DID, AND EVER WILL BELIEVE WHAT HAS BEEN, IS, OR MAY BE IMPRESSED ON HIS MIND BY HIS PREDECESSORS AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH SURROUND HIM.¹

Again and again Owen emphasizes that this conception of the formation of character is the only true one, and that it underlies his whole plan for changing society. As a result, education plays a most important role in Owen's solution for the world's difficulties.

In Owen's communities children were to be removed from the "untrained and untaught" parents at the earliest possible age and put into a nursery where they would be cared for by specially instructed nursemaids. The kindergarten was to consist of an indoor playroom and a sheltered playground suitable for use on fine days. Coming into this playground "as soon as he could freely walk alone", the child, with his future school-fellows and companions, would "acquire the best habits and principles". At meal-times and at nights he would "return to the caresses of his parents; and the affections of each would likely be increased by the separation".² At the same time the parents would be freed from the care and anxiety and from the loss of time "now occasioned by attendance on their children".³ Human nature, Owen maintained,

1 Owen, A New View, p. 53. (His capitals)

2 Ibid., p. 41

3 Loc. cit.

was "without exception universally plastic"

... by judicious training the infants of any one class in the world may be readily formed into men of any other class, even to believe and declare that conduct to be right and virtuous, and to die in its defence, which their parents had been taught to believe was wrong and vicious, and to oppose which, those parents would also have willingly sacrificed their lives. 1

Owen says that the first instruction he gave his Lanark school masters was that they should never beat, threaten, or use abusive terms in the course of their duties. The children were to have no examples of bad behaviour to copy, and they were to be taught that their first duty was to make their playfellows happy.

The children of the communities were to be so placed and cared for that they would always be "in a proper temperature for their age, and be fed with the most wholesome food".² They must have "no knowledge of individual punishment or reward, nor be discouraged from always freely expressing their thoughts and feelings ..."³ If the children were trained in this way, said Owen, they would acquire the traits which would enable them to create and abide in a rational society. The healthy environment would automatically produce men and women who would show confidence in others, unselfishness and toleration.

At Owen's school in his factory village of New Lanark the little children were taught as a game to identify simple objects, animals, and so forth. Their indoor playroom was hung

1 Owen, p. 72, A New View.

2 Podmore, (quoting Owen) 2:483.

3 Loc. cit.

with paintings and maps and "often supplied with natural objects from the gardens, fields, and woods".¹ Dancing lessons were given to the children when they reached the age of two, and singing lessons were added at the age of four. The children, as they got a little older (from three to six years), were taken for frequent walks in the country for exercise and instruction. The New Lanark school is important for our purpose because Owen based his educational ideas for his "Villages of Co-operation" on the methods developed by him at New Lanark. Although Owen was not able to separate the children from their parents entirely, (at Lanark) he did believe that every infant of one year should be placed in a boarding school for the best results.² At New Harmony apparently this method was tried. Children over two were removed from their parents to a common boarding school "to be educated along lines which would ensure their growing up with similar views and similar wants".³

As the child grew, his education was to grow with him. As much as possible, teaching would continue to be done by conversation, maps, and pictures. The children were to help, too, with the domestic chores, but such work was to be done only for "amusement and exercise". Books were not to be forced on the children; in fact Owen thought that when the best means of instruction were found he doubted if books would ever be used before the children had reached ten years of age.⁴ Indeed, Owen thought his system

1 Owen, Life, 1:140.

2 Ibid., 1:176.

3 Dos Passos, and Shay, "New Harmony, Indiana", Atlantic Monthly, Nov. 1940, vol. 166:606.

4 Owen, Life, 1:140

of education was a thousand times better than the "wretched" ones then being used. In proof of this statement, he said,

enter any one of the schools denominated national and request the master to show the acquirements of the children. These are called out, and he asks them theological questions to which men of the most profound erudition cannot make a rational reply; the children, however, readily answer as they had been previously instructed; for memory, in this mockery of learning, is all that is required.... Three-fourths of the time which ought to be devoted to the acquirement of useful instruction, will be really occupied in destroying the mental powers of the children. ¹

When the children passed into the school from kindergarten at the age of six they were already well taught in the basic precept: that each should always act in a way to make his companions happy. They now learned to "read well, and to understand what they read; to write expeditiously a good legible hand; and to learn correctly, so that they may comprehend and use with facility the fundamental rules of arithmetic".² The children were questioned on what they read and were encouraged to discuss and to ask questions. Rote learning was definitely discouraged. The children were also given instructions in such practical work as gardening and handicrafts. This combination of work with education is an interesting feature of Owen's plan, and an essential part of it. Owen said

It is obvious that training and education must be viewed as intimately connected with the employments of the association. The latter, indeed, will form an essential part of education under these arrangements. ³

1 Owen, A New View, pp. 75-6.

2 Ibid. p. 48

3 Owen, A New View, p. 283

Children were to begin to work in the open air one hour a day at the age of six and to work one hour longer with each passing year up to the age of twelve.¹ The boys would be taught the crafts presumably, with outdoor work as well. The girls would learn sewing and cutting, and "after acquiring a sufficient knowledge of these, they would attend in rotation the public kitchen and eating rooms to learn to prepare wholesome food in an economical manner and to keep a house neat and well arranged".²

At New Harmony the school children had work assigned to them in accordance with Owen's principles of education. When Saxe-Weimar visited there he found the teacher "in the act of leading the boys of the school out to labour". He says:

I saw the boys divided into two ranks and parted into detachments, marching to labour. On the way they performed wheelings and evolutions. All the boys and girls have a very healthy look, are cheerful and lively, and by no means bashful. The boys labour in the field or the garden, and were now occupied with new fencing. 3

A Mrs. Thrall who was once a pupil in the girls' school at New Harmony supplies us with a few details of the Spartan life of its inmates:

At rising a detail of the girls was sent out to do the milking, and this milk with mush cooked in large kettles, constituted the essential part of the morning meal, which the children were expected to finish in fifteen minutes. We had bread but once a week, on Saturday. I thought if I ever got out I would kill myself eating sugar and cake. At dinner we generally had soup, at supper mush and milk again.... in summer the girls wore dresses of coarse linen with a coarse plaid costume for Sunday or for special occasions. ... we marched in military order to the classroom. We went to bed at Sundown in little bunks suspended in rows by cords from the ceiling. Sometimes one of the children at the end of the row would swing back her cradle ... and set the whole row bumping together ... a favorite diversion

1 Owen, Life, Vol. 2, p.259. Report of a Leeds Deputation.

2 Owen, A New View, p. 48.

3 Quoted in Podmore, 1:314.

that caused the teachers much distress.... Children regularly in the boarding school were not allowed to see their parents, except at rare intervals. I saw my father and mother twice in two years. 1

Owen had recommended that the children of the new communities should be dressed in simple loose clothing all on the same pattern, because such garb would be healthy as well as cheap to make. Owen's son Robert described the costume of the New Lanark children:

The dress ... is composed of strong white cotton cloth of the best quality which can be procured. It is formed in the shape of a Roman tunic, and reaches in the boys dresses to the knee, and in those of the girls to the ankle. These dresses are changed three times a week, that they may be kept perfectly clean and neat. 2

In such unrestricting clothing the children could be trained up "strong, active, well-limbed, and healthy". Since all will be dressed alike, the cheapness and pleasantness of clothing will give all "neither care, thought, nor trouble, for many years, or perhaps centuries". And fashions will exist only for a short time "and then only among the most weak and silly part of the creation".³ The Orbiston co-operators in respect of this recommendation had, before their dissolution, made plans to uniform their children; the boys in tartan and the girls in "purple bombazet".⁴ At New Harmony, as Mrs. Thrall reports, the girls in the boarding school wore costumes of coarse linen and plaid.

1 Quoted in Podmore, 1:315-6.

2 Ibid., 1:142

3 Owen, A New View, p. 278.

4 Podmore, 2:371.

Another interesting feature of Owen's system of education in comparison with that in Soviet kolkhozy, is the military twist given to physical education. The children were all to be taught to march, to perform "military evolutions" of wheeling and turning in lines, and so forth. Owen pointed out that through these drills and exercises the children would "acquire facility in the execution of combined movements, a habit which is calculated to produce regularity and order in time of peace, as well as to aid defensive and offensive operations in war".

The children, therefore, at an early age, will acquire, through their amusements, those habits which will render them capable of becoming, in a short time, at any future period of life, the best defenders of their country.... These associations ... by the certain and decisive influence of their arrangements upon the character and conduct of the parties, would materially add to the political strength, power, and resources of the country into which they shall be introduced. .

"Were all men trained to be rational," said Owen, "the art of war would be rendered useless". But since men are not yet so trained, "even the most rational must, for their personal security, learn the means of defence" and every community of these rational persons "should acquire a knowledge of this destructive art, that they may be enabled to over-rule the actions of irrational beings, and maintain peace".²

To accomplish these objects to the utmost practical limit, and with the least inconvenience, every male should be instructed how best to defend, when attacked, the community to which he belongs. And these advantages are only to be

1 Owen, A New View, p. 291-2, Owen also says: "the knowledge of the science of the influence of circumstances over mankind will speedily enable all nations to discover, not only the evils of war, but the folly of it. Of all modes of conduct adopted by mankind to obtain advantages in the present stage of society, this is the most certain to defeat its object." Loc. cit.

2 Owen, A New View, p. 57.

obtained by providing proper means for the instruction of all boys in the use of arms and the arts of war. ... it is intended that the boys trained and educated at the Institution at New Lanark shall be thus instructed; that the person appointed to attend the children in the playground shall be qualified to drill and teach the boys the manual exercise, and that he shall be frequently so employed; that afterwards, fire-arms, of proportionate weight and size to the age and strength of the boys, shall be provided for them, when they also might be taught to practise and understand the more complicated military movements....¹

Thus, in a few years ... may a permanent force be created....

That the New Lanark school was a remarkable institution for the times is evident from the number of people who visited there from far and wide, and who have left us glowing accounts of all they saw there. One of the visitors, a doctor, during the first two days of his visit "was so full of pure enjoyment, that he felt himself quite unfit for cool and deliberate observation; and prolonged his stay to allow this excess of moral fever to pass away".²

With the peculiarities of Owen's program of education in mind, we turn to the Soviet kolkhozy where we find that education plays a similar role and is pursued for the same reasons by the same methods. This is not surprising, however, since Soviet educators are aware of Robert Owen's ideas on education through the medium of Karl Marx. Professor Pinkevitch of Moscow quotes Marx as saying:

As we can learn in detail from the study of the life work of Robert Owen, the germs of the education of the future are to be found in the factory system. This will be an education which, in the case of every child over a certain age, will combine productive labor with instruction and

1 Owen, A New View, p. 58.

2 Sargant, p. 210.

physical culture, not only as a means for increasing social production, but as the only way of producing fully developed human beings. 1

From the resulting system one can only come to the conclusion that the Soviet educators did indeed study the life work of Robert Owen.

Most kolkhozy have a nursery for the babies as well as a kindergarten for the small children. Foreign visitors seem always to be impressed by this feature of the new life of the peasant, and there are many references to it among their writings. Griffin visited a kolkhoz near Kharkov which had a "little nursery of peasant babies on exactly the same pattern on a small scale as district and factory nurseries for proletarian babies".² One room of this nursery was crowded with small cots which held infants from two to six months. The next room was for children between six months and a year and a half. There was a crawler corner and a pen for playing in. There was also a kindergarten for the bigger children.³

For the kolkhoz kindergarten the People's Commissariat of Health outlined the distribution of the summer day as follows:

Mothers bring their children to the nursery between five and seven in the morning. The children ... wash hands, face, neck, and ears, and rinse the mouth, and put on clean clothes. Opportunity should always be given them to do independently whatever they are able to do. By the time they wash and dress, their first breakfast should be ready. They then sit at the table and are served by comrades on duty.... The matron sees that order is maintained during mealtime and that the children eat slowly,

1 A. P. Pinkevitch, The New Education in the Soviet Republic, transl. Nucia P. Lodge, ed., G.S.Counts, New York, The John Day Co. (1929), p. 194.

2 Frederick Griffin, Soviet Scene, Toronto, Macmillan Co. 1933

3 Ibid., pp. 209-212.

make no unnecessary noise, and are courteous towards their neighbours.... The children on duty together with the matron, clear the dining room, wash the dishes, and sweep the floor.... On finishing their cleaning those on duty join the others and the games begin. There is also provision for molding, drawing, play with toys, and work with sand. In good weather the children should be taken for an outing to some nearby field, forest, or river bank.... With the older children talks on nature study may be conducted during these morning hours.... Following lunch they rinse their mouths and go to sleep on cots, on small beds, or, in good weather, on the grass. The children sleep from one and a half to two hours. After rising and making their beds they bathe in water warmed by the sun. At the close of day the children put on their own clothes and go home. 1

As in Owen's communities, the child was to learn by doing. He was to observe and question, and within the framework of communist morality, to judge for himself. Physical punishment was to be rarely used and the children were to be encouraged and rewarded with smiles and privileges. Music, drawing, the study of natural objects, dramatics, all were used as methods of instruction. The school was to be a laboratory of life.

The Owenite combination of vocational and intellectual education were not forgotten, "manual labour and intellectual instruction going hand in hand, or linked together in a striking fashion.... Science and industry were closely interwoven. A thing like electricity could demand early study".² On kolkhozy of course, manual labour for children consists mostly of weeding, gleaning after the harvest, watching for grain thieves and so

1 Pinkevitch, The New Education, pp. 113-4.

2 Harry Best, The Soviet State and its Inception, New York, Philosophical Library, 1950, p. 258.

forth. Maurice Hindus tells of seeing a crowd of children out weeding a potato field on one kolkhoz, and with them was a teacher, apparently supervising the work.¹

Even as Owen intended to mold the minds of his proteges into habits of thinking that would aid and promote the growth of "a new society", so Soviet education intends. One observer says that "a more or less incidental" result of the early start in Soviet education (nurseries and kindergartens) was to "dilute the allegiance the child owed to the parent and to turn more of it to the state - to loosen the influence of the home in the building of the child's life and character, and to vest more of these things in the control of the state".² This result is hardly "incidental" and it repeats the Owenite case exactly.

Apparently a great deal of the school curriculum for a time consisted of studying the resolutions of the Party and the Government in order to mold the minds of the young into patterns consistent with the growth of a new social order. This led to a growing abstraction and sterility in instruction; the children became bored by unimaginative teaching and monotonous repetition of abstract ideas. A series of orders were issued in 1934 which were meant to curb this trend. The decrees issued recall the complaints made by Owen against the existing "wretched" system of education in Britain in his time, for which his own system had been meant as a substitute. Soviet children,

1 M. Hindus, Mother Russia, London, Collins, 1943, p. 291. This kolkhoz has 40 children in its nursery and 50 more in the kindergarten. The bulk of the expense was paid by a fund of 2% of the gross income.

2 Best, p. 257.

stated these decrees, were "overburdened, to an inadmissible extent, with the study of resolutions passed by the XVIIth Party Congress, questions of Marxist and Leninist theory and the policy of the Party". One is tempted to point out that both in England and in the Soviet Union Owen's system of education has had to pit itself against a dogmatic method, and that the comparison does not end there. In any case, the Central Committee of the Party has made attempts to improve methods of political and other instructions in Soviet schools. A resolution of April 1934 reads in part:

Children of 8 to 12 years are requested, in schools and in the pioneer organizations, to answer questions which are beyond their understanding or which are so abstract that they antagonise the children even against such phenomena of social life and socialist upbuilding as are within their power of understanding. Scholastic "questionnaires" are circulated among the children, "political contests" and "political lotteries" are arranged as well as other artificial and harmful tricks. An animated account of the most outstanding social events which may entertain and interest children is replaced by dull hackneyed instructions and inadmissible senseless coaching. The Central Committee ... considers all this to be a perversion of the problems of communist education.... 1

Decrees attacking the methods of teaching history and geography were issued the following month:

The teaching of history in schools of the USSR is unsatisfactory. The textbooks and oral instruction are of an abstract schematic character. Instead of the teaching of civic history in an animated and entertaining form ... the pupils are given abstract definitions of social and economic formations.... The teaching of geography in elementary and secondary schools is suffering from serious deficiencies, of which the most important are: abstractness and dryness of exposition, insufficiency of physical and

1 Legislation, SR, 13:202.

geographical material, poor reading of maps, overburdening ... with statistics, economic data and general schemes; owing to this, the students very often leave school without the possession of an elementary knowledge of geography. 1

Though Soviet authorities still emphasized Owenite methods of education, they could not ensure them.

The importance of physical culture as mentioned by both Owen and Marx is also emphasized, and for the same good reasons. Patriotism and physical culture go hand in hand and one writer declares that the militarization of sport in Soviet Russia is taken as a matter of course - that sport has only one function, to better the race and make the youth of the nation ready to fight.²

In the lower grades of Soviet schools, physical training is purposely directed "toward the improvement of health and development of strength, hardiness, agility, bravery and courage. Also toward the cultivation in the young of a consciousness of those purposes for which it is necessary to fight".³ A Soviet magazine, Family and School, in an article entitled "The Fostering of Courage" wrote:

The fostering of courage begins at an early age.... As the child develops, games gain in importance in building courage, especially active games which involve chasing, searching, skirmishing etc. Children's enjoyment of war games is common knowledge. In such games children usually re-create various episodes of war which they might know from conversations of grownups, or stage heroic

1 Ibid., pp. 204-5

2 John R. Tunis, "The Dictators Discover Sport", Foreign Affairs, July, 1936, 14:606-617.

3 Quoted from a Soviet source by A. Goodfriend, If You Were Born in Russia, New York, Farrar, Straus, 1950, p. 39, my emphasis.

deeds performed by national heroes. These games play an important part in building courage. 1

The military orientation of the educational program in the later grades goes beyond mere drills, fostering of courage and patriotism. The military part of the curriculum is woven in with lessons in geography, science, and mathematics, and instruction in military law, and use of fire-arms, are given as well.

In the eighth grade, pre-conscription military training begins. Two hours a week, until the tenth grade, for a total of 198 hours, boys study the types of arms used in the Soviet Army; close order drill; marksmanship with rifle and machine gun; scouting and patrolling; customs of the service; defense against air, chemical and tank attack.... All ninth-grader boys go to summer camp for twenty days of intensive maneuvers and weapons training. Soviet Army men take over. Before the boys leave camp they can give a pretty good account of themselves with a rifle, bayonet and machine gun.... Girls study nursing and communication work.... Training for battle extends to other courses. Geography lessons teach map reading and the use of the compass. Mathematics provides training in instruments needed to make a simple survey. Classes in social science expose capitalist preparations for war. 2

The principal of a girl's school in Moscow told an American correspondent that military science had been a part of the curriculum ever since the Revolution. The training which began in the fifth grade, took about three hours a week. "It is largely sports and drilling", she said;

They learn to ski and to march. But they also learn to handle firearms - how to fire a rifle and run a machine gun. From the eighth grade to the tenth they spend four hours a week. They practice shooting on the ranges.

1 Goodfriend, If You Were Born in Russia, p. 15.

2 Ibid., p. 39

And beginning with the eighth grade they learn a specialty. In our school it is military radio operation. They also learn first aid to the wounded. 1

In Soviet kolkhozy, although education of the children may not be as fully organized as it is in some of the towns, it is reasonable to assume that some training of a military nature is included similar to that described above.

Thus we see that several features peculiar to Owen's plan for educating the children of his proposed communities have been instituted in Soviet education, not the least of these being the emphasis on very early training, the lessening of the influence of the parents, teaching by doing, the linking of education with employment in the community, the importance of physical culture and its military orientation, and the emphasis on the group rather than on the individual (the latter is partly achieved by dressing the children alike). 2

Adult education too plays its part in the two plans. Owen suggested that evening lectures be given during winter "three nights in the week, alternately with dancing".³ The lectures were to instruct the parents in the proper methods of child care and upbringing, in the proper management of their household expenses, and in other practical knowledge. Adult education, or at least the abolition of illiteracy, has also been the concern of Soviet authorities. Every kolkhoz undertakes to

1 Salisbury, p. 226.

2 Frederick Griffin, Soviet Scene, Toronto, Macmillan Co., 1933, Griffin during his visit to one kolkhoz saw about 20 youngsters of 4 and upwards going along the road. "I thought they were all boys since they all wore short pants and little shirts of blue, but I learned later half of them were girls. The group was from the village kindergarten." p. 208.

3 Owen, New View, p. 50.

foster educational and cultural advancement among its members. The cinema, travelling libraries, lectures, all are used to educate the peasants. Cultural competitions are arranged between kolkhozy for which each kolkhoz may set itself a program of activities including excursions to other villages, lectures on collective farming, sanitation, and natural science. The literacy campaigns were conducted with the aid of readers, wall-newspapers, book-carriers, and the travelling libraries.¹

The kolkhozy must also try to improve the qualifications of their members by providing assistance to those who want to become tractor men, veterinaries, drivers, sanitation experts, shepherds, and so on.² Many kolkhozy set aside a fraction of their gross income as a "cultural fund" as well, and out of this they try to fulfil another of their charter obligations: "to establish clubs ... to build public baths ... to construct clean and airy field-camps, to keep the village streets in good order, to plant various, especially fruit-bearing, trees, to assist the members in improving and decorating their houses".³ All these activities call to mind Owen's own efforts to educate his New Lanark people and to raise their standards of health and cleanliness. He drew up a set of rules for them which included such directions as these: every house must be cleaned at least once a week and whitewashed at least once a year by the tenant, every

1 Lement Harris, "The Life of the Soviet Peasant", Current History, July 1931, 34:505-510.

2 Legislation, S.A.A.A. in SR, 14:192.

3 Loc. cit.

tenant must take his turn in cleaning the public stairs and sweeping the roadway in front of the dwellings. Tenants were forbidden to throw ashes or dirty water into the streets or to keep pigs or poultry in their dwellings, and all doors had to be shut at 10.30 and no one was to be out after that time without permission.¹

Urbanization of agriculture

While no one would say that the kolkhozy have reached their final development, nor the highest stage of social organization, still one can see a certain overall trend in their development, and this trend in some ways is toward the Owenite ideal of highly organized agricultural-manufacturing communities. The new Soviet "Agrograds" (Agricultural cities), if realized, would be the modern equivalent of Owen's "Parallelograms".

First there is the attempt to obtain the advantages in one community of both country and city life. Second there is the attempt, by these new arrangements, to obliterate the differences between town and country folk.

Owen's "Villages of Co-operation" were called by some, "Owen's Parallelograms" because he proposed to arrange the buildings of each community in a large rectangle facing inward around a park and public square. The central building of the whole establishment was to be the public kitchen. On either side of it were to be the nursery, the school rooms, the lecture room and the

¹ E. L. Hutchins, Robert Owen, Social Reformer, London, Fabian Tract #166, The Fabian Society, 1912, p. 11.

library. Around the outer sides of the park the lodgings for the village members were to be built - consisting of apartments for the married people, dormitories for the single men and boys, and other dormitories for the single women. In the centre of each of the sides would be the apartments for "general superintendents, schoolmasters, surgeons etc.". There would also be a warehouse and infirmary, a tavern or other building for visiting strangers and relatives.

On the outside, and at the back of the houses around the squares, are gardens, bounded by roads. Immediately beyond these, on one side, are buildings for mechanical and manufacturing purposes. The slaughterhouse, stabling, &c., to be separated from the establishment by plantations.

At the other side are offices for washing, bleaching &c.; and at a still greater distance from the squares, are some of the farming establishments, with conveniences for malting, brewing, and corn-mills, &c.; around these are cultivated enclosures, pastureland, &c., the hedgerows of which are planted with fruit-trees. 1

The picture we get from this is of a pleasantly arranged community, with no crowded and jumbled dwellings, and no narrow, dark alleys as can be found in the ordinary town. The central group of public buildings is set off from the dwelling places but convenient to all. The park which surrounds it is repeated in the green belt which separates the dormitories from the barns and machine shops beyond. And beyond those buildings there is another belt of green, orchards and gardens, which screen the farm-manufactories and fields from the central community. The inhabitants of such a community could thus enjoy the beauties of the countryside

1 Owen, A New View, p. 162.

without living in isolation. They could enjoy the social intercourse of the town without having to endure cramped and unhealthy quarters. And the inter-dependent, communal mode of living would wean them away from their old notions of individuality.

Similar communities have been the goal of socialists and other reformers for decades, and they appear to be the goal of Soviet theorists too. Bukharin and Preobrajensky stated that one of the tasks of the Communist Party was to "save Russia ... from barbaric methods of individual cookery", for instance, and Stalin pointed out that one of the advantages of collectivization was that it would help to "wash away" the contradiction between the city and the village.¹ Remember too, that as far back as 1931 the MTS were being designed as "agro-industrial centres" and were expected to become "mighty factors for removing differences between town and countryside".² Stalin, speaking in 1934 about the future kolkhoz, said:

The future agricultural commune will arise when the fields and farms of the artel are replete with grain, cattle, poultry, vegetables and all other produce; when the artels have mechanised laundries, modern dining rooms, mechanised bakeries etc.; ... when the woman collective farmer sees that it is more to her advantage to take her meals in the dining-room, to get her bread from the public bakery....³ When will that be? Not soon, of course, but be it will.

The most delightful picture of the Soviet agricultural communities of the future are drawn by M. Ilin whose book The Story of the

1 Ladejinsky, PSQ, 49:25

2 Legis., SR., 10:717

3 Quoted in Rothstein, p. 186-7.

Five-Year Plan is used as a text for Soviet children. In the future, says M. Ilin,

There will be no village. Bread and meat and milk will be secured from factories in sovhozes and kolkhozes. Around each of these agricultural factories other factories will be constructed - food, flour, conserve, meat, refrigeration. All of these will constitute a single union of factories, but agricultural rather than industrial.... And around each of these unions a city will rise - an agricultural city. The words "peasant" and "workman" will pass away. Only the word "laborer" will remain.... A green wall of parks will separate the heart of the city - the factory - from the residential sections. This green wall will protect the city from the smoke and soot of factory chimneys. And the blocks will be different. From the central square, like the rays of the sun, avenues and boulevards will radiate in all directions.... White house-communes, schools, libraries, hospitals will be surrounded with flower beds.... 1

Collectivization was the first big step toward the creation of such communities, but in spite of Soviet claims to the contrary, progress toward changing the face of the countryside and the mind of the peasant has not been great. One would expect that the life of the peasants would be better than it was before the Revolution; that food, housing, the supply of clothing, would be better and would be growing year by year, as indeed has been the case in most countries. Yet this is all that Yugow, for instance, claims as the measure of progress among Soviet peasants, and he adds that "a comparison with conditions typical ... even among the peasants of Latvia or Finland, would show how long a road they must still travel to reach a state of well-ordered civilized life."²

1 M. Ilin, New Russia's Primer, The Story of the Five-Year Plan, transl. Geo. S. Counts and Nucia P. Lodge, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., 1931, pp. 154-6.

2 Yugow, p. 218. (1942).

Another project which had as one of its aims the "washing away" of the difference between the town and the country was the plan for afforestation. Great belts of forests were to be planted throughout the country on big kolkhozy, and on a minor scale, even in the cities, stretches of trees were to be planted to attract rainfall and to act as windbreaks. Progress has already been made in this project, which has to some extent closed the gap between town and country life. The processes of "citifying the village" and "vernalizing the town" go together.¹

In the Soviet Union, an overwhelmingly agricultural country, the peasantry have been regarded as a drag on the movement to transform society and to build a new socialist life. The proletarian is the ideal socialist man. The rural ideology is considered "dark", backward, narrow, individualistic, and in every way undesirable. That collectivization did not much change the peasant is evident from Russell's comment:

It is difficult to find anything in common between the peasant and the educated Russian of the town and during the period in which I have visited Russia I have seen no signs of any approach. On the contrary, the tendency for segregation of the different groups seems to increase; University professors, for instance, are housed in a block of buildings of their own and in holidays they go away to their own rest homes.... I found professional people and higher engineers who were undoubtedly sincere in their assertion that they were working for the public good.... I never met in the villages anything but a desire to earn as much as possible while there was a chance of doing it. The Russian peasant, in short, retains the general characteristics of the peasant in other countries. His desire is to be secured in the holding of his land and to be left in peace to look after his animals and his crops. The fusion of country life with town life still remains one of

¹ cf. C. Bryner, "Soviet Agricultural Policy", Current History, New York, N.Y. Times Co., Oct. 1949, n.s. 17:211.

great problems before the Russians, as indeed it still is before the Western peoples as a whole. 1

Another major development in the realization of the agro-industrial centres that Ilin and others dreamed of, was the recent drive to amalgamate the smaller kolkhozy and build Agrograds. This merging campaign went into full swing in 1950. There is little doubt that at least one of the reasons for the merging of the small collectives and the emphasis on the construction of Agrograds, is to destroy the pattern of rural life, not only to industrialize agriculture but to reshape the peasants' life and attitudes, to make him truly proletarian. Figures are available for only a few regions, but they are sufficient to indicate the speed of the transformation once it was decided to amalgamate the smaller kolkhozy.

| | Jan. 1 | June 20 | |
|----------------------|--------|---------|----------------------------------|
| Moscow Province | 6,069 | 1,668 | Number of Kolkhozy 2 1950. |
| Yaroslavl Province | 3,890 | 963 | |
| Byelo-Russ. Republic | 9,771 | 3,279 | |

The same story is told of other regions. In Leningrad Province the number of collectives was reduced from over 2,000 to 600.³ In Soviet Latvia, instead of 4,115 kolkhozy which were originally created after the Soviet occupation, there were, at the beginning of 1951, 1,792 collective farms.⁴

This vast re-organization of kolkhozy into Agrograds necessarily meant that a terrific construction program would have to begin in order to provide central accommodation for the

1 E. John Russell, "The Farming Problem in Russia" SR, 16:340

2 Boris I. Nicolaevsky, "The New Soviet Campaign Against the Peasants", RR, April 1951, p. 90

3 Harry Schwartz, Russia's Soviet Economy, New York, Prentice-Hall, 1950, p. 269

4 Volin, Foreign Ag. 15:98 (May 1951)

displaced peasants and their cattle. And the migration, which at first it was suggested would take place over a period of ten years or so, was not to be gradual after all. Said Izvestiya of November 22, 1950:

The immediate task of all local soviets and their rural organizations, kolkhoz administrations, is to complete during the winter months (of 1950-51) all necessary preparations for evacuating the smaller villages so that rapid construction for the accommodation of their inhabitants at the new centres of the enlarged collectives may be started with the arrival of spring. ¹

It is Nicolaevsky's opinion that since plans for housing construction had not been worked out, transferred populations would have to live in the most difficult circumstances,² and the above report from Izvestiya suggests that the smaller villages were to be evacuated and razed in time for spring plowing, and that the peasants would have to build their own new lodgings and meantime have no roof over their heads. The following Soviet account of a new amalgamated farm strengthens this suggestion. It is from an article entitled "Amalgamated Collective Farms Open Up New Benefits for Members".

... I recently made a trip to the village of Myachkovo,... some sixty miles from Moscow. Myachkovo is now the centre of a large collective farm named after Dimitrov. The new collective farm, formed by the amalgamation of five neighbouring collective farms, is composed of 360 peasant families....

The members of the amalgamated collective farm were moving from the neighboring villages to Myachkovo which was rapidly changing its whole appearance. Already there had been built a club ... a garage.... Recently, a group of prominent Moscow architects visited the village ... and discussed

1 Quoted in Nicolaevsky RR, April 1951, p. 95

2 Loc. cit.

a plan for rebuilding the village into a collective farm city....

The Myachkovo peasants live a prosperous and cultured life.

... Books are greatly loved ... [etc.]

... the new developments in the countryside answer the deepest thoughts and aspirations of the ordinary Soviet peasant. 1

The re-shufflement put the Soviet countryside in a turmoil, and it is said that the amalgamation orders were received coolly even in some sections of the Communist Party.² As a result, the program of resettlement seems to have been abandoned for the time being at least. Soviet publications since March 1951 have ceased all reference to the amalgamation drive.³

Even if the Agrograd movement is temporarily abandoned it seems most likely that Agrograds remain an ideal, and efforts will probably continue to be directed toward the achievement of that ideal. The Agrograd is the Owenite village envisioned on a grand scale, where "agricultural labor is becoming more and more a form of industrial labor. The differences between town and country life are being obliterated".⁴

1 M. Shchchokov, U.S.S.R. Information Bulletin, March 23, 1951.

2 Nicolaevsky, RR, April 1951, p. 95, pp. 186-7
cf. Economist Jan. 27, 1951, p. 202.

3 Cf. Nicolaevsky, and Volin, FA, May 1951, 15: 95-9.

4 USSR Information Bulletin, Washington D.C., Embassy of the USSR, November 7, 1950, p. 658.

Chapter V

SIMILARITY OF SOLUTIONS

The Soviet kolkhozy are without a doubt more than superficially similar to the communities proposed by Robert Owen. How can this similarity be explained?

The official Soviet version of the origin of the kolkhozy is that they are the creation of Joseph Stalin. Soviet Calendar for 1947 says "the collective farm system, large-scale socialist agriculture, represents the practical embodiment of the great ideas of Lenin and his brilliant successor, J.V.Stalin". The task of organizing large-scale socialist farming, continues Soviet Calendar,

had as its theoretical basis Lenin's co-operative plan.... Drawing theoretical conclusions from the first experiences in collective-farm developments, Stalin thoroughly developed the Lenin co-operative plan and worked out a complete program of collectivizing agriculture. Under his leadership this plan was put into practice. 1

The few sentences (discussed before, in Chapter IV) in which Lenin stated that agriculture would be large-scale, co-operative, and based on mechanization and rural electrification, is the extent of "Lenin's co-operative plan".

Russia did, however, have considerable experience with

1 Socialist Agriculture in the USSR., Moscow, Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1947. No page numbers.

large scale agriculture before the Revolution. There were the old artels and communes; there were the military colonies; there were even a few State farms under the Romanovs.

The "mir" had constituted a more or less permanent self-governing assembly in each village in pre-Soviet times. It was a group system of ancient origin, based on collective responsibility to the State. It had fairly definite responsibilities and certain limited powers. One modern writer describes the functions of the village mir thus:

It had some police, judicial, and similar functions. It could see to the construction of bridges and roads, recruiting for the army and providing of quarters for soldiers. It had some word as to the restricted educational facilities that could be offered. It was responsible for the collection of taxes for the government. It was answerable for the repayment of loans made to its members.... It could prevent the leaving of any of its members for other regions. 1

The mir not only allocated the land to be cultivated by each peasant, but decided what to plant and when to sow, and reap, and so forth.

Nothing was to be attempted without its consent. For his

allotment the peasant had to pay by rent or labour. The peasant lived in the village, and went out each day to work the plot of ground which had been assigned to him.... 2

In fact the notion of individual property in land was not a part of the Russian tradition. The joint-family or household was (and still is) the basic unit in the Russian conception of land

1 Best, p. 42.

2 Ibid., p. 78.

ownership. It is an institution "vastly different from the Roman conception of individual property, and attached to it are a great variety of partnerships and associations - partnerships for utilising in common teams - the 'artel' and so forth".¹

The intertwining of the peasants' land plots caused the households to follow a common routine and the collective principle extended into the actual work of the peasants. Count Witte noted this practice.

In 'artels' or co-operative groups, the peasants plow the land, and sow, harvest and thresh the grain ... mow hay, cut down forests and brushwood ... construct enclosures, common threshing floors, grist mills, pasture fences, dams, roads, ponds and ditches. ²

Leroy-Beaulieu in 1893 had written: "In all Moscovia, collective property almost exclusively prevails to this day.... In all that immense region extending from the Neva to the Ural, the number of peasants owning land on personal titles does not exceed 1% or 2% of the totality".³ And the land commune system before the Stolypin reform of 1906 still covered almost eighty per cent of the total peasant land allotments.⁴

Obviously collective labour, collective title to land, and collective responsibility to the State are not new things to the Russian peasant. In their village mir, in their artels and

1 K. Kachorovsky, "The Russian Land Commune in History and To-day", SR, 7:576. cf. Jasny, p. 134/142. Kachorovsky also says: "And above the Land Commune there reigned in Russia another great social collective unit - the overlordship of the State over the land".

2 Quoted in Ladejinsky, PSQ., 49:5

3 The Empire of the Tsars and the Russians, transl. Z.A.Rogozin, New York, G.P.Putnam's Sons, 1893, 1:483.

4 Ladejinsky, PSQ., 49:5

communes, they were always accustomed to some collective principle in agriculture.

Another pertinent example of large-scale agriculture which was conducted in Russia in pre-Revolutionary times, was the military colony of the nineteenth century.¹ The origin of these colonies of soldier-peasants was long in dispute, but one of the earlier historians says they owed their origin to the Emperor Alexander I, "who, being struck with the protection which similar establishments on the frontiers of Transylvania had long afforded to the Austrians and Hungarians in warding off the predatory incursions of the Mussulman horse, resolved in 1817 to found colonies of the same sort in several parts of his dominions".² In 1820 the emperor took steps to strengthen his defences and his severe, autocratic administrator, Arakcheev, was put in charge of setting up a number of colonies.

The design of the emperor ... was to encircle the empire with a zone of military colonies, stretching from the Black Sea to the Baltic, where the soldiers might acquire dwellings, and pursue the labours of agriculture, like the Roman legions, while still guarding the frontiers ... 3

1 This discussion is based on the following authorities: Solonevich in SR, 14, p. 81; Sir Archibald Alison, A History of Europe, Edinburgh, Wm. Blackwood & Sons, 1854, 2:156 and 178; A.G. Mazour, The First Russian Revolution, Berkely, Univ. of California Press, 1937, pp. 38-45.

2 Alison, 2:156, cf. Mazour. The Hungarians apparently had these outlying military colonies for hundreds of years. The practice is said to have begun when the Magyars allowed in the Avars (who were being pushed by the Pechenegs) and settled them on the frontiers. Later the Pechenegs fled from some Tartar tribes, and the Magyars then let in the Pechenegs and settled them in the same way.

3 Alison, 2: 178.

Arakcheev's method was to transform all at once a whole county into a military colony. The peasants' wishes were certainly never taken into account; they were only instruments, little more than animals.¹ The girls were married by order of the military authorities. The children from the ages of seven to eighteen were kept in separate "cantons" where they received military training and were taught a trade. All the peasants under the age of fifty had to shave off their beards and crop their hair. They were all uniformed and sent to work in the fields in squads. Common cottages were built and medical dispensaries set up. Millions of rubles were spent in organizing these colonies and peasant resistance was harshly suppressed. Outwardly their appearance was favourable and everything ran like clockwork, but underneath there was grumbling and a readiness to revolt. "Even the high officials complained of the terrible regime and the depressing atmosphere".²

But Alexander had made up his mind that military colonies would be established and his brother Nicholas continued the program. Alexander set the pace by declaring: "The military settlements will come to be, even though it be necessary to lay with corpses the road from Petersburg to Chudovo."³

1 Arakcheev's attitude toward peasants can be found in these words of his which are quoted by Mazour, p. 42: "Every woman on my estate must give birth every year, preferably a son to a daughter; if someone gives birth to a daughter, I exact a fine; if a dead child is born, or a miscarriage - a fine also; and if there is a year that the woman does not deliver a child then she is to present ten arshin [i.e. about 280 inches] of linen."

2 Mazour, p. 44.

3 Quoted in Solonevich, SR, 14:81.

These activities apparently alarmed the British, for, Solonevich tells us, "terrified at the spectre of a country inhabited by vast millions being reconstructed on a military model, tilling land and being drilled" the British government demanded from its representatives in St. Petersburg "the most accurate and detailed reports" of the whole project.¹

By 1825 the colonies had been established in five provinces, and the last of them did not disappear until after the Crimean War. They were abolished in 1857.

After taking into consideration these Russian experiences with large-scale agriculture there remains the possibility that Owen's own solution might have been used as a pattern for the Soviet kolkhoz system. But no credit is given to Owen as a forerunner of the kolkhoz idea, let alone as the inspiration and architect of the kolkhoz structure. Indeed, Soviet literature refers to such "Utopian socialists" as Owen in scornful terms. Yet our study of the various phases of kolkhoz life has proved that in many respects the underlying philosophy is the same as Owen's - and the details of the two solutions are, to say the least, strikingly similar.

Russia in the latter half of the nineteenth century, was steeped in socialist thought of all varieties, and Peter Kropotkin in his Memoirs several times mentions the socialist tenor of discussions among working men of both Russia and Western Europe.

1 Quoted in Solonevich, SR, 14:81.

Great hopes had been awakened in the years 1840-48 in the hearts of European workers. Only now [he wrote in 1899] we begin to realize what a formidable amount of socialist literature was circulated in those years by socialists of all denominations - Christian socialists, state socialists, Fourierists, Saint-Simonists, Owenites, and so on; and ¹ only now we begin to understand the depth of this movement...

The Russian intelligentsia of pre-Revolutionary times were well acquainted with the works of the western writers, particularly with the works of the French socialists. After the Crimean War the study of political economy became the fashion and "in no other country was ... it so approved".² The fate of capitalism, the future of Europe, the role of Russia, - these were subjects of endless debates among the Russian intelligentsia. "A brief period of official intoxication" with English liberalism was followed by a widespread admiration for the French socialist.³ Among the French socialists who influenced Russian revolutionary thought, St. Simon and Fourier are most important. These men, like Robert Owen, drew pictures of a future socialist paradise, and Fourier's "phalanxes" are the familiar "villages of co-operation" on the joint-stock principle. Another Frenchman, Babeuf, formed a "Society of Equals" and put forth a plan too. Under Babeuf's plan, the State was to "seize upon the new-born individual, watch over his early moments, guarantee the milk and care of his mother and bring him to the maison nationale, where he was to

1 Memoirs of a Revolutionist, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Co., (1930), p. 270.

2 Stepanov, quoted by Normano., The Spirit of Russian Economics, London, Dennis Dobson Ltd., 1949, p. 11.

3 Ibid., see Chapters 3 and 4 in particular.

acquire the virtue and enlightenment of a true citizen".¹ The plans of Owen and the French socialists have much in common.

Russian writers like Chernyshevsky and Dobrolyubov studied the socialist writers and through them Lenin's generation was made acquainted with the dreams of western socialists. It is Maynard's opinion that of all the pre-revolutionary Russian "thinkers", it is probably Chernyshevsky who had the most influence on Lenin. "Chernyshevsky", says Maynard, "is remarkable among the Russian Socialists for having in him something of the scientific as well as the Utopian element". In that, for him, circumstances did not have to guarantee the attainment of the ideal, Chernyshevsky was "unscientific" and therefore unlike Marx. Chernyshevsky was prepared to co-operate with the old parties too, and he did not believe in the necessity of a violent revolution. "Like Marx, he thought in terms of the State ... and defended Socialism as a product of economic necessity." Maynard continues:

The ideas put forward in his novel, What is to be Done? are not original. They are all to be found in Owen, Fourier, Georges Sand, Godwin or John Stuart Mill.... The Fourierist features of the book show themselves in one of Vera's dreams, where we see the community of the "phalanstery" living in a palace of aluminum and glass ... and Russia converted into a paradise of fertility, beauty and healthfulness by the subjection of nature to the needs of man - a glimpse of Socialism as a systematic development of productive resources which anticipates the Bolsheviks.... Lenin's widow tells us that the works of Chernyshevsky were among her husband's favourite books. He was very plainly a forerunner of the Bolsheviks, he was inspired by English Utilitarianism, and hardly, if at all, in the regular Populist succession. 2

1 Quoted in Edmund Wilson, To the Finland Station, New York, Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1940, p. 73.

2 Maynard, Flux, pp. 71-3, Chapter 5.

It is a fact that the revolutionaries of 1917 were deeply influenced by all that great ferment of socialist thought and agitation of the late nineteenth century, a part of which sprang from the Owenite movement in England. Herten had made Owen's acquaintance in London. Dobrolyubov wrote an essay on Owen. The Decembrist Shakhovskiy read Owen in prison. Owen, and Comte were popular reading among Russian university students in the 1870's and their reading was deepened by university courses in English political thought.¹

Marx's contribution to the Revolution was a criticism of the existing State and a call to the working class to throw off its chains, to seize power and make the State theirs. Beyond that Marx did not go, and Marxists directed all their energies to the first task - the seizure of power. "The socialists", wrote socialist Morris Hillquit, "are concerned only with the immediate effects of their proposed measures on the welfare of the present population, and if they venture at all to inquire into the future, they limit their inquiries to such immediate effects...."²!! And it is apparently true that although both Marx and Engels wrote and published a great deal there is not one pamphlet by either of them which treats at all systematically the questions which would face the socialists who managed to gain power.³

1 Paul Milyukov, "The Influence of English Political Thought in Russia, SR, 5:258-270

2 Socialism in Theory and Practice, New York, Macmillan Co., 1912, p. 110.

3 cf. Schwartz, p. 78 and Veblen, Thorstein, "The Socialist Economics of Karl Marx and His Followers", Quarterly Journal of Economics, 1905-6, vol. 20, p. 593.

But in the Party and among its sympathizers there was "a hard core of men and women determined to create a Socialist State. But what was the Socialist State, and how was it to be built? Marx could not help".¹ Those who thus far had followed Marx's guidance had now to look elsewhere for help. It is reasonable to suppose that in their search they remembered the "Utopian" socialists, socialists who had attempted to work out solutions for the problems of government, and foremost among them was Robert Owen.

There are many reasons why Owen's solution might be more attractive to the Bolsheviki than the ideas of other socialists. Owen's whole philosophy is consistent with the Marxian philosophy, with the exception of the "class struggle" in the latter. Where Owen never saw any conflict between the real interests of labour and capital, where he was filled with warmth toward all mankind, Marx preached that the interests of labour and of capital were opposed and could only bring about class hatred. Edmund Wilson clarifies Marx's position:

The demiurge of German idealism was never a God of love, nor did it recognize human imperfection: it did not recommend humility for oneself or charity towards one's fellows. Karl Marx, with his Old Testament sternness, did nothing to humanize its workings. He desired that humanity should be united and happy; but he put that off till the achievement of the synthesis, and for the present he did not believe in human brotherhood. 2

But the essence of Marx's teaching is his "materialism", the doctrine that economic causes determine all events, and his theory

1 Maynard, Flux, p. 252.

2 Wilson, p. 197.

of surplus-value which arises from Ricardo's labour theory of value. Now Owen's whole plan arises from similar conceptions of the nature of value and the influence of environment, and one philosopher has called him "one of the most thoroughgoing materialists who ever lived".¹

That is to say, he conceived of human consciousness as a purely incidental phenomenon occurring in a world of matter, and not as the essential underlying reality of the universe.... Whereas we most of us agree that the inanimate may have a limiting influence on the actions of the animate, Owen thought that the phenomena of consciousness were entirely caused and explained by the influence of the inanimate. ²

Incidentally, followers of both Marx and Owen have attempted to show that those men did not really mean to emphasize the materialist side of life to the exception of all else. Cole has attempted it for Owen.

... though Owen was apt under stress of excitement to make wild statements, he did not, I think, really hold the view often attributed to him that man is solely a product of environment.... He is not always clear on this point; but it should be noted that ... he insists on the collective application of his theory.... In other words, his essential point is not that each individual is in every respect the pure product of his training and environment, but that societies collectively are the product of the forms of training and of social environment in which their members are brought up to manhood. This is a doctrine which may stand as a good social generalisation, when it is admitted that individuals' character cannot be explained completely in these terms.³

The same thing was done for Marx by Engels, who says in a letter

1 Joad, Fabian Tract #182, p. 2.

2 Loc. cit.

3 Cole, Robert Owen, pp. 101-2. Cole is at variance with all other writers on this point. cf. Joad p. 3. "[Owen denied] absolutely that character was in any sense formed or controlled by the individual. It was formed for the individual by external circumstances independently of his will." cf. Hutchins, p. 23, and McCabe, Joseph, Robert Owen, London, Watts & Co., 1920, p. 37.

written in the 1890's

Marx and I are partly responsible for the fact that at times our disciples have laid more weight upon the economic factor than belongs to it. We were compelled to emphasize its central character in opposition to our opponents who denied it, and there wasn't always time, place and occasion to do justice to the other factors in the reciprocal interactions of the historical process. 1

At any rate it was certainly understood by the great body of the followers of Marx and of Owen that their respective teachers believed in the salvation of mankind by material means. 2

The other basic doctrine common to both Marx and Owen is the labour theory of value mentioned above. Owen wrote:

THE NATURAL STANDARD OF VALUE IS, IN PRINCIPLE, HUMAN LABOUR, OR THE COMBINED MANUAL AND MENTAL POWERS OF MEN CALLED INTO ACTION. 3

On this principle Owen advocated his "labour-notes" which were to be the currency of the "new society". Marx's own theory of "surplus-value" seems to be a refinement of this idea, so it is worth examining the sources of his theory. 4

Ricardo, who was a contemporary of Owen, held that the value of any commodity was measured by the work involved in making it. His Principles of Political Economy and Taxation, published in 1817, "became, in a sense, the canon of economic orthodoxy", as Bertrand Russell says, but at the same time "it was found that the devil could quote scripture: both Socialists and Single-

1 Quoted in Wilson, To the Finland Station, p. 183.

2 cf. McCabe, p. 94-5, who recognized the similarity in the Marx-Owen ideal.

3 Owen, A New View, p. 250, (his capitals).

4 The following discussion follows Bertrand Russell, Freedom and Organization, London, Geo. Allen & Unwin, 1934, pp124-30, 199-236.

Taxers derived their proposals from his doctrines".

The Socialists appealed to his theory of value, the Single-Taxers to his theory of rent. More generally, by discussing the distribution of wealth among the different classes of society, he incidentally made clear that different classes may have different interests. There is much in Marx that is derived from Ricardo.... Economists associated with the working-class movements, notably Thomas Hodgskin and William Thompson, basing themselves on Ricardo, argued that no one should receive money except in return for labour.... These men ... became influential in the Socialist movement connected with Robert Owen. At a later stage they influenced Marx, who also based his argument on Ricardo's theory of value....

Marx starts from the orthodox economic doctrine that the exchange value of a commodity is proportional to the amount of labour required for its production ... and the next step in the argument is derived (without adequate acknowledgement) from Malthus's theory of population that there would always be competition among wage earners. ... From these premises, the labour theory of value and the iron law of wages, the theory of surplus value seems to follow. 1

It is evident therefore that Owen and Marx were intellectual companions on the vital question of the source of value.

Both Engels and Marx recognized Owen's work as a genuine contribution to the socialist movement. Engels once said of Owen that he was a man of "almost sublime and childlike simplicity of character, and at the same time one of the few born leaders of men".² Engels himself contributed to one of Owen's newspapers.³ Owen's ideas on education were directly praised by Marx, and Marx as much as Owen insisted on the importance of education. Lenin included Owen, along with St. Simon and Fourier, "in spite of their fantastic notions and utopianism" among the "greatest minds

1 Russell, Freedom and Organization, pp. 124, 129-30, 31-2.

2 Quoted in Harry Laidler, A History of Socialist Thought, New York, Thomas Y. Crowell Co., (1927), p. 106.

3 Wilson, p. 148.

of all time".¹ There is so much agreement between Owen and Marx that it seems only logical that socialists who gained power by adhering to Marxian teaching would, once they discovered that Marx could take them no further, would turn to that socialist who offered a solution to their problems which was most consistent with Marxian principles.

There is still the possibility, however, that the philosophy itself, underlying the various experiments made by the Bolsheviks, supplied the inspiration for these same groping experiments. And that the logic of their philosophy has led them to the same solution of their problems as that suggested by Owen a hundred years before.

¹ Lenin on Britain, a compilation edited by Harry Pollitt, London, M. Lawrence, (1934) p. 80, from What is to be Done?

CONCLUSION

With the information that is available one cannot say positively that the Soviet planners consciously used Owen's solution as the pattern for their own. There was a precedent in Russia for State-organized large-scale agriculture, as well as long experience among the peasants with co-operative effort and collective responsibility. There was also a similar situation facing the planners - the shortage of grain and serious unemployment. Finally there is the similarity of the philosophies of Marx and Owen and the whole heritage of socialist thought among the intelligentsia.

The source of ideas is not easy to trace. The source of Soviet ideas is doubly difficult to determine, because officially Soviet leaders get the credit for all ideas. Still, in this case, we know that Soviet planners studied Owen's life work in connection with the organization of education, and we have seen what a close parallel there is between Owen's system and the kolkhozy of the Soviet Union. It would be completely illogical to suppose that one could study Owen's life work and come away unaware of Owen's detailed plans for the organization of agricultural communities. And if such plans fitted into the philosophy of the Soviet authorities it seems reasonable to suppose they would not be ignored.

ADDENDA I

THE RESORT TO COMPULSION

This addenda is an attempt to describe the various means by which the peasants were persuaded to join the kolkhozy and the devious means which the peasantry has used to defeat government control. It is not a chronicle of horrible events intended to fill the reader with disgust and repulsion at the wickedness of Bolshevik methods. It does give some account of the kulak persecutions, because 'kulak' eventually came to mean any peasant who resisted collectivization. Finally, it attempts to evaluate the "success" of compulsion. To have entered into this discussion in the body of the thesis would have been to wander outside the strict limits of a stated purpose: to show in what ways the plans of Owen and the Soviet differ. It was enough for that purpose to show that in the Soviet Union compulsion had been used.

In chapter 4 (iii) when we examined the background of the collectivization policy we discovered that the Soviet authorities had pursued collectivization partly for political reasons. The failure of the early communes and later, of the Sovhozy, as sources of socialist strength had left the Soviet Union with this alternative: it could continue to allow private enterprise in production, and it would have to hamper initiative less; or it could insist on the socialist ideal. It would have been surprising if the Bolshevik leaders had done anything but the latter.

This was not the first time Soviet authorities used

force to attain their ends. There was a basis for compulsion and violence in their philosophy, and a precedence of violence in grain collection drives was set during the period of 'war communism'. Instructions to seize grain were issued to the Food Detachments (August 20, 1918)

The Food Detachments were to consist of not less than 75 men armed with 2 to 3 machine guns; they were to be so distributed as to establish contact with one another in the shortest possible time; and regular cavalry was to be stationed between each detachment. [Political Commissars were to convene meetings of the village poor] to order surrender of all firearms in the possession of the population, and to distribute such firearms to the Committees of the Poor for the purpose of arming Food Detachments. 1

Nansen the explorer reported in 1923 that the peasants were required to give away so much of their crop that they were unable to buy goods. On the other hand, the government offered the peasant "preposterously low prices" for his produce on the home market.² The peasant was being squeezed. He was reluctant to deliver his grain or to have any dealing with the authorities at all. Even if the peasants had money there were no goods to buy. The manufactured goods which are a peasant's particular interest - textiles, leather, footwear and agricultural implements, were just not to be had.³

Stalin admitted that in 1928 the government was compelled to use "emergency measures" in order to collect grain - not once

1 Birmingham Bureau of Research on Russian Economic Conditions. Memorandum #8, December 1932, The Communist Policy towards the Peasant and the Food Crisis in the U.S.S.R., p.4.

2 F. Nansen, Russia and Peace, London, G. Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1923, p. 107.

3 Chronicle in S.R., March 1928, Vol.6., p.682, cf. Maynard Flux, p. 268.

but twice.

But we had to get the grain. Hence the second relapse to emergency measures, administrative arbitrariness, violation of revolutionary law, raids on peasant houses, illegal searches, and so forth, which affected the political condition of the country and created a menace to the link between the workers and the peasants. 1

The "food-workers" were responsible for getting grain for the government, and naturally favoured collectivization because of the comparative ease with which grain could be collected. Collective harvesting, the storing of grain in central granaries, and so on, would make it possible to deliver the grain surpluses almost automatically. The drive to collectivize began.

Direct and indirect encouragement and pressure

To begin with, kolkhozniks were put in a preferred position over other peasants. Kolkhozy were given free the services of government land surveyors and agents for organizing collective farms. They were allowed to buy machinery and other manufactured goods which otherwise, because of government monopoly, it would have been impossible to get. They were favoured in receiving seed supplies. The property, animals, machinery and money owned by dispossessed kulaks were turned over to kolkhozy as the share of poor peasants who wished to join them. Various decrees extending various privileges appeared from time to time. A decree of April 2, 1930, freed all socialized draught animals from taxes for two years, granted to kolkhozy loans totalling 500 million

1 Stalin, 2:129.

rubles, cancelled all liabilities which kolkhozniks had incurred against the state prior to joining a kolkhoz, and freed kolkhozy from repaying to the State the value of kulak property.¹ Additional tax decreases, loans and so forth were granted from time to time. When collectivization had been more or less solidified in the grain growing areas, the authorities shifted their organizing efforts to the Siberian and Far Eastern provinces. Legislation passed on December 11, 1933, extends very special privileges to the Far Eastern kolkhozy. This decree exempts for ten years these kolkhozy from obligatory deliveries of all grains. Most of the kolkhozy in the region were exempted as well from deliveries of meat, potatoes, wool, milk, butter, soybeans, vegetables and flax. Prices to be paid to all kolkhoz fisheries in this province were raised by twenty per cent as were the wages of most workers, technicians, and professional men.² For many peasants, the "cultural institutions - reading rooms, the printed newspaper, radios, nurseries for children, clubs - [which could] be more readily promoted in the collective group, [represented] a very real inducement to join".³

But if the inducements to join kolkhozy were not enough they were accompanied by such discrimination against the individual peasant that life outside the kolkhoz became increasingly

1 Ladejinsky, PSQ., 49:38, (from 25 to 40 per cent of all the indivisible funds of the kolkhozy organized by May 1930 consisted of such property, Ibid., 30.)

2 Legislation in SR., 12:715.

3 Harper, Making Bolsheviks, p. 90

harsh and uncertain. If a family tried to improve its position it was in danger of being labelled "kulak" and of losing all its goods and chattels in consequence. Yet if peasants could not produce enough to meet their high taxes, their property might be taken in forfeiture. Sometimes the local Soviet requisitioned their land and gave in return poorer land distant from their homes. They also had to suffer petty annoyances and minor deprivations of all sorts. Sometimes their children were refused admittance to schools. Paraffin, and sugar and salt were sold only to kolkhozniks.¹

Sir John Maynard has described the predicament of the individual peasant thus:

The process of collectivisation is a continuing one, involving changes as each additional batch of peasants decides to join. This means a continuing process of redistribution, in which those who remain uncollectivized normally receive the worst and most distant land, allotted to them normally only for one agricultural year, at the end of which another redistribution may be made necessary in consequence of new adherents to collectivization.... The marvel is that any uncollectivised peasant has found it economically possible to survive. Though it is frequently stated that he pays only 10 per cent more in dues and taxes than the collectivised, there are published orders which show that, in some regions, at least, the excess is four or five times as much as this. 2

Still, collectivization raised great hopes among the peasantry. In areas where no machine had ever been, technical civilization began to penetrate.

1 Baikalov, S.R., vol. 8, p.542. Ciliga, A., The Russian Enigma, London, G. Routledge and Sons, (1940), p. 98.

2 Maynard, in Slav. Rev. 15: 62.

Wireless and cinema came to villages that were without a school the day before; where the plough was still unknown and the earth was broken with the aid of the ancestral hoe, tractors made their appearance. The people were dazzled....

From now onwards, a new road, though strewn with terrible sacrifices, lay open before the peasants. The storm of collectivization was clearing new horizons. Horror and hope were born at the same instant. 1

Individual peasants still resist the invitation to join kolkhozy, but according to Jasny they bear a relentless and increasing burden. An order of July 1939, for instance, fixed meat delivery quotas for individual peasants at twice those for kolkhozniks. A law passed in September of the same year fixed the income tax on 4000 rubles at 404 rubles for a kolkhoznik, but at 720 rubles for an individual peasant. Even in the payment of insurance premiums (compulsory for all houses, machinery, livestock and crops) the individual peasant paid at rates 66 2/3 to 125 per cent higher than the kolkhoznik and the kolkhoz, and in case of loss they received about 20 per cent less. (order of April 4, 1940) On the other hand, as Jasny points out:

The income of the kolkhozniki derived from the kolkhozy had already been subject to heavy taxation, mainly in the form of obligatory deliveries, before it reached them.... The huge delivery and tax burdens of the individual peasant in the first place reflect the heavy burden imposed directly, and especially indirectly, on the kolkhoz peasant. 2

Kulaks and compulsion

There is no doubt that the kulak was officially the "class enemy" in the countryside. As such he could expect no

1 Cilliga, The Russian Enigma, p. 100

2 Jasny, pp. 313-17.

mercy. He was to be rooted out of the community, his possessions were to be confiscated. There was no doubt what would happen to a kulak once he was caught--but, the question was, who was a kulak? Here is the source of uncertainty which created panic among the peasants, which caused them to slaughter their cattle wildly in order to dodge an arbitrary definition. On January 16, 1930, appeared this decree: "Those kulaki who rapaciously slaughter their animals or incite others to do so" shall be deprived of all their property. They will at the same time be subjected to criminal prosecution "and the courts are to sentence them up to two years of detention, with or without deportation."¹

Stalin had said:

In order to squeeze the kulaks out as a class we must break down the resistance of this class in open fight and deprive it of the productive sources of its existence and development... ²

The rich peasant must go. He is a blood-sucker, a vampire--he will recreate capitalism and landlordism. ³

A kulak was not admitted to a collective farm. Bread rations were denied him. Doctors were forbidden to attend him. Relatives were ordered to refuse him help. ⁴

Unfortunately for him, the peasant could never be sure whether or not he would be labelled 'kulak'. Definitions varied:

a successful farmer (Bukharin)

Ownership of property does not necessarily indicate a kulak. A kulak is a peasant who desires to take advantage of his neighbour. This desire is, of course, common to every

1 Legislation in SR., 10:208.

2 Stalin, 2:278.

3 Quoted in Harper, p. 95

4 Lawton, An Economic History of Soviet Russia, 2:535.

peasant, whether rich or poor. But the rich peasants are better situated to take advantage of their neighbours than the poor ones." (Kalinin)

Any peasant who owned more than a pair of draught beasts was a kulak ... a middle peasant was one who owned a pair of draught beasts ... a peasant who owned none at all was poor - a proletarian in the true sense of the word. (according to Lenin) 1

A kulak is a peasant farmer having one or more of the following characteristics: (1) employment of two agricultural laborers, one of them hired for not less than one half of the year; (2) possession of not less than three head of draught cattle, in some regions not less than four, and the cultivation of more than 10, 12, 14 or 16 desiatins, depending on the region; (3) ownership of a small processing plant with at least one hired laborer in some other branch of the farm; (4) ownership of some commercial enterprise, even without the assistance of a hired man; (5) individual ownership or large share ownership of modern agricultural machinery." 2 (Council of Peoples Commissars and Central Statistical Office).

A village soviet which does not revise its work to adjust it to the new functions in connection with the mass collectivization ... will be in fact a kulak-soviet." (Central Executive Committee of the U.S.S.R.) 3

The poor and average individual peasant who helps the kulak to combat the kolkhoz undermines the collectivization movement ... he is in fact an ally of the kulak." 4

As Lawton has observed, it became as difficult to detect as to define a kulak. "Rykov cited cases of peasants being stigmatised as kulaks who owned a gramophone or wireless set, or who made use of metal instead of wooden spoons.... Poverty was so common, gradations of wealth so imperceptible." 5

1 Lawton, p. 451.

2 Ladejinsky PSQ., 49:16, quoted from Pravda November, 1927

3 Jasny, p.307, quoting an order of January 25, 1930.

4 Ibid., p. 308. Sixth Congress of Soviets March 1931.

5 Lawton, Economic History of Soviet Russia, p. 457

That this could happen is not surprising if we consider the kind of order which local Party and Soviet authorities received during the bitter times of collectivization. The Slavonic Review published in its chronicle of Russia in 1930 a report concerning a secret order which supplemented the general directives about penalties to be imposed on kulaks. According to this report

... all the kulaki in the given district are to be composed of those kulaki who are guilty of active resistance to the Soviet plan, and also those known as "latent counter-revolutionaries". All who are in the first category, must be arrested at once and shot without trial.... This measure should be applied without any wavering, as it is intended for the prevention of peasant risings and for the extermination of the possible leaders of such risings. In the second group those kulaki are included who habitually hire laborers.... 1

The Commissar of Agriculture in March 1931 said that those who were against the collectives were against the State. If the poor and the middle peasants fail to join the movement, asked Yakovlev, are they with the kulaks or with the kolkhozy?

Is it possible now to remain neutral - "I am, you know, neither with this one nor with that one". It is not possible to be both with the kulak and with the collective. That is why, comrades, the problem of the individual poor and middle peasant is being interpreted in a new light. 2

To join a kolkhoz seemed the only way to escape persecution.

Stalin insists collectivization be voluntary

It is worth while to read the speeches of Stalin in the light of the actual method of collectivization as described above.

1 Chronicle in SR. 8:710

2 Ladejinsky, PSQ., vol. 49, p.209, quoted from Pravda.

It is these pronouncements which have led outsiders, and perhaps many Russians, to believe that the new czar, like the old, is separated from the people by a bureaucracy which screens from him the burdens his people suffer; that he does not know of the injustices and that he does not will them. Witness Stalin's words:

We need neither decriers nor boosters of individual peasant production. We need sober statesmen capable of getting the best out of individual peasant economy, but who, at the same time, will be capable of gradually transferring individual economy to the lines of collectivism. The solution lies in gradually amalgamating individual small and middle-peasant production into large-scale collective and co-operative, entirely voluntary associations.... 1

Collective farms cannot be set up by force. To do so would be stupid and reactionary. The collective farm movement must lean on the active support of the basic masses of the peasantry. Forms of collective farm construction in the developed regions cannot be mechanically transplanted to the backward regions. To do so would be stupid and reactionary. 2

We know that in a number of grain regions of Turkestan there have already been attempts to "overtake and surpass" the advanced regions of the Soviet Union by resorting to threats of applying military force, by threatening to deprive the peasants who do not yet wish to enter the collective farms of irrigation water and of manufactured goods.... Who benefits by these distortions, this bureaucratic decreeing of the collective farm movement, this wretched threatening of the peasants? Nobody but our enemies! 3

But Markoosha Fischer tells a story of collectivization which does not concur with the implication in Stalin's speeches.

1 Stalin, 2:131, speech of July 1928.

2 Stalin, 2:281, speech of Feb. 24, 1930.

3 Stalin, 2:283, speech of Feb. 24, 1930.

Mrs. Fischer quotes a peasant, the only Communist in his village, (1930) who described how his village had been collectivized:

"When we were told of collectivization, he said, I liked the idea. So did a few others in our village.... The rest of the village was dead set against it....

Well, we got going. Then one day an order comes from the Klin party committee that we had to get 100 more families into our little collective. We managed to pull in about a dozen. And, believe me, this was not easy.... I went to Klin and explained the situation to the party committee. I begged them to let us go ahead as we started and I promised them, if they did, to have the whole village in the collective by next year. They wouldn't listen to me. They had orders from Moscow, long sheets saying how many collectives with how many members they had to show on their records. That was all. They told me that I was sabotaging collectivization and that unless I did as I was told I would be thrown out of the party and disgraced for ever. Well, I knew that I couldn't get our people in, unless I did what I heard others were doing; in other words forced them.... I called a village meeting and I told the people that they had to join the collective, that these were Moscow's orders, and if they didn't, they would be exiled and their property taken away from them. They all signed the paper that same night, every one of them.... And the same night they started to do what the other villages of the U.S.S.R. were doing when forced into collectives - to kill their livestock....

I took the new membership list to the committee at Klin, and this time they were very pleased with me.... They had the list and could forward it to Moscow; that was all they cared about. I couldn't blame them, they were under orders as well as I was.

Our village remained in an uproar.... Things went from bad to worse.... Then last March the papers were full of Stalin's article 'Dizziness with Success'.... Everybody in the village now laughed at me. I wanted to go away and never return. But the committee wouldn't let me go. "no," they said, 'you carry on but do it right this time.' ... They made me spit into my own face. And here we are now, the same twelve families working together as we had started, only with our livestock gone, our minds confused, and the villagers laughing into my face...."

1 Markoosha Fischer, My Lives in Russia, New York, Harper & Bros., 1944, pp. 49-51.

Stalin blamed the district and local Communists for the excesses that occurred. He said that the "rapid successes" achieved in the sphere of the collective farm movement had caused the Party men to become "dizzy". Such an explanation implies that when great success is achieved without coercion people are likely to turn to compulsion to gain the desired end ... a strange idea, surely.

Success sometimes turns people's heads. It engenders excessive self-opinion and conceit. That may easily happen to the representatives of a Party which holds power, especially in the case of our Party, the strength and authority of which are almost immeasurable... 1

Stalin's article was the signal for abatement in the intensive campaign to collectivize.

Sholokhov's novel Virgin Soil Upturned has as its theme the progress of collectivization in a southern village, Gremyachy. Sholokhov has recorded in this novel the resistance of the peasants to the movement, particularly to the over-all socialization of their cattle and chickens. Resentment grew to such a pitch that many peasants were ready to revolt against the communists. But after they read Stalin's "dizzy with success" speech they changed their minds and refused to follow the White Guardist officer who had incited them to rebel.

Owing to this article in Pravda we've decided not to revolt ... Our village authorities have been stupid; they've driven some of us into the collective farm, they've unfairly treated many middling peasants as kulaks, and our government didn't understand that you can only frighten girls, but you can't treat all the people like that.... Well, we did think, of course, that the order had come from the central

1 Stalin, Leninism, 2:294.

authorities to squeeze the fat out of us, and we understood that this propaganda had been started by the Central Committee of the Communists, and we said the windmill sails don't turn without wind.... But now ... it appears the peasant's going to have an easier time ... [and so forth.]¹

In the light of developments after the publication of this novel, the reflections of the White Guardist officer are not without interest.

What a people! Scum! Fools, bearing God's curse! They don't realise that this article is a shameful fraud, a manoeuvre. And they believe it like children.... For the sake of high politics the fools are played like a fish on a hook, the reins are slackened so that they shan't be choked to death, and they take it all in good faith. Well, all right.² They'll understand and be sorry, but then it'll be too late.

Indeed, the consternation shown at local Party headquarters after the speech suggests that local authorities had only been obeying their superiors and now suddenly found themselves without a leg to stand on, scapegoats in their own communities. Sholokhov describes the confusion

Shortly after the newspapers containing Stalin's article arrived in the district, the District Committee sent the [local Party nucleus] a lengthy letter of instruction. But it dealt only vaguely and unintelligibly with the problem of eradicating the effects of forced collectivization. It was obvious that there was complete bewilderment in the District Committee, and nobody from the district³ authorities showed his face in any of the collective farms.

The peasants took Stalin at his word and there followed many withdrawals from the Gremyachy kolkhoz. The week after Stalin's speech the District Headquarters evidently received

1 Sholokhov, p. 299. cf. ante p. from Kravchenko.

2 Sholokhov, p. 304.

3 Ibid., p. 321.

further instructions which did in fact mean forcible collectivization. 'Round came the District Agricultural boss to pass on the word:

Not in any circumstances are you to hand back the cattle and implements to the members who have resigned. Leave it till the autumn, and then we shall see.... Of course by rights we ought to return their property, but the Regional Committee takes the attitude that they are to be given back only in exceptional cases, observing the class principle.... Give them back to the poor, but promise the middling peasants they'll have theirs in the autumn.

[The local chairman, a Party man, objected]

But won't the same thing happen as with hundred per cent collectivization?... If we don't give back the middling peasants their cattle, that means in fact we're putting pressure on them, doesn't it? What will they plough and sow with?

It's not for you to worry over that. Your concern is not with the individual peasant, but with your collective farm.

... 1

Yet the government from time to time admonished the local soviets to refrain from using coercion.

The village soviets must radically repudiate attempts at administrative coercion in matters concerning the kolkhozy. 2

And the Bolshevik Party disclaimed completely any responsibility for the compulsory socialization of cattle.

Only enemies of the kolkhozy may permit the compulsory sequestration of cows, pigs, sheep, etc., belonging to individual members of the kolkhozy.... 3

Even with collectivization fairly well completed, grain deliveries were away below the State requirements. In Pravda on August 21, 1932, we find Stalin practising Bolshevik "self-criticism".

1 Sholokhov, p. 323.

2 Legislation, Dec. 22, 1931, SR., 11:202.

3 Legislation, from Izvestia, March 27, 1932, in SR. 11:444.

Not in the peasants must we seek for the causes of the grain collection difficulties, but in our own ranks. Because we are at the helm of power, we have at our disposal the national resources, we are called upon to direct the work of the collectives and we have to shoulder the entire responsibility for the work in the village. 1

It appears, however, that it is again the local leaders who have gone astray. They have not understood this, they did not realize that. But, as Harper says, the claim that local authorities were to blame for arbitrary actions should not be taken at face value. There was no "dizziness".

The claim that the overreaching in the use of compulsion was local hot-headedness cannot be accepted. The published directions of the central authorities were not unclear and were interpreted precisely in the same way all over the country. The overreaching was general and not confined to a few localities. 2

Peasant resistance within the kolkhozy

It was not enough to force the peasants into the kolkhozy. It became necessary as well to extend the lines of government control within the farms, to shift and to modify the controls in order to increase general productivity and the returns to the State. As in the years of War Communism, collectives that sprang up under the shelter of government privileges were in most instances artificial. They, like the communes of 1920 (pp.2-3 ×

1 Quoted in Ladejinski, PSQ, vol. 49, p. 237.

2 Harper, p. 94. Books in English are still published in which the Soviet official interpretation is blindly accepted. For example: "It was necessary for Stalin and the Central Committee to go against the general trend in the party and insist that collectivization be voluntary. Stalin succeeded in correcting the situation before any considerable section of the peasantry had been alienated ...". From a book by Wm. M. Mandel, A Guide to the Soviet Union, New York, The Dial Press, 1946, p. 101.

before) were only "blocks of peasant patches of land pasted together." Once again the peasant village had assumed a disguise. The form was there, without the will to fill it out.

Herr Puschel, a German agronomist who was invited to Russia as an agricultural adviser, said before a congress of the kolkhozy in July 1929,

You must not deceive yourselves ... the majority of the existing kolkhozy are living corpses.... Very grave mistakes are made in the technique of land-cultivation.... The insufficient financing of the kolkhozy on one hand, and grave mistakes in management on the other, have already discredited the collectivist movement. ¹

Certainly mistakes were made; mistakes which only increased peasant reluctance to join the kolkhozy. Livestock was collectivized when there were no sheds to keep it in, and cattle mortality was high from this cause alone. The more prosperous farmers (often the most able) stayed out of the kolkhozy, and organizers sent from the towns knew little about farm work. The words of Herr Puschel were too true. ²

Individual peasants found ways of avoiding the first pressures of the "class principle" too. For example: if a man had three cows he might be branded a "kulak" so he partitioned his farm instead. His wife would obtain a divorce, which was at that time a simple matter, and, with one of the cows, would be considered a separate economic unit. The "kulak's" son might build himself a hut on a corner of his father's land, move there

1 Baikalov, SR. 8:544.

2 cf. Trotsky's comment in Ciliga, p. 270. "From peasants' nags and wooden plows however combined, you cannot create large-scale farming any more than a combination of fishermen's rowboats can make a steamer".

with the third cow, and thus create another independent farm. By such parcelling, a single taxable kulak family so multiplied itself that it became three pauper families and no longer an object of taxation or persecution. The villagers have managed to evade harsh laws ever since by similar devious means.¹

In the Soviet novel Brusski, the author tries to show how each peasant works only for himself; none desires to co-operate. Here are the new collective farmers building an irrigation canal under the direction of Kirka, the kolkhoz chairman:

Kirka went aside to a higher part of the ground and surveyed the work. The peasants were smoking, scratching themselves and staring at the sky; the women called to each other, and here and there a heated dispute arose between the villagers from Krivaya and Zaovrazhenoye.... Behind the willow tree where Grandfather Kitai sat, Shlenka was hopping about, slapping his spade on the ground, now on one spot, now on another.

"What are you doing there?" Kirka cried to him.

"There's a little snake here. And he won't crawl over the spade. He goes to one side, and I put the spade there, and then he crawls away again; he won't go over it...."

"Comrades!" Kirka shouted, standing on tiptoe. "You're all working as if for strangers. If you go on like this, we won't be finished by autumn, and everything will be burnt out. We're working for ourselves, so let's look sharp about it".

For a few minutes the peasants worked with greater energy, but again they slackened, straightened their backs and stared at the hot sky.

"Well, what can I do with you all?" Kirka muttered,...

"They ought to have a taste of the whip; they won't work." ²

These same peasants, when the water begins to flow along the canal, rush off to their former strips of land in order to irrigate their

1 Solonevich, SR., 14:87

2 F. Panferov, Brusski, New York, International Publishers (1930) pp. 272-3.

own plot first. This story echoes the observations Nansen made in 1923: "Despite the village system, with its common ownership, the peasant is a thorough individualist, avoiding as far as he can all work for the common weal."¹

Perhaps no better indication that the peasant had unwillingly parted with his private enterprise is to be found than in the great number of withdrawals from kolkhozy which followed Stalin's speech of February 24, 1930. Meyendorff gives the following figures of collectivization for the Moscow region:

| Per cent of households ² | | |
|-------------------------------------|------|---|
| 1 October 1929 | 2.7 | Stalin's speech re-stated the voluntary nature of collectivization. |
| 1 January 1930 | 12.7 | |
| 1 February 1930 | 36.0 | |
| 20 February 1930 | 72.0 | (See p.140 addenda) |
| 20 March 1930 | 25.0 | |

As we have already seen however, the pressures on peasants outside kolkhozy did not stop, and eventually the kolkhoz system blanketed the entire agricultural economy of the U.S.S.R.

Compulsion not successful:

The resort to compulsion in Soviet agriculture did not solve the problem of food supply nor did it encourage the efficient use of resources of manpower and materials. Instead it

1 Nansen, p. 112

2 Meyendorff, Notes on the Five-Year Plan, Slav. Rev. 9:28 cf. Ladejinsky, Pol. Science Quar. 49:39.

created a chain of undesirable reactions both economic and social, which have further delayed and distorted the growth of co-operative agriculture.

The authorities hoped that collectivization would make the collection of the grain tax easy; that it would be hard for peasants to withhold produce, particularly grain. But the hungry peasant managed to obtain grain in spite of all efforts to stop him, and consequently he upset the calculations of the Plan.

...coming out to sow, the peasant brigade would throw on the ground, secretly from the brigadier, somewhere under a furrow, in a small heap, a few pounds of grain. Sometimes grain would be buried in a piece of rag. Afterwards the peasant would unearth those "treasures" and consume them.... The result was that the grain ... destined for sowing was either buried in the fields or stolen by the workers. On fields which according to plan were marked as sown, there grew nothing or almost nothing. 1

Grain requisitions were so heavy in some areas that peasants had no grain left at seeding-time. In years of bad harvest the peasant's condition was just that much worse. Sir John Russell relates the story of how some peasants had survived the very lean years after 1930.

... in the preceding famine, grain had been sent down for sowing, and the peasants had eaten it; then a second lot of grain was sent with soldiers to watch the sowing, and this time the soldiers ate it. Then, as it was too late for more grain, potatoes were sent for planting; the peasants planted them by day, stole back to the fields by night, dug them out and ate them. 2

The peasantry resisted the grain-collection Plan collectively as well as singly by disregarding the obligations that their

1 Solonevich, "Collectivization in Practice", SR., 14:89.

2 Russell, SR., 16:339.

kolkhoz owed the State. As the Plan extended, the kolkhozniks changed their points of resistance. They ignored or evaded many decrees. The kolkhozy were supposed to pay their members on a piecework basis, but many paid on a membership basis. The "Red Harvest" kolkhoz in the middle Volga region for instance, fixed the ration of grain at 300 kilograms per member without reference to the labour each member had expended on the kolkhoz. (1931) Also, kolkhozy were to deliver grain to the State before any other allotments were made. Yet numerous cases reported in Soviet papers and speeches show that there were wide departures from this law. A kolkhoz in the Northern Caucasus had allotted part of its income to its fund of working capital. Others had given sums to special funds: cultural funds, women's funds, Red Army funds, funds for communal feeding and so forth, before the State had received its "share". The kolkhoz "Fishforan" in the lower Volga region in one year illegally allotted to various such funds a sum totalling 4,350 rubles.¹ A certain kolkhoz chairman went so far as to declare that in his kolkhoz at least it would not be the peasants who received the residual of the crop. Said he:

I shall not deliver a single pood [of grain] until I have provided for my household, until I have created funds for those [members of the family] in the army, as well as insurance, seed and fodder funds. For all this I shall use the grain already in the granary and I shall deliver² to the State only what remains from the latest threshing."

1 Legislation (1931) SR., 11:193-5.

2 Quoting Novikov, Ladejinsky, P.S.Q. 49:256.

This chairman had undoubtedly "surrendered to the kulak influence."

Kaganovitch, the Bolshevik "trouble-shooter" extraordinary, severely criticized kolkhoz management. Even in proficient kolkhozy, he said, both labour and land were badly organized. In spite of an elaborate system of rewards on a piecework basis, the peasants worked listlessly. In most kolkhozy no system of crop rotation was practised, the same crop was sown year after year. The land was badly ploughed, many patches left unploughed altogether. Harrowing and weeding were carelessly done. In this poorly tilled land, said Kaganovitch, "instead of wheat and rye, weeds flourish". Petty thieving of kolkhoz property was common. "Grain, for instance, was stolen not only from the storehouses, but from seed-drills during sowing, from reaping machines during the harvesting, and from threshers during the threshing. It was even stolen from fields which had not as yet been reaped."¹

The Soviet leaders denounced such theft as "sabotage". Special squads were told off to patrol the fields and the threshing grounds, and all persons plundering kolkhoz property were declared to be "enemies of the people" and liable to be shot or to be imprisoned for no less than ten years.² In 1933 the grain harvest was very good but even then "a regular war went on in the villages ... children were drafted into special 'brigades for

1 Speech in Izvestia, 18 Feb., 1933, quoted in Monograph, p.22.

2 Chronicle 1933, SR., 12:464.

guarding the crops' by spying on the peasants and detecting 'grain barbers' (who clipped the ears off standing corn) and thieves."¹

The Communist Party insisted that the difficulties in agriculture were caused by "anti-Soviet elements" who had crept into positions of trust in the kolkhozy only to betray them.

In the words of a Resolution of the Party:

Worming their way into the kolkhozy as book-keepers, managers, storekeepers, foremen, etc., and, very often, as leading members of kolkhoz managing bodies, the anti-soviet elements ... wreck machinery, sow badly tilled land, organize the pillage of seeds.... Sometimes they succeed in dissolving the kolkhozy. 2

The same elements work into positions of importance in Sovhozy, and,

... by premeditated wrecking of tractors and machinery, by poor cultivation of soil, by bad minding of livestock, by infringement of labour discipline, by pillage ... of sovhoz products [they do great damage to the Sovhozy.] All these anti-soviet and anti-kolkhoz elements prosecute one common aim: they want to restore the power of the kulaks and landowners over the toiling peasants, they want to restore the power of capitalists over the workers. 3

The changes that have been introduced in the delivery system are a good indication that the peasant has found ways to push his own interests over those of the State. Prior to 1933, voluntary agreements were made by kolkhozy with State organizations for delivery of grain. But in 1933, because kolkhozy had avoided as far as possible all exchanges with the government as unprofitable, deliveries became obligatory. The Sovhozy and the Machine-

1 Chronicle 1933, SR., 12:464

2 Legislation, SR., 11:702.

3 Ibid., p. 703.

Tractor Stations were now the only organizations which were allowed to own heavy agricultural machinery, so kolkhoz use of the M.T.S. became almost a necessity. The government fixed the prices and amounts of grain that each kolkhoz was to deliver - on the basis of the planned sown area. It fixed also the rates charged by the M.T.S. for their services; and through the M.T.S. assured the first part of the harvest to the State. This system led in some cases to an actual reduction in sown area. In order to get more grain the government applied a method which had previously been used only for extracting grain from individual peasants - total land area, whether tilled or lying idle, was now used as the base for calculating collections. (1940) All deliveries,¹ meat, eggs, vegetables as well as grain were put on this basis.

But since the kolkhoz management is responsible to the kolkhoz assembly as well as to the government its loyalties are split and very often the interest of the kolkhoz is served first. Singly and collectively resistance to government control continues. In 1939 Molotov complained about one form of opposition:

There are still not a few among the peasants ... who think only of snatching as much as possible for themselves both from the State and from the collective farm.... The interests of the subsidiary homesteads ... have in some cases begun to be set up in opposition to the interests of the collective farms.... To what extent is it normal when in collective farms there are not a few collective farmers - in name only - who for the whole year do not have a single work-day to their credit, or have only some 20-30 work-days, just for forms' sake, so to speak? 2

1 Dr. Ronimois has compared this system to that used by the Arabs in the 8th century.

2 Molotov, speech of March, 1939, quoted in Rothstein, p. 202.

During the war these subsidiary economies became of immense importance, but at the war's end their activities were drastically curbed. The Communist Party in 1946 exposed further abuses in kolkhoz administration, mainly in the distribution of labour-days, and ordered that the waste occasioned by an excess of office staff should be immediately reduced.¹

Soviet postwar literature reveals that after twenty years of collectivization and gradual improvement in kolkhoz organization, the Soviet government has not assured itself of receiving agricultural produce according to the Plan. Gerschenkron has made an extremely interesting study of Soviet postwar plays and novels. Many of them are about the problems of collective farms, and they "serve to illustrate the fact that the struggle of the government versus the peasants in evading the obligation to deliver grain to the procurement agencies has continued unabated."

Both the play of Nikolaj Virta Our Daily Bread, and the novel by Semen Babaevsky, Knight of the Golden Star, refer to the collective farm practice of hiding grain by adding it to the 'seed fund'.... In addition, in Virta's play, a kolkhoz chairman hides the grain by letting it escape into the offals during threshing with the intention of recovering it later during the winter. 2

But, as Gerschenkron asks, since from 1940 the basis of deliveries has been on the area of arable land belonging to the kolkhoz, why do the peasants still want to hide their grain? What do they gain by it?

1 Rothstein, p. 203.

2 Gerschenkron, SR., 9:14.

Possibly the farm hiding grain avoids the pressure to deliver additional grain to the government under the so-called 'decentralized deliveries'. More likely is the supposition that the rigid stipulations of the legislation are impossible of practical implementation and that in reality grain deliveries are determined by taking, in some manner, account of the actual production of grain. Still another possibility is that by concealment of grain the kolkhoz hopes to achieve a reduction of future obligations. Finally, there may be, of course, outright bribery of officials in charge of supervising the process of grain deliveries. In Virta's play the maleficent chairman of the kolkhoz even goes so far as to bribe the director of the M. T. S. station into issuing a falsified certificate concerning the quantity of grain threshed and the employee of the procurement agency into issuing a fictitious receipt for grain that has never been delivered.¹

The dislocation caused by unfulfilled plans can only be estimated, but it is evident that serious waste of resources is attendant. Rigid planning and consequent compulsion have not achieved an economic use of men and materials. They have made more things a crime ... and so more 'criminals', like the schemers described in Virta's play. Yet what the planners originally intended (and perhaps still intend), is the economic use of resources and the uplift of mankind.

¹ Gerschenkron, SR., 9:15.

ADDENDA II

QUESTIONS ASKED OF A PEASANT ABOUT LIFE IN THE KOLKHOZ

This peasant, who lived in a village in the east Ukraine, was interviewed for me by Mr. Peter Isaak, who presented the list of questions and recorded the replies, spring 1952. The peasant was one of those who stayed outside the kolkhoz, although practically the whole village was in it. He is now nearly fifty years old, and left the Ukraine when the Germans were there in the 1940's.

1. What was the area of the kolkhoz?
There were 45 households with an area of 250 hectares.
2. What crops were grown?
In winter: rye and wheat; in summer: wheat, barley, oats. They also grew sunflowers, corn, potatoes, hemp, watermelons, cattle-beets for the kolkhozniks use.
3. What animals did the kolkhoz keep?
Horses and oxen for draught animals; cows, sheep, pigs and hens.
4. Did the kolkhoz own machines or implements of any kind?
They had one reaping machine, one binder, also some harrows and some horse ploughs. They didn't use the MTS at all but managed to do the work themselves.
5. Were there any buildings such as greenhouses, slaughter-houses, flourmills etc.?
There was no greenhouse or slaughterhouse. There was a windmill for grinding but it was not much used because they had to pay so and so much grain. They had instead grinding stones in the house; they had only about 10 or 15 pounds to grind anyway. The kolkhoz gave their harvest in grain and almost never milled it.

6. Was there a library? a cinema? a kindergarten?
No library. There were some travelling movies about three times over the summer. The kolkhozniks didn't like it because they had to pay for it. There was a creche for the children up to about 6, nearly every kolkhoz had one. There were about 15 children in it, with 2 nursemaids and a cook.
7. Was there a public meeting place?
Yes, in the so-called administration building. The offices were here.
8. Was there a communal dining hall?
No. Nowhere around there. The people wouldn't like that.
9. Did each family have its own house?
Yes, its own hut.
10. How many members in each household?
From 4 to 8 people.
11. How big was the household plot? What was grown on it?
They had from half to one hectare and grew potatoes and vegetables.
12. What animals were owned by the household?
Each kolkhoznik had the right to have one cow, one calf, about 10 sheep, and as many pigs and chickens as he wanted. They didn't have many chickens or pigs because of lack of feed.
13. What implements were owned?
They had no implements.
14. What was eaten?
Bread they ate, but not as much as they wanted. Potatoes, eggs and milk but no meat. On holidays they had chicken. They had meat sometimes in harvest time when one cow was slaughtered for the whole kolkhoz.
15. Where did most of the family income come from?
From the labour-days (trudodni) from the plot, and also from selling the young animals.
16. What kinds of jobs did women do outside of the housework?
The women worked the same as the men in summer, and did additional work at home.

17. What was a labour-day? What were some of the norms of labour-days?

Labour-days were the only method of paying people. To plough one hectare of land with 2 horses was the standard labour-day.

Women's work: to cultivate and weed one hectare of potatoes or sunflowers was equal to 5 labour-days; to bind 260 sheaves of grain was equal to one labour-day, picking up potatoes from one hectare of land was 5 labour-days.

Men's work: To sow two hectares by hand was one labour-day; to mow one hectare of wheat with a scythe was worth 5 labour-days. You would probably need 2 days to do this. To mow one hectare of oats was 3-labour days; to carry manure to the field and load it and unload it was worth 1 labour-day for 15 cart-loads. To feed and care for the horses was considered the most profitable and steady job; for this they got 30 labour-days a month but had no day off.

18. What were the working hours? Were they different in winter? How long did the women work?

The day was not "normed". The kolkhozniks worked from sunrise to sunset.

19. How many persons worked in the offices, keeping books etc? Were these people any better paid than the other kolkhozniks?

There was a manager, a bookkeeper, a warehouseman, and a brigadier. They didn't do any physical work and they got more trudodni than the other kolkhozniks.

20. What was the usual number of members and kind of work done in the brigade?

There was only one brigade in this kolkhoz. Men and women worked in links of about 5 to 6 people. For weeding and binding the links were only from 3 to 5 people.

21. Could a kolkhoznik choose which link and brigade he would be in?

The kolkhozniks were free to join links but the work they did was delegated to them.

22. Were the norms of work ever changed?

The norms were revised usually once a year but as a rule it was an increase.

23. How many labour-days would a man earn in a year?

The average for women was 500 and for a man 700. The labour-day was worth from 200 grams to 2500, depending on the crop. From 1930 to 1943 they gave from 1 kilo to 2½ kilos of grain.

24. Would a kolkhoznik prefer to work on a Sovhoz?
Kolkhozniks were not allowed to work anywhere else, except by government order. For big families it was not profitable to work elsewhere outside the kolkhoz.
 25. Were there any individual peasants in the district?
There were. (this peasant was one of them.) They had each .15 hectares to provide for their families and had to go to work on the Sovhozy or in the towns.
 26. What were the reasons for collectivizing agriculture?
The authorities ordered it.
 27. Why did peasants join?
The authorities ordered it.
 28. Did the kolkhoz meeting have the right to discuss the plan it was given to fulfil?
The plans were 'lowered' to the kolkhoz and were not discussed at all. They were formally received.
 29. How often was the kolkhoz management elected?
There were no definite terms. It depended on the desire of the kolkhozniks and the local Soviet. Sometimes the manager was sent from some other place.
 30. What did the household do for recreation?
No answer.
 31. Were any people employed just as guards?
There was one guard. He was appointed for the field and for the yard.
 32. Did the children go to school every day? For how many years?
It was compulsory to go for five years. Some did not send their children because of lack of clothing and footwear. School was six days a week.
 33. Did the children receive any military training?
No. They were taught marching, however.
 34. Did the children help with the farm work?
The children helped during school-time sometimes, with their teachers, and after school, collecting the different kinds of weeds. In their holidays they helped if their parents wanted them to.
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