TITLE:  IS AGRARIAN PRIVATIZATION THE RIGHT PATH? A DISCUSSION OF HISTORICAL MODELS

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Agrarian or agricultural reform in the former USSR has been a major subject of concern in both Russia and the west over the past decade or so. In recent years, meanwhile, the problem seems to have grown, and we have been bombarded with threats of a major agricultural crisis. As a consequence, increasing attention has been devoted to the whole question of privatization, decollectivization, and the elimination of state control over agriculture. In the face of these concerns, the Russian government has adopted a number of laws designed to transform the conduct of Russian agriculture. This reform legislation consists of three parts: restructuring state and collective farms, the encouragement of individual and family farming, and the development of cooperatives to take on the marketing and supply functions for these farms. Meanwhile, as some of the fears about a major crisis have faded, we continue to be confronted with fresh sowing and harvesting panics which have in turn inspired a variety of new measures that seemingly threaten a revival of traditional, Soviet-style approaches to the agricultural sector, primarily in the form of yearly sowing and harvesting campaigns but, should the political or economic situation grow worse, perhaps even a return to more coercive methods of grain collection.

What has been accomplished so far? On the one hand, the state and collective farms have restructured themselves and some 250,000 individual farms have been organized. On the other hand, this process has also generated considerable conflict, mostly at the expense of individual farmers. Meanwhile, under the influence of the January 1992 price liberalization and the concomitant unwillingness to continue subsidizing the agricultural sector, huge disproportions developed between the prices for supplies and equipment and both government purchase prices for crops and free market prices for food products. This contemporary version of the classic "scissors crisis," familiar from the 1920s as a cause of collectivization, affected farmers of all types, provoking widespread protests. As a result, the government was forced to advance new credits. Meanwhile, an independent organization known as AKKOR (The Association of Peasant Farms and Agricultural Cooperatives) was granted quasi-governmental status, contracting with the state to deliver grain in exchange for subsidies for private farmers.

Despite all this activity, none of these measures seem to have had a significant impact on the agricultural situation. Not only has overall agricultural output continued to decline but state and collective farms are refusing to deliver grain to the state procurement agency leading to a sharp decline in government collections. Livestock production has been especially hurt provoking an expansion in imports of grain for animal fodder. Peasant farmers, meanwhile, are either unwilling or unable to respond to the presumed incentives of the developing market environment. Despite their apparent novelty, the government's
reforms have come to naught. In part, this outcome is a consequence of the ongoing political conflicts in Moscow, particularly over the question of establishing private property in land and reforming the state and collective farms. In part, however, it is because the government’s entire program was mis-conceived from the beginning. The task of this article is to explain why.

There is a long history of problems with the state and collective farm system and of government attempts to reform it so as to increase productivity and efficiency—all to no avail. The buzzwords of contemporary agrarian reform, meanwhile, are "privatization" and "de-collectivization." While these terms appear to refer to a single process of abolishing the collective farm system and forming individually managed and privately owned peasant farms, in fact, they refer to two separate processes: on the one hand, the creation of individual or "peasant" farms; on the other, a process of de-statization or denationalization and the relinquishment of the state's control over agriculture. Thus, at the very heart of the reform dilemma is not so much "privatization" in the western sense as the question of who decides how the land is to be cultivated, what crops are to be planted, and so on: the government in Moscow or local farmers. The goal of the current reforms is thus to provide new incentives to producers by granting increased levels of autonomy.

Why, however, did the government feel it necessary to introduce such reforms? Traditional explanations cite insufficient output, a threat to Russia's Great Power status created by agricultural backwardness and low productivity, or a desire to win political support. Stated goals, meanwhile, refer almost exclusively to overcoming the supposed current food crisis and enabling Russians to "live better" in the future. None of these explanations is fully satisfactory. On the other hand, Russian agriculture suffers from a long list of real deficiencies, the solution to which requires it to be liberated from the straightjacket imposed by the Stalinist command-administrative system. Thus, it would seem that the primary motivation behind the current reforms is, in fact, a political one and perhaps even a moral or spiritual one—to break with the survivals of Stalinism. It is this motivation which ultimately explains the paradoxical direction that reform has taken over the past six years.

The search for alternatives to the Stalinist system first took reformers to the period of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in the 1920s. NEP offered a native-born alternative to the existing system while preserving ideological legitimacy. Moreover, NEP suggested the efficacy of rapid change from above since, with seemingly little effort, it produced dramatic results in a very short period of time. In retrospect, however, such a strategy was anachronistic—particularly when the nature of the economic and political environments were so radically different. Meanwhile, other forces, especially the growing Russian nationalism, were pushing people to look beyond the Soviet system for models. Inevitably, they turned to the last great reform project of the tsarist regime—the Stolypin Agrarian Reforms. And this, in turn, shifted the focus of agrarian reform away from traditional forms of organizational restructuring to the more sensitive issues of privatization, individual ownership of land, and the formation of peasant family farms. Yet if the NEP model could be considered anachronistic, the Stolypin model was even more so. Nevertheless, Stolypin's name has
repeatedly surfaced in the ongoing discussion about the proper nature and direction of reform. In part, this is because Stolypin’s wager on the peasant family farm was the absolute antithesis of the command-administrative system.

There are two strands of popular opinion that look back to Stolypin as a model: the Russian nationalists and conservatives who see Stolypin as a strong and decisive leader and the defender of the unity of the multi-national but Russian dominated state and of Russia’s Great Power status; and the westernizing liberals who see him as a reformer and modernizer and westernizer who sought to introduce the rule of law, constitutionalism, and market reforms. The true picture is made up of elements of both views. As a politician, however, Stolypin was forced to maneuver between liberal and conservative forces as he tried to maintain a ruling coalition. While this political strategy failed, his agrarian reform continued even after his assassination. And, notwithstanding wide differences of opinion about their efficacy, from a purely economic point of view, there was much that was positive about them. As in the present, the problem was to stimulate productivity by increasing the peasant’s incentives. And Stolypin sought to achieve this by liberating the peasant from the commune and granting him the opportunity to own and cultivate his land without outside interference and thereby also to achieve a "stake in society." And, it seems, the reforms achieved some success, administratively, economically and even politically. The current polarization of Russian educated opinion around the Stolypin Reforms reflects the ongoing political debate between present-day conservatives and liberals over Russia’s future, both of whom invoke the shade of Stolypin in support of their cause. However, there was supposedly one major difference between the two programs: whereas the Stolypin Reforms are seen as having made a wholehearted commitment to private property, the current reformers have temporized on this issue. This is not, however, accurate, for the tsarist government was just as ambivalent about creating a genuinely free market in agricultural land. More important than the property issue, both reforms focused on the issue of land management and both sought a fundamental reorganization of land-use patterns.

The real question, however, is whether or not the Stolypin model of privatization is anachronistic in the contemporary context. This question also has applicability to the Stolypin Reforms, for many contemporaries and later historians have insisted that the Stolypin Reforms were themselves inappropriate at the time. Meanwhile, the arguments, both past and present, while not identical, are almost mirror images of each other. Ultimately, however, it is the differences between the Stolypin and current programs that are most important—above all, the different context in which the reforms were being introduced. At the turn of the century, the entire agricultural economy functioned within an already existing market framework, while all of its major components were constructed on the basis of private property, with the exception only of peasant agriculture. At the same time, Russian agriculture then was like Chinese agriculture today: high in labor inputs and low in capital inputs. In this context, such a low-tech change as a reform in land-use and management practices could thus be expected to reap quick benefits which would quickly outtrace the conflict these changes generated. Today, not only is Russian agriculture highly capital intensive but it operates within a non-market system dominated by government monopolies and ubiquitous centralized control. In such a context, it is therefore impossible
to expect a quick boost from a program of privatization. On the contrary, without providing other and relatively costly changes to the surrounding infrastructure, the most one might expect from the kind of privatization that has been undertaken so far would be the formation of an equally anachronistic subsistence agriculture--which, indeed, seems to be precisely what is happening. Moreover, this strategy has created an unnecessary level of social and political conflict.

The net result is that the current reforms have produced little more than paper changes whose results are all but negligible. Indeed, the whole initiative seems to be grinding to a stop while the discussion continues. This is not to say that references to the Stolypin Reforms do not have some political value in mobilizing support for the government program, even if the Stolypin model should be considered inappropriate. On the other hand, the obsession with the Stolypin Reforms has polarized the political debate producing a kind of fetish about introducing private landownership, which is seen as the sole means to provide incentives to intensify and increase production. As a result, attention has been misdirected and opportunities for more effective reform measures have been lost. The root problem is that concern with agricultural reform continues to be second to the concern with industry. Thus, while the Stolypin Reforms' were the product of many decades of discussion, such is not the case today. Quite the reverse. The desire for a quick fix, the derivative status of agriculture, the reliance on the NEP and Stolypin models--not to mention both western pressure and support for a policy of privatization and the concomitant Russian desire to please the west in return for financial assistance--all combined to prevent any serious new government thinking on the subject. This only reinforced the knee-jerk reaction against everything inherited from the Stalinist era and its aftermath as well as the desire to break with the long history of failed Soviet reforms. As a result, truly meaningful reform has been postponed and may at this stage even be impossible due to the costs involved and the government's virtual bankruptcy.

It is not that the policy of privatization and de-collectivization is wrong in itself. Certainly, some organizational reform of agriculture is necessary, particularly of land-use and management practices on the producer level. However, the problem with such reforms is that they are always disruptive and, at least initially, always involve a major conflict of short-term interests. Meanwhile, since the immediate problem with Russian agriculture is one not of output but of wastage, it would seem that, in the short-term, the more productive path would have been to begin resolving the various problems related to infrastructure and capital inputs, beginning with storage. Had this been initiated at the beginning of perestroika, when the government still had the power and the financial resources to transfer capital expenditures from production to storage and infrastructure, perhaps accompanied by some privatization of distributors and the creation of a genuine wholesale market for agricultural goods, then the ground would have been laid for a subsequent reorganization of the system of agricultural production, including both a gradual de-statization and privatization. Meanwhile, this seems to be the direction agricultural reform is now taking. This, of course, is the complete reverse of the Stolypin Reforms' strategy.
Agrarian or agricultural reform in the former USSR has been a major subject of concern in both Russia and the west over the past decade or so. In recent years, meanwhile, the problem seems to have grown, and we have been bombarded with threats of a major agricultural crisis that could lead to widespread hunger, if not starvation and famine, and that in turn inspired various kinds of international emergency aid. As a consequence,


increasing attention has been devoted to the whole question of privatization, decollectivization, and the elimination of state control over agriculture (razgosudarstvlenie). Meanwhile, as some of the fears about a major crisis have faded, we continue to be confronted with new sowing and harvesting panics which have in turn inspired a variety of new approaches that seemingly threaten a revival of traditional, Soviet-style approaches to the agricultural sector, primarily in the form of yearly sowing and harvesting campaigns but, should the political or economic situation grow worse, perhaps even a return to more coercive methods of grain collection.\(^3\)

In the face of these concerns, there has been considerable agreement between Russians and westerners as to the necessity of reform, even radical reform, as well as some agreement on its content. Over the last few years, a number of laws have been adopted, beginning with the Soviet Law on Land in April 1989, which initiated land leasing, and which was followed by a number of Russian Republic laws starting with the December 1989 Laws on Land Reform and on Peasant (Farmer) Economy, and followed up by the December 1991 Law on the Reorganization of State and Collective Farms. The essence of all of the reform legislation consists of three parts: restructuring state and collective farms, the

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encouragement of individual and family farming, whether through a system of leasing or the introduction of private property in land, and the development of cooperatives to take on the marketing and supply functions for these farms. In addition, the price liberalization in January 1992 had a major impact, not to mention the subsequent soaring inflation, though it was not specifically directed at agriculture. Then, in March 1992 a considerable expansion in the system of "private plots" was authorized, though more as a form of urban subsistence farming than anything else. This was followed, in June 1992, by the establishment of a new organization, the Center for Land and Agro-Industrial Reform, in part to try to expedite

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5 On cooperatives, see Rutskoi, **Agrarnaia reforma v Rossii**, pp. 19-26. On inflation and rising prices, Rutskoi, *Agrarnaia reforma v Rossii*, pp. 34-38; art. in Rabochaia Tribuna, 3/10/92, p. 3 in RNA, #A24; art. in Sel'skaia Zhizn', 3/27/92, p. 1 in RNA, #A36; art. in Delovoi Mir, 4/7/92, p. 8; art. in Pravda, 6/6/92, p. 1 in RNA, #A77.

reform. There has also been some talk of establishing a Land Bank to facilitate the sale of land to individual farmers, though nothing appears to have come of it.8

How, then, have these reforms been implemented and how successful have they been?9 To date, it seems that about half of the large farms have voluntarily restructured, transforming themselves into limited liability partnerships, agricultural cooperatives, or joint-stock companies, while the other half, either actively or passively, have retained their


original form. On the other hand, the assumption that unprofitable farms would be disbanded does not appear to have materialized. Only some two-three percent (700) have completely de-collectivized, not necessarily those considered losing propositions, and transformed themselves into private farms. At the same time, some quarter of a million private farms have been organized, often with the support of the collective farm, but as often, it seems, without it or even in direct opposition to it. As a result, there have developed a myriad of petty conflicts and, some individual farmers have been forced to abandon farming or return to the collective.\textsuperscript{10}

During 1992, meanwhile, under the influence of the larger program of "shock therapy" and the unwillingness to continue to subsidize the agricultural sector that was a part of it, not only was state funding withdrawn but huge disproportions developed between the prices of supplies and equipment that had to be purchased from the industrial sector and both

the government's purchase prices for crops as well as free market prices for food products. This contemporary version of the classic "scissors crisis," familiar from the 1920s as a cause of collectivization, affected both state and collective farms as well as private producers.11 As a result, there was a continuous wave of opposition and protest against the government's methods, if not the goals of reform, including so-called grain strikes, such that it was forced to advance new credits.12 Insofar as private farmers were concerned, the lack of alternate


suppliers and distributors often forced them to continue to operate through the collective farms. Meanwhile, to assist them, an independent organization known as AKKOR (The Association of Peasant Farms and Agricultural Cooperatives) had been formed back in 1989, though it has subsequently become something of a surrogate state organization since it is a virtual monopoly and because it has sub-contracted with the government to deliver a certain quantity of grain in exchange for funding which it can use to support private farmers.\(^\text{13}\)

Other organizations aimed at private farmers have also begun to appear as have some private commodity exchanges. However, all such independent or semi-independent organizations seem now to be in the process of being squeezed out once again by various government agencies.\(^\text{14}\) Most recently, to match the special subsidies that were designed to help private


farmers, the government has also reestablished a wide range of state subsidies for state and collective farms.¹⁵

Despite all this activity, none of these measures seem to have had a significant impact on the agricultural situation.¹⁶ Not only has overall agricultural output apparently continued to decline, though the grain harvest seems to be holding its own, but state and collective farms are refusing to deliver grain to the state procurement agency. As a result, state

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collections are declining even more rapidly. Meanwhile, under the influence of sharply reduced demand, caused by inflation as well as shortages of and high prices for state supplied fodder, this decline has particularly affected livestock production, leading to significant reductions in herd sizes and exacerbating hard currency problems by forcing the state to continue and even expand grain imports to make up the difference. Peasant farmers, meanwhile, are either unwilling or unable to respond to the presumed incentives of the developing market environment. Thus, despite their initial novelty, the government’s

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reforms are increasingly redolent of traditional Soviet attempts at reform in that, despite all
the sound and fury, they signify nothing because little of substance has actually changed. 20

Indeed, the entire history of recent reform efforts is full of paradox, while the
reforms themselves threaten to become yet another Potemkin village. 21 In part, these
paradoxes are a consequence of the ongoing political conflicts in Moscow that began under
Gorbachev and continued under Yeltsin over the question of establishing private property in
land and reforming the state and collective farms. 22 And, just as the beginning of what at

independent peasant initiative in Russia." *International Social Science Journal*, 42:2 (May 1990), 193-

*RPD*.

21 See, for example, the comments of Iu. Chernichenko, "The Situation with Land--What Does it
Look Like?", *Moscow News*. No. 4, 1/22/92; Iakovleva, "More and More Land" in *CDPSP*, XLV: 3
2 in *RPD*; S. Luboshitz, "One Hectare Worth 3,500 Rubles," *Moskovskii Komsomolets*, 3/18/92, p. 1
in *RPD*.

22 On this debate, see *inter alia*, Van Atta, "Political Mobilization," pp. 51-3; Van Atta,
"Ligachev Rallies Opposition." pp. 10-12; art. in *Izvestiia*, 4/20/92. p.2 in *RNA*, #A49; art. in
*Kommersant-Daily*, 10/31/92, p.2 in *RNA*, #A164; art. in *Delovoi Mir*, 11/3/92, p.1 in *RNA*, #A167;
art. in *Izvestiia*, 11/4/92, p. 2 in *RNA*, #A170; V. Konovalov, "100,000 Farmers," *Izvestiia*, 4/27/92,
Chernichenko, "Confrontation on the Ugra, Or What has Happened to Land Reform," *Kuranty*,
5/1/92, p. 5 in *RPD*; N. Gorodetskaia, "The Referendum is a Legal Reality," *Nezavisimaia Gazeta*,
11/14/92, p. 2 in *RPD*; Ulko, "AKKOR: Progress of Reform Cannot Be Halted" in *RPD*, 11/27/92;
P. Emelin, "Appeal From 3rd Congress of Peasants' Party of Russia." *Sel'skaia Zhizn'*. No. 21. p. 3 in
*RPD*, 2/20/93; V. Konовалов, "Ministry of Agriculture Greets Spring, This Time Without Panic," *Izvestiia*, 2/17/92, p. 2 in *CDPSP*, XLIV: 7 (1992), pp. 24-5; V. Konovalov, "As Long as the
Peasant Isn't an Owner, He Can Be Ordered Around," *Izvestiia*, 4/17/92, p. 1 in *CDPSP*, XLIV: 16
*CDPSP*, XLIV: 43 (1992), pp. 2-3; A. Podkopalov, "We Almost Came to an Agreement with
and V. Konovalov, "Chernomyrdin Promises Support for Private Farmers," *Izvestiia*, 2/12/93, pp. 1-
2 in *CDPSP*, XLIV: 6 (1993), p. 24; V. Konovalov and E. Iakovleva, "Deputy Prime Minister
Aleksandr Zaveriukha Will Strive to Make the Rural Sector a Priority," *Izvestiia*, 2/16/93, p. 4 in
*CDPSP*, XLIV: 7 (1992), p. 30; TV interview with V.V. Makharadze in *FBIS*. 5/29/92, pp. 37-9; TV
the time seemed like real reform was initiated by the "war of laws" between the Soviet Union and Russia, so now, there is a new war of laws going on between the Yeltsin government and the parliament--not to mention conflict within the Yeltsin government itself.\(^{23}\) In part, too, however, it seems, these conflicts and failures have occurred because the government's reform strategy was mis-conceived from the beginning.\(^{24}\) It is the purpose of this article to discern the sources of these paradoxes and misconceptions by means of an analysis of the two principal models which have guided reformers: the era of the New Economic Policy (NEP) in the 1920s and the era of the Stolypin Agrarian Reforms between 1906 and 1914.

The current round of attempted reforms of Russian agriculture began, of course, as part of Mikhail Gorbachev's larger program of economic reform known as "perestroika." Moreover, many of the specific proposals, especially the concept of leasing, originated under


Gorbachev, while others, most notably the introduction of private property ownership of land, were discussed. At the same time, as with the economy as a whole, there was a long history of both problems with the state and collective farm system and government attempts to reform it so as to increase productivity and efficiency while also responding to various and changing ideological concerns. Thus, while the system itself was sacrosanct, there developed, nonetheless, a tradition of tinkering with agriculture that included major and minor organizational reforms of the bureaucratic and ministerial superstructures as well as of structural relationships at the local level. Meanwhile, in pursuit of supposed economies of scale, various kinds of horizontal and vertical integration were also undertaken. In addition, there were a never ending series of experiments designed to address the issue of incentives that, in addition to increasing and guaranteeing minimum levels of rewards, included various types of leasing arrangements and adjustments of the size of work teams. Equally

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significant, since the 1950s there have been massive increases in the relative and absolute levels of investment designed to make up for two decades of neglect under Stalin. The final round of reform, one that Gorbachev was himself associated with as Communist Party secretary for agriculture, was Brezhnev’s 1982 Food Program.26

Despite this tradition of reform, the consensus, both western and Russian, seems to be that it accomplished very little or even that it was a failure. Thus, reform has continued to be viewed as a necessity up to the present. The problem for the observer of all these reform efforts, including the current ones, is twofold: first, to know what exactly are the problems that these reforms are designed to resolve; and second, what exactly is meant by agricultural reform. Let us answer the latter question first.

A Problem of Terminology

Listening to the ongoing debate over agrarian reform in Russia, it is often difficult to understand what exactly is being talked about.27 The terms that are most often associated


with reform are "privatization" and "de-collectivization"---buzzwords *par excellence*. "Privatization," however, is a complex concept that involves changes from state to private ownership, from state to private management, and from a planned or administered economy to a market economy. De-collectivization, on the other hand, is relatively simple and seems to refer to the break-up of the state and collective farm system. It would seem, therefore, that these two terms refer to one and the same thing, namely, the abolition of the state and collective farms and the transfer of their assets from the state to private individuals, above all by the formation of individually managed and privately owned peasant farms, linked together by a network of market-based relationships. In fact this is not at all the case. Rather, in Russia today, these terms essentially refer to two separate processes. Thus privatization refers primarily to the creation of individual or "peasant" farms--not necessarily even on the basis of private property but also through simple leasing arrangements--and certainly without any break-up of the state and collective farm system. De-collectivization, meanwhile, refers less to the issue of transferring assets from the state to society or to private individuals or groups of individuals--let alone the actual break-up of these units--than it does to a process of de-statization, denationalization, or *razgosudarstvlenie* ---the relinquishment of the state’s superordinate control of the collective farm system.

Another way of referring to this kind of reform would be to talk of organizational reform. Here, however, it is important to distinguish between the traditional kind of organizational reforms that were undertaken during the Soviet era, and which continued under Brezhnev’s successors, including Gorbachev, and that mostly involved reforms of the system of agricultural administration, and the new kind of organizational reforms that seek to change the way individual enterprises or producer units actually operate. Thus, while privatization is one way of addressing the structural and functional questions of agricultural organization at the local level, in fact, such changes do not necessarily have to involve either the break-up of the collective or state farms or the transfer of assets or even the introduction of private property in land---at least in the short-term.

the USSR" in Claudon and Gutner, *Putting Food on What Was the Soviet Table*, pp. 43-8.
What is at the very heart of the reform dilemma in contemporary Russia is really the question of control--who controls local decision making on how the land is to be cultivated, what crops are to be planted, and so on. Hence, what the current reforms are primarily directed towards are an attempt to provide new incentives to producers by granting increased levels of autonomy, whether through the creation of peasant farms--a process that, at this stage, and in conformity to the focus on "control," might better be termed individualization since the issue of "ownership" is still in question--or by restructuring the state and collective farms. Again, the ultimate form this can take is, indeed, a complete destruction of the existing state and collective farm system and a total privatization or transfer of assets. However, this has not been undertaken or even attempted, and there are many possible way-stations short of such an extreme goal.

A final level of possible reform involves the supply of inputs to agriculture and the distribution of agriculture’s output. Here, the term "privatization" would be appropriate to describe the break-up of the vast government monopolies, and, in the case of the supply network, this question is tied up with the government’s broader privatization program for the industrial sector. Insofar as the distribution network is concerned, however, there have been very few changes. Indeed, the only real changes in both areas have involved attempts to create alternative supply and distribution mechanisms for the new, individual farmers, primarily through cooperatives, and the creation of private grain exchanges. Both developments, however, have left the government organizations in this area essentially intact.

Why Reform?

In the face of the evidence of Russia’s huge agricultural output, it is sometimes difficult to understand what exactly is the problem. After all, on the face of it, the Soviet Union steadily increased agricultural output throughout its existence and over the years was able radically to raise the food consumption of its inhabitants both quantitatively and qualitatively. Today Russia continues to produce enough food to feed its population even as many alarmists have talked about the possibility of hunger, starvation, and even famine. Meanwhile, as talk about a systemic crisis has passed, we are still encouraged to think in
crisis terms, though now the crisis is the more traditional one of trying to get the sowing done on time in the Spring and the harvesting done on time in the late summer. What then is happening?²⁸

In fact, this question is very similar to a question that might be asked of the economic system as a whole. For, in the eyes of many, as the Soviet Union launched itself on the path of reform, there was, in fact, no immediate economic crisis. Gorbachev, himself, referred to a "pre-crisis" situation. On the contrary, it seems likely that the system might well have continued to function adequately and satisfy its needs for some years to come. This suggests, of course, that the prime motivation for reform was not economic at all but political and, specifically, to reassert centralized control and the power of the center. And as this affected the economy, what this initially meant was an acceleration of production and an increase in output with the short-term goal of increasing popular levels of consumption and the long-term goal of reinvigorating the power of the state. The same can be said of agriculture, it would seem: namely, that there was no absolute agricultural crisis facing the regime when it began to talk once again about reform.²⁹ This is not to say that there were not problems with


both the industrial or agricultural sectors of the economy prior to the onset of perestroika. However, it is important to keep in mind the specific nature of these problems and to distinguish them from a state of imminent crisis, for otherwise it will be impossible to understand the most recent attempts at reform in the agricultural sector.

What then were the problems with agriculture? Much has been written on this subject, and there is no need to repeat the entire litany here. Briefly summarized, the principal problem has been that Soviet and Russian agriculture has almost universally been considered backward in comparison to the agricultural sector of the other industrial powers, especially the United States—long the standard against which Soviets and now Russians almost always measure themselves. And while total output was often greater, the critical figures were those on crop yields, on land and labor productivity, and on returns on investment—all of which were markedly lower. Since the death of Stalin, innumerable attempts have been made to increase land and labor productivity and overall efficiency—and it is largely out of the failure of these efforts that the weaknesses of Soviet agriculture, and particularly the state and collective farm system, have become apparent. The solutions have come in two forms—either agro-technical, which involved raising land productivity by increasing factor inputs, whether in the form of investments in machinery, fertilizer,

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improved seeds and so on, or social, which involved attempts to increase labor productivity by offering or increasing direct and indirect incentives. All this has been to little avail in achieving what might be called a breakthrough in either land or labor productivity.31

This concern with productivity was not new. It had been the major focus of all thinking about agriculture since the 18th century and came to play a dominant role in the crafting of an earlier attempt at privatization, known as the Stolypin Agrarian Reforms, in 1906.32 Yet, then, as now, as well as during the Soviet interregnum (with the exception of the 1930s), the concern was not so much with an immanent crisis—although there was much talk about an agricultural crisis at the end of the 19th century as well.33 Rather, the underlying concern was with Russia's Great Power status, which was perceived to be threatened by her weak industrial as well as agricultural development.34 In the mind of those such as Count S. Iu. Witte, the Minister of Finance at that time, it was usually a question of "keeping up with the Jones'."35 For his bolshevik successors, however, it was a

31 See fn 26, above.


33 Macey, Government and Peasant, pp. 43-44 and 274, fn. 2. For a balanced contemporary study, see [A.S. Ermolov], Neurozhai i narodnoe bedstvie (St. Petersburg, 1892). Also, R.G. Robbins Jr., Famine in Russia, 1891-1892: The Imperial Government Responds to a Crisis (NY, 1975).


35 In addition to the items cited in fn. 34, see on Witte, T.H. Von Laue, Sergei Witte and the Industrialization of Russia (NY, 1969).
question of "catching up and overtaking" them. Thus, underlying the perennial concern
with both industry and agriculture was the whole problem of economic development. And in
this "economic" scenario it came to be understood that agriculture, while as always of
secondary concern to industry, nonetheless had to be developed first, or at least
simultaneously, in order to permit the industrial sector to develop. Thus it was that Witte,
best known for his encouragement of industrialization, eventually came to acknowledge the
equally imperative need for agricultural reform, for it was, after all, the agricultural sector
that provided raw materials for industry, the food supply for industrial labor, labor itself, and
consumers of industrial goods as well as grain for export in order to earn the foreign
exchange that would help either pay directly for the investment necessary to develop industry
or at least maintain a stable economic and fiscal environment that would encourage foreign
investment.

Such concerns reappeared, of course, during the "industrialization debates" in the
1920s and to some extent in their revival in the 1960s and thereafter. However, while in

36 The classic comparison of tsarist and Soviet periods in this vein is T.H. Von Laue, Why

37 On the relation between agrarian reform and development, see E.H. Tuma, Twenty-six
Centuries of Agrarian Reform: A Comparative Analysis (Berkeley, 1965), pp. 3-14, 221-242; E.L.
Jones and S.J. Woolf, "The Historical Role of Agrarian Change in Economic Development" in E.L.
Jones and S.J. Woolf, eds., Agrarian Change and Economic Development: The Historical Problem
(NY, 1969). On the Russian case, in particular, T. Shanin, Russia as a 'Developing Society.' Vol. 1

38 Macey, Government and Peasant, pp. 34-37, 43-81 passim. 105-111.. See Gorbachev's self-
criticism of this derivative state of agriculture: Konovalov, "Chernomyrdin Government Intends to
Stabilize Agricultural Production" in FBIS, 2/1/93, p. 28.

39 The classic discussion is A. Erlich, The Soviet Industrialization Debate, 1924-1928
(Cambridge, 1960). For the later period, M. Lewin, Political Undercurrents in Soviet Economic
Debates: From Bukharin to the Modern Reformers (Princeton, 1974); On the role of agriculture in
Soviet development, see M. Harrison, "The Peasantry and Industrialization" in R.W. Davies, ed.,
From Tsarism to the New Economic Policy: Continuity and Change in the Economy of the USSR (NY,
1991), pp. 104-124; S. Merl, "The role of agriculture in Soviet industrialization" Wädekin,
Communist Agriculture, pp. 3-22; A. Nove, An Economic History of the USSR, 1917-1991, New and
the former case the questions were "how to industrialize" and what role agriculture was to
play in industrialization--by the 1960s these questions were assumed to have been answered
and the focus of attention was directed toward increasing the efficiency of the existing system
in order to raise the standard of living and enable Russians to "live better." In the aftermath
of collectivization and with the self-declared achievement of rapid industrialization,
agriculture lost its "honored" role as a contributor to industrial development and became an
even more peripheral concern--even as increases in productivity continued to be sought by
means of a huge expansion in investments. Today, it is not completely clear to what degree
this linkage between Great Power status and economic and hence also agricultural
development survives. On one level, Russia has lost most of its empire, yet on another it
clearly continues to aspire to a major role on the world stage. On the other hand, with
the reorientation of perspectives that the abandonment of communism has entailed, it has
once again been possible for Russia to acknowledge its backwardness and hence to be
concerned with development--if only to satisfy domestic political needs and concerns,
including those of preserving social stability and preventing popular unrest. In the case of
agriculture, this has meant becoming self-sufficient and eliminating grain imports--and,
ultimately, perhaps, once again to generate exports that could help either finance industrial
development or stabilize the currency as a prerequisite for foreign investment.

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pp. 16-110.

40 But see S. Schmemann, "Yeltsin Suggests Russian Regional Role," NYT, 3/1/93.


42 On the goal of self-sufficiency, see UPI, "Russia Buys Grain," CSM, 1/16/92, p. 2; Kuzmin.
"How to Obviate the Need for Grain Imports" in BEN, 1/21/93; Economic News Agency.
"Agriculture Policy Based on Self-Sufficiency Principles," Business Fact No. 39, BEN, 3/1/93; Khrapovitskii, "Concept of Russia's Grain Independence" in BEN, 3/19/93; art. in Kommersant-
Daily., 12/10/92, p. 12 in RNA, #A194.
A third possible factor explaining the government's commitment to reform, and again one that has its origins in the pre-revolutionary, Stolypin era, is purely political—the need to win the support of the rural population. However, given both that today only twenty-five per cent of the population lives in the countryside, while only some fifteen percent is engaged in agriculture, and that any improvements in labor productivity will reduce that number even more through urban migration and will need to reduce it in order to increase the labor supply to fuel industrial development, then the political motivation for reform seems somewhat weaker than it did at the turn of the century. Indeed, in the short-term, at least, it seems, the concern was the reverse—namely, to slow down the pace of reform and even to give over control of the process to the collective and state farms themselves in order to win their support.

As we consider the various possible motivations behind the contemporary movement for agricultural reform, what is curious is that the traditional linkage between agriculture and industry and the traditional concerns for economic development in general, whether or not these are relevant to Russia's status in the international arena, are seldom made explicit. Rather, the explanations that are given tend to refer almost exclusively to the need to overcome the supposed crisis in the present and to enable Russians to "live better." At the same time, it is true and universally agreed upon that Soviet and Russian agriculture suffers from a long list of real deficiencies—all of them traceable to the imposition of the Stalinist command/administrative system. Clearly, increases in productivity as well as in the overall effectiveness of the system require that Russian agriculture be liberated from the straight-jacket imposed by the Stalinist system. Thus, it would seem that the primary

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motivation behind the current reforms is, in fact, a political one and perhaps even a moral or spiritual one—to break with the survivals of Stalinism in all spheres of state activity—a motive that often finds itself reflected in the desire for a complete de-collectivization of Russian agriculture and is symbolized by the slogan calling for the "renewal of the Russian countryside." On the other hand, it also seems that the supporters of reform have concluded that the only way to mobilize support for change—both political and economic—is to threaten imminent collapse—an approach that is itself eminently Stalinist.

Meanwhile, if it is true that the real motivation behind the drive for agrarian reform is indeed anti-Stalinism, then this helps explain the direction that reform and the discussion of reform have taken over the past six years.

Given the supposed threat of imminent collapse, it makes perfect sense for reformers to search for that "quick fix" which will both solve the immediate crisis while also satisfying


the desire to break with Stalinism in agriculture. And, in reaction to the repeated failure of previous Soviet attempts at reform and especially the almost counter-productive nature of attempts to solve agriculture's problems by the technological fix of increasing investment—to the point where the marginal rate of return was almost non-existent if not negative—it was only logical that the reformers look outside the Stalinist system for alternate models.

The NEP Model

As we have noted, Gorbachev's initial reforms were in part a continuation of an established tradition of reform and specifically of Brezhnev's 1982 Food Program, with which Gorbachev had personally been involved, as well as of the policy of economic acceleration sponsored by the interim leader, Andropov. However, as Gorbachev became increasingly aware of the obstacles to reform presented by the existing system, and as he and especially the intelligentsia, now liberated by glasnost', began to build their assault on the survivals of Stalinism in all areas of society, economy, and polity, Gorbachev and his advisers began to look beyond the system established by Stalin for alternatives. It is at this point that attention was drawn to the era of Lenin's New Economic Policy in the 1920s. What this era represented in economic terms, it seems, was a native-born alternative to the existing system yet one that permitted the reformers to preserve their legitimacy by remaining within the broader ideological framework established by Lenin and the October Revolution. In fact, it could be and was argued that following such an alternative would return the Soviet Union to the original and hence proper path to socialism. On a more theoretical level, the NEP model also suggested the possibility of a third way between the

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socialist command/planned/administered economy and the market economy of capitalism—a kind of mixed economy or institutional pluralism or *mnogoukladnost'* in Russian terminology. At the same time, it also seems to have suggested the efficacy of rapid change from above in that, with seemingly little effort, Lenin’s introduction of NEP produced dramatic results in a very short period of time.⁴⁹

More important, however, than the ideological inspiration provided by NEP was that it offered an organizational model in which production was decentralized and the state played a relatively minor role, collecting and distributing a certain minimum output to guarantee food supplies to the cities and the military as well as raw materials to industry. At the same time, the 1920s saw widespread experimentation with a variety of individual and collective forms of agriculture including traditional peasant communes, a resurgence of individual *khutora* (integral peasant family farms), Soviet style communes, collectives, artels and

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associations as well as a flourishing cooperative movement. This was also the heyday of agricultural economists, particularly the Organization-Production School, which focused on the role of the family farm and cooperatives, the best known member of which was Alexander Chaianov, who has, himself, been the subject of a revival of interest. Thus NEP, in conjunction with the memory of numerous successful but abandoned Soviet experiments with various kinds of leasing arrangements by independent work-teams, especially in the 1950s and 1960s, provided the basis for the first reform programs adopted in 1989. And while this program devoted primary attention to organizational reform, in the Soviet tradition, it focused almost exclusively on the reorganization of farm management at the local level and offered a far greater variety of alternatives. Even more important, these reforms were conceived as voluntary—in deliberate contrast to the primarily administrative approach of the past.


In retrospect, and while acknowledging the combined motivations of searching for alternatives while retaining ideological conformity, there is, of course, something anachronistic about turning to the past for new approaches—particularly when the nature of the economic and political environments were so radically different. In talking only of agriculture, during NEP, there were some 25 million peasant households, most of which conducted a basically subsistence agriculture within the context of a predominantly communal system of open-field strip cultivation and compulsory crop rotation and a technology that was little changed from the era of serfdom. Meanwhile in present day Russia there are some 25,000 state and collective farms that function locally as monopolies controlling all local supply and distribution functions, including all modern technological inputs, most of which, however, are designed only for large-scale enterprises. Hence, these state farms effectively served as the only intermediaries between the individual farmer and the outside world.

Equally important, however, the onset of NEP saw a rapid revival of markets in both agricultural and consumer goods, based on markets that had developed under tsarism and that to some extent survived as black markets during the civil war. The situation was less satisfactory when it came to agricultural supplies, implements, and improved technology, however, and shortages of various agricultural inputs in combination with huge disproportions between the prices for agricultural and industrial goods was what provoked the scissors crises and eventually collectivization.\(^{54}\) In the 1980s, however, and with the

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exception of the collective farm markets in the major cities, the supply of industrial goods and the distribution of agricultural goods was handled by government monopolies.

The Stolypin Model

Simultaneously with the turn to NEP for models, other forces in Russian society, especially the growing Russian nationalism, were pushing people to look completely outside the Soviet system itself for models. Inevitably, they turned to the last great reform project of the tsarist regime—the Stolypin Agrarian Reforms. And this, in turn, shifted the focus of agrarian reform away from the organizational restructuring of the existing system to the more sensitive issue of privatization, individual ownership of land, and the formation of peasant family farms.

The turn to the pre-Revolutionary period for models is a particularly interesting development. For if one is to consider the NEP model anachronistic, then surely the Stolypin model is even more so. Yet, since Gorbachev's first expression of interest in the Stolypin Reforms back in 1985, Stolypin's name has repeatedly surfaced in the ongoing discussion about the proper nature and direction of reform whether in the popular press, on television or radio news reports, in public speeches, as well as in a variety of books and

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Indeed, the current Minister of Agriculture, V.N. Khlystun, wrote his dissertation on Stolypin's Agrarian Reforms.\footnote{Van Atta, "Final Results," p. 20.}

One of the earliest and most important references to Prime Minister Stolypin and his reforms came in a November 1990 speech by the then Prime Minister of the Soviet government, Ivan Silaev, who took a very positive view of them but even more importantly noted the common nature of Stolypin's and the current government's goals: to revive the Russian countryside.\footnote{See the Silaev speech, given 11/27/90 and published in several newspapers the next day. A partial translation is in CDSP, XLII: 49 (1990), pp. 4-5; also see the TV interview with I. Silaev, 10/20/91 in BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, 10/22/91. N. Shmelev, the prominent economist spoke out even earlier: Literaturnaia Gazeta, 7/26/89 as cited in Davies, "Soviet Economic Reform," p. 134.} Subsequently, many have made approving references to Stolypin, and they continue down to the present.\footnote{Some recent references to Stolypin include: Sirotkin, "No Man's Land" in RPD, 4/29/92; E. Tokareva and E. Pishchikova, "Everything Has Been Ploughed Up...." Rossiiskaia Gazeta, 7/25/92, p. 3 in RPD; Arakelian, "Rutskoi Tries on Stolypin's Shoes" in RPD, 7/29/92; V. Epifanov, "On Shaky Ground." Rossiiskaia Gazeta, 11/27/92, p. 2 in RPD: TV interview with V.N. Khlystun in FBIS, 1/23/92, p. 59; TASS report, 2/5/92 in FBIS, 2/6/92, p. 34; Moiseeva, "Distributing the Land Is Not Difficult" in FBIS, 5/6/92, p. 33; Ostankino TV report, 7/24/92 in FBIS, 7/27/92, pp. 24-5; Arakelian, "Rutskoi Tries on Stolypin's Uniform" in FBIS, 8/4/92, p. 40; Rutskoi, Agrarnaia reforma v Rossii, pp. 3, 9-12, 93, 120, 140. A computer search of a number of databases for 1991-3 listed 127 references to Stolypin.}

The question, of course, is why?

On the one hand, perhaps, the answer is clear. Stolypin's wager on the peasant family farm was the absolute antithesis of Stalin's collective and state farms--of the Soviet command-administrative system. It could also be seen as a symbol of westernism in general--though a westernism once again perceived as a universal norm for development. And given the near universal linkage between programs of agrarian or land reform and the search for

\footnote{For a detailed discussion, see Macey, "Stolypin is Risen!" pp. 97-120. Three new works which have appeared since that article went to press are P.N. Zyrianov, Krest'ianskaia obshchina Evropeiskoi Rossii, 1907-1914 g.g. (M., 1992); P.N. Zyrianov, Petr Stolypin: Politicheskii portret (M., 1992); and I.V. Ostrovskii, P.A. Stolypin i ego vremia (Novosibirsk, 1992).}
political support, just as in the pre-revolutionary period, Gorbachev's government, and subsequently Yeltsin's, were also perhaps desperately seeking to win broader social support. On the other hand, there has been much criticism of this turn back to the tsarist era. Somewhat surprisingly, the most sustained attack has come from the professional historians who have rushed into print in order to defend their professional investment in the past as well as to correct what they perceive as contemporary myths, legends, and misunderstandings, and above all because they have judged the Stolypin Reforms a failure.

In fact, the professional and popular debates are decidedly more complex than simply a question of whether the Stolypin Reforms were successful or not and whether, therefore, they are an appropriate model. There are indeed two, sometimes contradictory, strands of popular opinion that look back to Stolypin as a model. On the one hand, there are the Russian nationalists and conservatives, for whom Stolypin is seen as a strong and decisive leader and the defender of the unity of the multi-national but Russian dominated state and of Russia's Great Power status; and on the other hand, there are the no doubt equally patriotic westernizing liberals who see Stolypin as above all a reformer and modernizer and westernizer, someone who sought to introduce such conceptions as the rule of law, constitutionalism, and market reforms.

Of course, the true picture is made up of elements of both views. Stolypin was quite clearly a nationalist and was dedicated to the preservation of the state, one and indivisible, and, as such, an appropriate political model for any contemporary Russian leader, including Gorbachev and Yeltsin. On the other hand, he was also a realist and pragmatist and favored gradual and evolutionary change in a westernizing direction--especially in agriculture, where he sought to introduce individual property ownership as well as an individualization of land-

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61 Macey, "Stolypin is Risen!", pp. 98-100.

62 Ibid.
use. However, he was a politician, and he was therefore unable to pursue any of these goals in their purest form since he was dependent on other political forces for support. Thus he was forced to maneuver between liberal and conservative forces in the Duma trying to maintain a ruling coalition. In the end, however, he lost the support of both groups and equally important of the tsar as well. His assassination in 1911 was but the coup de grace to his prior political defeat. Thus, it might seem that Stolypin's political strategy and ultimate fate should serve as a cautionary tale to contemporary politicians. Apparently, however, it has not—witness Gorbachev's very similar political strategy and his fate, while Yeltsin too appears to be following a similar political balancing act—with potentially similar results. On the other hand, the only alternative to such a centrist policy is to stake out a position at either the conservative or liberal extremes of the political spectrum.

Nonetheless, while Stolypin failed politically to achieve his objectives, the most important part of his program, the agrarian reform, continued and evolved even after his death. Only very recently have Russian historians begun to acknowledge the positive seeds that this reform contained—even as in most cases they strive to defend the traditional judgment as to its failure—though these judgments are also in part predicated on political rather than economic developments. Meanwhile, new generations are emerging both in

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64 See talk of the latest coup scare in S. Erlanger, "2 Years After Coup Attempt, Yeltsin Warns of Another," NYT, 8/20/93; S. Erlanger, "The Dissents From Russia's Frayed Edges." NYT, 8/22/93. On the Gorbachev coup, see the recent D. Remnick, Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire (NY, 1993).

Russia and the West who have taken a more positive view of both Stolypin and his reforms. ⁶⁶

And, indeed, when the agrarian reforms are considered from a purely economic point of view, there is no doubt that there was much that was positive about them. Above all, the goal seems to have been to apply the Lockian theory of possessive individualism, itself fully compatible with the marxisant thinking that was ubiquitous at that time in Russia, even within the government. As in the present, the problem, ultimately, was to stimulate productivity by increasing the peasant's incentives. And they sought to achieve this by following what was not so much a "western" model as by following what was at the time believed to be the universal pattern of development. Thus, based on western experience, it was felt that the primary incentive was for the peasant to be liberated from the traditional peasant commune and be granted the opportunity to own and cultivate his land without outside interference. Under these circumstances, it was hoped that the peasantry would respond to the ever expanding market stimuli and gradually intensify their agriculture and increase their output. At the same time, it was also believed that such peasants would finally achieve a "stake in society" and hence reject the revolutionary alternative and become staunch defenders of the status quo, according to the French model, and eventually provide a key source of social support for Stolypin's reformist government. ⁶⁷

Now, there is some evidence to suggest that these reforms were achieving some administrative success and even some moderate economic success—though 8-10 years was far too short a period to make any definitive conclusions on either count. Meanwhile, there is little direct evidence that the reforms were having the desired political outcome though indirect evidence suggests the possibility for success in this realm too. For the reform

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process was evolving gradually and smoothly and clearly had the potential for fulfilling many of the desired goals had they been given enough time and assuming, of course, continued political and fiscal support.\textsuperscript{68}

The current polarization of Russian educated opinion around the Stolypin Reforms is itself, of course, a reflection of the ongoing political debate between present-day conservatives and liberals over Russia's future. Whether or not the two sides are coming together and where this will lead Russia in the future is still unresolved. However, in the spring of 1992, following his appointment to head a special new organization in charge of agricultural reform, Vice-President Rutskoi also invoked the shade of Stolypin noting that what the country needed, as it did in 1906, was liberal reforms and strong government--thereby bringing the two views of Stolypin closer together while better reflecting the historical reality.\textsuperscript{69}

To return to an earlier point, granted the Stolypin Reforms can be considered the antithesis of the Stalinist system of state and collective farms, the real question is whether there are any similarities between the situation in 1906 and that today that would support the use of the Stolypin Reforms as a model for contemporary agricultural reform. Here, it seems, the question is broader than simply that of privatization. In the first place, there is a broad analogy between the tasks that faced the tsarist government and those facing the Gorbachev/Yeltsin governments. Thus, both governments sought to increase productivity by increasing individual incentives. To this end, both can be said to have sought to break down a basically collectivist system, though each of which was based also on individual calculation and self-interest if to different ends, and replace it with one based on individualism in which

\textsuperscript{68} Macey, "Government Actions and Peasant Reactions," pp. 133-173: Macey, "Agricultural Reform and Political Change." But see, Zyrianov, \textit{Krest'ianskaia obshchina}.

the peasant would be freed of external interference and restraints and become the true "khoziain (master) of the land." In both cases, moreover, these changes were inspired by the common need for some kind of "quick fix" to the system--in the tsarist case, the need was more political than economic in that they sought to defuse the revolutionary unrest and restore political stability; in the contemporary situation, the initial impulse seems to have been to provide an immediate boost to agricultural production, though this too had the ultimately political motive of preserving political stability.70

However, it seems, that in both cases this desire for immediate results served to distort the overall program of reform and divert it away from what was needed in the long-term. In the tsarist case, this led to an unwarranted emphasis on persuading peasants to claim title to their strips, while those strips remained within the commune and thus subject to the traditional obstacles to individual entrepreneurship as well as to the open-field system of cultivation.71 There was also an unwarranted emphasis on creating individual khutora or peasant family farms in which all strips were consolidated into one compact plot of land and the peasant family resettled on that land, either building a new cottage and outbuildings there or transferring already existing structures from the village to that property.72 In the current situation, meanwhile, there has been a similarly unwarranted emphasis on encouraging the formation of private farms such that the number of private farms formed seems to be the principal indicator of agrarian reform's success.73


71 See the discussion in G. Yaney, The Urge to Mobilize: Agrarian Reform in Russia, 1861-1930 (Urbana, 1982), pp. 260-265.


73 "Put Away Your Axes Lads....," Sel’skaia Zhizn’, 2/18/92, p.1 in RPD; Konovalov, "100,000 Farmers" in RPD, 4/27/92; Sirotkin, "No Man’s Land Once Again" in RPD, 4/29/92; Gorodetskaia, "The Referendum is a Legal Reality" in RPD, 11/14/92; Ulko, "Progress of Reform Cannot Be Halted" in RPD, 11/27/92; Emelin, "Appeal From 3rd Congress" in RPD, 2/20/93; Konovalov.
In both cases, however, the initial policies went through an evolution that moved from the extremism of the early years to a more gradual and evolutionary and even pragmatic approach that broadened the focus and took a longer-term perspective. As a result, both reforms abandoned their single-minded emphasis on a single path to reform and shifted their approach to one that accepted multiple paths or a pluralism of approaches. In the tsarist case, this permitted a whole range of reform activities intermediary to the final goal—the khutor—which remained at least the ideal if not real goal.\(^74\) In the current case, this has resulted in giving equal billing to the task of reorganizing the state and collective farms and making them either into private farms or other forms that are designed, at least in theory, to provide them with true autonomy.\(^75\) As was said at the turn of the last century, and as applies equally as well today, the goal is to make the commune/collective farm a free and voluntary union rather than an obligatory form of organization.\(^76\)

Despite the many similarities, there is supposedly one major difference between the reforms today, and the debate over them, and those at the beginning of the century. This is the whole problem of whether to permit individual, private landownership and the development of a land market. In fact, however, while the Stolypin Reforms are receiving big billing as the model for privatization, it is important to recall that there were as many

\(^74\) Macey, "Government Actions," pp. 133-173; Macey, "Agricultural Reform and Political Change."

\(^75\) See fn. 49, above.

skeptics then as now. Moreover, the tsarist government, in fact, hedged the issue as much if
not more than its successor today. After all, private property in land has been authorized,
though sales have been limited for the first ten years to the government, and the discussion
continues.  

On the other hand, during the first stages of the Stolypin Reforms, when the
peasants could acquire title to their strips, within the commune, their rights as property
owners were sharply circumscribed by their continuing subordination to the agricultural
calendar and practices of the commune. Equally important, in the process of undertaking
other reorganization projects within the village, the commune could require such property
owners to consolidate those strips into a compact plot in a new location and, hence, to
separate from the commune against the property holder’s will. Beyond these temporary
limitations, once these strips were consolidated into an integral unit, they continued to be
subject to various restrictions. Above all, such land was considered part of a special fund
that was to be preserved for peasant use and hence such “allotment land” as it was known
could only be sold to other peasants. Equally important, to reduce the possibility of land
speculation, which it was feared could lead to widespread landlessness, various regionally
determined maxima were placed on the quantity of land that could be owned by a single

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78 Yaney, Urge to Mobilize, pp. 260-265; Macey, Government and Peasant, p. 243.
peasant.\textsuperscript{79} There was also discussion about imposing minima in order to prevent excessive fragmentation and the proliferation of unworkable holdings.\textsuperscript{80} On the other hand, non-allotment land that had been purchased on the open market or through the Peasant Land Bank was not subject to these restrictions.

One further and related issue concerns the question of permitting such land to be mortgaged—also an issue today. While a law was passed almost simultaneously with the reform legislation permitting such mortgages, and while, indeed, the necessity of raising capital for agricultural improvements was a major rationale behind the transfer to private property ownership, this right was never fully operative—in large part because of the problem of what to do with the land if it was foreclosed as a result of defaults on payments. One such solution was to limit such mortgages to the state-owned Peasant Land Bank—though even then the law never became fully operative, mainly because the Bank insisted that foreclosed land be sold on the open-market in order to protect the bank’s financial interests. This problem was nonetheless on its way towards a resolution on the eve of the War by which time, however, it became largely irrelevant.\textsuperscript{81} One final limitation that should be mentioned was that peasants did not own mineral rights to their land.

Thus, it is clear that contemporary debates over the wisdom of establishing private property rights in agricultural land are informed not simply by some seventy-five years of state landownership but by an even older tradition that embodies a deep skepticism over granting individuals full property rights over land. In the past, such reservations were determined in part by the image of the peasant as child, over whom the state had to exercise a paternalistic supervision in order to protect both the peasant’s and the state’s interests; and


\textsuperscript{80} See Rossiiskii Gosudarstvennyi Istoricheskii Arkhiv, f. 1291, op. 120 (1909), d. 2, Ch. III.

in part by the regime's instinctive anti-semitism and the fear that outsiders, usually Jews, would buy up peasant land.\[^{82}\] Today, it seems, such concerns remain, though now the talk is more of inter-ethnic conflict and potential civil war, while the outsiders today could be anyone but especially peoples from the Caucasus. Meanwhile, in both cases, those who favored the development of a land market dismissed such fears and argued for full property rights as an essential component of the reform\[^{83}\]

The Relevance of the Stolypin Model

Ultimately, the Stolypin and contemporary agrarian reforms were fundamentally similar in that both focused on the issue of land management and both sought to fundamentally reorganize land-use patterns. The question, however, is whether, notwithstanding these similarities, the Stolypin model is truly applicable to the present--whether or not privatization or the creation of large numbers of peasant farmers is or is not anachronistic in the contemporary context. Indeed, this question itself also has applicability to the Stolypin Reforms for many contemporaries and later historians have insisted that the Stolypin Reforms were themselves inappropriate at the time. Moreover, the arguments, both past and present, while not identical, are almost mirror images of each other.

\[^{82}\] Ibid., pp. 192-193.

In the case of the Stolypin Reforms, there were basically three political alternatives. Thus, revolutionaries claimed that the whole privatization program was misconceived and that the only solution to the agrarian problem was a redistribution of all privately and state owned lands into the hands of the peasantry.\textsuperscript{84} Liberals also considered additional land to be a necessary part of any solution, though they placed equal emphasis on the principle of private property ownership and agro-technical assistance in order to raise productivity.\textsuperscript{85} Meanwhile, populist socialists, who also favored land redistribution, also argued that privatization was undesirable and even unnecessary to improve productivity since such reforms could be better introduced by whole communes—as was already happening in the case of some non-black earth regions.\textsuperscript{86} In addition, there were, of course, some conservatives who opposed all changes and simply sought to preserve the peasant commune. In each case, however, the criticism was motivated more by political opposition to the existing government than by any objective evaluation of the merits of the government’s program. Ultimately, therefore, each argument had politically revolutionary implications. Subsequently, of course, Soviet historians have consistently supported the revolutionary


\textsuperscript{85} See, especially the program worked out by N.N. Kutler for S.Iu. Witte and which later influences the Kadet Party’s agrarian program, in Macey, \textit{Government and Peasant}, pp. 125-133. Cf. \textit{ibid.}, pp. 56-62.

alternative, which was enacted into law in October 1917.Only recently have a number of historians in both Russian and the west sought to reargue the populist alternative.

The essence of all these approaches can be expressed in terms of two basic alternatives to the tsarist government's program of privatization: either the more radical policy of land reform and a complete redistribution of all private and state land into the possession of those who worked it; or the less radical policy of change within the existing system. To be sure, both alternatives addressed some of the initial weaknesses in the government program: on the one hand, a refusal to consider any kind of land redistribution, even along the lines of the division of land that took place with the emancipation of the serfs in 1861; and on the other hand, an apparent unwillingness to consider admittedly limited measures to raise productivity within the communal structure. Neither, however, addressed the even more fundamental economic question of the system of land-use and management since both presumed the survival of the traditional peasant commune.

In fact, however, the critics' characterization of tsarist policy was only partially accurate. For from the very beginning the government had recognized the need to provide additional land, though it would only do so either in Siberia or the far north of European Russia, where the land was indeed gratis, or by individual purchases at market prices from the Peasant Land Bank.Insofar as the proper means to increase productivity was concerned, while the government's position was at first quite rigid, it developed considerably

87 See, for example, I.D. Koval'chenko, "Stolypinskaia agrarnaia reforma (Mify i real'nost')," Istoriiia SSSR, No. 2 (1991), pp. 52-72; and Zyrianov, Krest'ianskaia obschina; [V.S. Diakin], "Stolypinskaia zemel'naia reforma" in V.S. Diakin, ed., Krizis samoderzhaviia v Rossii, 1895-1917 (Leningrad. 1984), pp. 349-374.


89 Macey, Government and Peasant, pp. 160-162, 204-205, 226-231.
more flexibility as the 1905-6 revolution faded into memory and as it gained more practical experience with the process of land reorganization. In this respect, its program drew deliberately closer to the liberal program. At the same time, the two basic alternatives to the government program had strong utopian components, for each saw their solution as the panacea for Russia’s agrarian problem and essentially ignored the more important economic question of raising productivity. And while utopianism was not entirely excluded from the government’s program either since, for a while at least, it indeed seemed to see the khutor as just such a panacea, nonetheless, as that program became modified it seems to have offered somewhat greater opportunities for agricultural improvement than the alternatives. For, in the end, it was the reorganization of land-use patterns and land management practices that was at the heart of the transfer from communal to individual agriculture. Equally important, such a reorganization could only be undertaken on a voluntary and hence gradual and long-term basis rather than at the infamous and utopian stroke of the pen. And, of course, the redistribution eventually practiced by the bolsheviks not only did not resolve the productivity problem but created far greater disruptions and problems, which the current regime is still trying to resolve. The populist alternative of reform within the commune, meanwhile, although offering some hope, ultimately did not sufficiently acknowledge western and even some Russian experience with the higher levels of productivity achievable under a system of private property ownership and individual forms of land use.

What is interesting about these reactions to the Stolypin Reforms is their similarity to current responses to the Yeltsin government’s reform program. However, whereas the earlier opposition was motivated by a desire for a more revolutionary political outcome, today it is the government that is taking the revolutionary path by advocating privatization

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91 On the Stalinist legacy, see N. Shmelev and V. Popov, The Turning Point: Revitalizing the Soviet Economy (NY, 1989), pp. 252-258.

92 See, for example, A.A. Kofod, Bor'ba s chrezpolositseiu v Rossii i za granitseiu (St. Petersburg, 1906).
and the opposition which seeks to preserve the state and collective farms and thus the political status quo ante. In economic terms, however, both tsarist and present-day governments adopted a radical economic approach to the agrarian problem by seeking to transform both management and land-use patterns and raise productivity. Even more interesting, however, is that in both the tsarist and current Russian cases, the resultant policy turns out to be one of compromise that rejects extremism of all kinds. Such, indeed, is the nature of politics—even pseudo-democratic politics. Moreover, in the absence of direct coercion, for any program to be effective and stand a chance for success, there must be at least some degree of social consensus around the program being implemented.93

And so we return to the question of the applicability of the Stolypin model to the contemporary situation. Here it would seem that despite all the similarities both in terms of the task to be undertaken and even of the political debates surrounding it, it is the differences that are more important. This is not to say that references to the Stolypin Reforms do not have some political value in mobilizing support for the government program, both among liberal supporters of economic reform as well as among nationalists and conservatives. However, it does mean that the Stolypin model is nonetheless inappropriate. Worse, it seems, the obsession with the Stolypin Reforms has served to polarize the political debate producing a kind of fetish about introducing private landownership as the sole means of creating an incentive to intensify and increase production, to the virtual exclusion of all others.94 Yet, what has been ignored is that in an unstable political and legal situation, such

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94 See fn. 73, above; and art. in Sel'skaia Zhizn', 3/6/92, p.1 in RNA, #A23; art. in Argumenty i Fakty, 4/3/92, p. 2 in RNA, #A39; Lesik, "Number of Farms Growing" in BEN, 5/18/93; Emelin, "Appeal From 3rd Congress" in RPD, 2/20/93; Konovalov, "100,000 Farmers" in RPD, 4/27/92; Moscow Radio interview with A. Rutskoi, 3/3/92 in FBIS, 3/6/92, pp. 26-7; TV interview with V.N. Khlystun in FBIS, 3/22/93, pp. 74-5; McIntyre, "Phantom of the Transition," p. 82; Van Atta.
as currently exists in Russia, there are no guarantees for the farmer since the legal system is inadequately developed to protect either private property or even lease contracts. Indeed, one of the repetitive themes throughout the history of the current reforms so far is the individual farmer's insecurity in the face of both an uncertain legal environment and, even more, the uncertainty created by the instability of the political regime that is sponsoring the reforms and, hence, the fear that a policy reversal may follow the establishment of a new government in the future—a threat reinforced both by the inconsistencies of the current regime as well as by the whole history of Russia in the 20th century. Meanwhile, as contemporary figures show, the hopes of providing a quick fix through privatization have not been borne out. Worse, it would seem that for the past five years or so, attention has been misdirected and many opportunities for more effective reform measures have been lost. Let me elaborate.

"Conflicts Over Agrarian Reform," p. 2. Many western evaluations also place individual farms at the center of attention: "Russian Farming: The Least Likely Agricultural Miracle," Economist, 4/11/92, pp. 71-2; Marnie, "Unresolved Question," pp. pp. 35-7; Van Atta, "First Results," pp. 20-3; Wegren, "Trends," pp. 50-7; and Van Atta, "Comments." There is also a tendency in both Russia and the west to claim that a compromise between the plan and the market is impossible. See, for example, P. Hanson, "Prospects for reform: Three Key Issues in 1990," Report on the USSR, 1/26/90, pp. 1-4; I Demchenko, "Government Has No Intention To Abandon Reform Course," Izvestiia, 8/7/93, pp. 1,2 in RPD; S. Erlanger, "New Promises. Familiar Drift. In the Kremlin," NYT, 8/7/93, p. 4. This polarization is opposed by V.N. Khlystun, "Agrarian reform Requires Amendments" in FBIS, 12/30/92, p. 24-5; and Konovalov, "Peasants and Government Sum Up Year as Partners" in FBIS, 12/31/92, p. 38.

95 Sneider, "Private Farming," CSM, 11/12/92, p. 11; art. in Rossiiskaia Gazeta, 10/28/92 p. 3 in RNA, #A162; O. Chaikovskii. "Farmer: Phantom or Breadwinner," Rossiiskaia Gazeta. 6/2/93, p. 5 in BEN.

96 Art. in Delovoi Mir, 2/14/92, p. 5 in RNA. #A17; V. Grishchenko, "Spring '92" in CDPSP, XLIV: 18 (1992), pp. 1-3; Chaikovskii, "Farmer: Phantom or Breadwinner" in BEN, 6/2/93; Vashchukov, "The Number of Farmers Grows" in BEN, 7/10/93; A. Sizov, "Reforms in Russia and CIS." Rossiiskaia Gazeta. 7/13/93, p. 4 in BEN; Wegren. "Trends." pp. 50-7.
The Situation Today

At the beginning of the century, and quite apart from the viability of the reform program actually adopted and implemented by the tsarist government, the whole context was quite different from the present. Above all, despite the communal forms of landownership and land-use, the entire agricultural economy functioned within a market context. None of the pre-requisites had to be created, though it is true many of them were in need of further development. Moreover, in terms of enterprise organization, all the major aspects of the agricultural economy were constructed on the basis of private property with the exception only of peasant agriculture. And even here, there were some elements of individual property ownership, at least in the west and north-west. Moreover, every household conducted their farm economy independently even as that economy and the household were part of a communal system. Thus, if a government were looking for a relatively cheap and relatively un-disruptive means, economically and politically, to increase productivity, even in the short term, then it was not unreasonable to expect an immediate boost from such a relatively low-tech change as a reform in land-use and management practices. (I leave aside the question of privatization since most of the initial improvements do not necessarily require full privatization in the western sense and could possibly have been accomplished with guarantees of long-term or permanent use--there being precedents for these in recent Russian history.)

What were those expected improvements? Above all an increased productivity of labor achieved by eliminating unnecessary travel time to and from strips and between strips and the home base; the elimination of land wasted on borders and paths; an incentive to introduce improvements such as animal fertilizer to raise productivity since the land would remain in their possession; and finally, some degree of crop diversification and/or specialization. None of these changes required any significant capital input. And even the transfer of the house, the most expensive item, could be delayed or even avoided by the creation of an otrub--an integral plot with the cottage and other buildings remaining in the core village. Further improvements were also possible, of course, but would require the

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assistance of agronomical aid or extension services as well as the accessibility of short-term credit--both of which were in the process of development. However, the key to these changes was their relative cheapness. Indeed, the position of agriculture in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century was somewhat like that of manufacturing in England at the end of the eighteenth century. In both cases, modernization was a low-tech and hence relatively cheap affair. With the passage of time, however, and with the development of technology, the costs of modernization sharply increased so that the cost of industrialization to Russia one, not to mention two, centuries later was far greater than it had been to England, notwithstanding the so-called "advantages of backwardness." Indeed, it sometimes seems that the costs may be so high as to preclude latecomers, especially large ones like Russia from ever successfully modernizing and of "catching up" with the advanced industrial world.

The situation with agriculture today in Russia is like that of industry a century ago: that is to say the cost of reform or modernization has been significantly increased. Moreover, as has already been noted, the context is quite different. With the exception of the so-called "private plots," not only is agriculture an almost exclusively state enterprise, but it operates within a non-market system dominated by government monopolies and ubiquitous centralized control. In such a context, it is therefore impossible to expect a quick boost from a program of privatization. On the contrary, without providing other and relatively costly changes to the surrounding infrastructure, the most one might expect from the kind of privatization that has been undertaken so far would be the formation of an equally anachronistic subsistence agriculture---which, indeed, seems to be precisely what is

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98 For the Stolypin era, see P.G. Klebnikov, "Agricultural Development in Russia"; V.S. Diakin, "Den'gi dla sel'skogo khoziaistva (Vybór puti ekonomicheskogo razvitiia Rossii. 1892-1914 gg.)," Istoriiia SSSR, No. 3 (1991), pp. 64-82; and a forthcoming mss. on this subject by the same author. On contemporary discussions, see: V. Konovalov, "Peasants Will Soon Be Able to Get Credit Using Land as Collateral," Izvestiia, 2/25/93, p. 1 in CDPSP, XLV: 9 (1993), pp. 30-1.

happening.\textsuperscript{100} Thus, just as "shock therapy" was applied to industry with the freeing of prices at the beginning of 1992, so too was it simultaneously applied to agriculture—with little thought, it would seem, as to its consequences and with only some protective limitations. However, in neither sector has this therapy had the desired result. On the contrary, production, which had already begun to decline during the Brezhnev and Gorbachev years, has only declined further.\textsuperscript{101}

In agriculture, however, "shock therapy" contains only the potential for disaster. The same would have been true of the subsequently adopted program of de-collectivization had it actually involved a break-up of the state and collective farm structures.\textsuperscript{102} In fact, as a result of the political conflict and indecision, these reforms appear to have been little more


\textsuperscript{102} See, for example, the consequences of de-collectivization in Georgia, Albania, and Bulgaria, all of which have reverted to a subsistence agriculture of a pre-modern even medieval nature.
than a paper change. The results of those changes which have been undertaken are, moreover, disappointing. Indeed, the whole initiative seems to be grinding to a stop while the discussion continues. The root problem with reform, however, is not the political conflict which surrounds it. It is rather that far too little attention has been paid to the problem of agricultural reform because, as has been traditional in Russia and the Soviet


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Union, the primary focus of government reform policies has been industry. Indeed, Rutskoi has argued that the state, in fact, has no program. At the same time, agriculture is a realm that encourages both conservatism and nationalism since it deals with the basic food supply and raises serious questions about a country's independence and self-sufficiency—even more so when it is feeling vulnerable. To return to the Stolypin model, once again, there is one comparison that is especially revealing. Prior to the Stolypin Reforms' enactment, peasant agriculture had been subjected to intense scrutiny by both government and society for many years and even decades—to the point that many despaired of any action at all. However, while the government certainly procrastinated, the long period of discussion meant that the reforms, when they were adopted, were the product of serious reflection. Such does not appear to have been the case in Russia today. Quite the reverse. The desire for a quick fix, the derivative status of agriculture, the reliance on the NEP and Stolypin models—not to mention both western pressure and support for a policy of privatization and the concomitant Russian desire to please the west in return for financial assistance—all combined to prevent any serious new government thinking on the subject, thereby reinforcing the knee-jerk reaction against everything inherited from the Stalinist era and its aftermath as well as to break totally with the long history of failed Soviet reforms. As a result, it seems that truly meaningful reform has been postponed and may at this stage

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108 Macey, Government And Peasant, passim.

even be impossible due to the costs involved and the government's virtual bankruptcy.\textsuperscript{110} Meanwhile, reliance on various foreign training programs, foreign investment, and the creation of model farms seem to be as drops in the ocean, somewhat comparable to the long history of the Soviet-era experiments, many of which while valuable nonetheless vanished into oblivion.\textsuperscript{111}

In this connection, it is worth noting one other possible source of models that may have influenced the decision to de-collectivize and privatize.\textsuperscript{112} These were the successes of China's de-collectivization program and, perhaps, even Poland's recent agricultural successes. Here, too, however, it is a situation of comparing apples and oranges. In the Chinese case, some 80\% of the population still lived in the countryside and retained memories of life before collectivization which itself was only some thirty years old when the de-collectivization was begun in 1978. Moreover, given the labor intensive nature of Chinese agriculture, the need for capital inputs was minimal. In addition, a deliberate attempt was made by the Chinese authorities to win the rural cadres over to the program by allowing them to benefit from the reforms as well and to become private farmers.\textsuperscript{113}

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\textsuperscript{110} The current political debate and conflict is but the first step on the path of such a thoroughgoing discussion. On the government's fiscal problems, see S. Pendleton, "Debt Revisions Key to Russian Grain Purchases," \textit{CSM}, 12/16/92, p. 6; art. in \textit{Kommersant-Daily}, 12/10/92, p. 12 in RNA, #A194; TV interview with V.N. Khlystun in \textit{FBIS}, 12/29/92, p. 27. For the earlier period, see Brooks, "Soviet Agriculture's Halting Reform.\textquotedblright\ pp. 34-5; Wegren, "Political Institutions and Agrarian Reform," pp. 133-135; but see Prosterman and Hanstad, "Individual Peasant Farming," pp. 160-1: Van Atta, Second Congress of the Russian Agrarian Union," p. 43.
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\textsuperscript{112} See Rutskoi's discussion of E. European experiences in Rutskoi, \textit{Agrarnaia reforma v Rossii}, pp. 87-92.
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Russia, meanwhile, only some twenty-five percent of the population lives in the countryside, as many as one fourth of them administrators and technical workers, while the age structure has shifted markedly upward as the young fled to the cities.\textsuperscript{114} It is this demographic situation, indeed, which has led to the idea of settling demobilized members of the military in the countryside--a strange reincarnation of both Arakcheev's "military colonies" of the early 19th century and early Soviet attempts to create communal forms of agriculture following the end of the civil war--as well as attempts to encourage urban out-migration to the countryside.\textsuperscript{115} Moreover, there is little memory of what life was like outside the collective farms and, it seems, even less interest.\textsuperscript{116} Thus the similarity is purely formal.

Meanwhile, the Polish model is even less relevant, for despite the relative successes of post-communist agriculture there, there never was a collective farm system in the first place so that the Polish reforms were limited to the input and distributional components of the agricultural sector--though in this respect they may serve as a model in the future.

\textsuperscript{114} Wegren, "Political Institutions and Agrarian Reform," pp. 140-141.


If neither privatization nor de-collectivization were appropriate models for Russia in the present, what strategy should have been adopted? It is not that the policy of privatization and de-collectivization is wrong in itself. Certainly, some organizational reform of agriculture is necessary, particularly of land-use and management practices on the producer level. However, the problem with such reforms is that they are always disruptive and, at least initially, always involve a major conflict of short-term interests between supposed losers and gainers. Moreover, despite the assumptions of reformers that the disruptions in production could be compensated for in the short term by the private farms, such has not proved to be the case. On the contrary, it would appear that neither private farms, such as they now exist, nor private plots—even in their much increased numbers—will be able to pick up the slack during the transition period. This suggests that an alternative strategy was necessary.

As already noted, the problem with Russian agriculture in the short-term is not one of output. What then is the problem? I would argue that the immediate problem is also not the problem of incentives, as the current discussions would suggest, and toward the provision

117 Macey. "Government Actions," pp. 133-173; and fn. 10, above; Also Burke. "Rural Conservatism." CSM, 7/7/93, p. 9; TV interview with V.N. Khlystun in FBIS, 3/22/93, pp. 74-5.


of which the current reforms are oriented. It is rather the huge wastage that takes place, beginning with the harvest and then on down the line to the store shelf. This wastage is caused by a variety of factors including poor harvesting equipment, inadequate harvesting methods, inadequate storage, and unreliable transportation. The paradox is such, indeed, that smaller harvests don’t necessarily reduce the quantity of foodstuffs available by the same proportion. On the contrary, they could be considered a godsend. For on one level what a reduced harvest means is that there will be less wastage. Hence, it seems that, in the short-term, the more productive path would have been to take measures to resolve the various problems related to infrastructure and capital inputs, beginning with storage. Had this been begun several years ago, when the government still had the ability to transfer meaningful investment from production to storage and infrastructure, perhaps accompanied by some privatization of distributors and the creation of a genuine wholesale market for agricultural goods, then the ground would have been laid for a subsequent program for the reorganization of the system of agricultural production, including both a gradual de-statization and privatization. This is to say that in the current circumstances the strategy should have been the reverse of that adopted by the Stolypin Reforms, and rather than introducing tenure or organizational changes and then developing the infrastructure the reformers should have been reforming the infrastructure and then introducing organizational changes. Moreover, such a path would have significantly reduced the level of conflict

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121 Former USSR, p. 10; art. in Delovoi Mir, 9/12/92, p. 9 in RNA, #A139; TV interview with V.N. Khlystun in FBIS, 9/1/92, pp. 23-4; Cavanaugh, "Looking Beyond Production." pp. 1-5; Rutskoi, Agrarnaia reforma v Rossii, pp. 40-41.

122 On the problems of overproduction, see V. Konovalov, "Private Farmers are Concerned About the Prospect of Overproduction." Izvestia, 3/17/92, p. 2 in CDPSP, XLV: 11 (1993), pp. 22-3. Cf. the current threat of new bumper harvest. Demchenko, "Government Has No Intention To Abandon Reform Course in RPD, 8/7/93.
between the "friends and foes of change," both on the local level and in the center, and thus facilitated the achievement of a compromise over long-term goals.

That such an approach is not simply academic speculation is supported by the actual direction agricultural reform now seems to be taking. And this, it seems, is in large part a response to the ongoing political conflict over agrarian reform represented most recently by the dismissal of Rutskoi as head of the Center for Land and Agro-Industrial Reform, the appointment of A.Kh. Zaveriukha as Deputy Premier for Agriculture, and the recent Second Congress of the Russian Agrarian Union. Indeed, although Rutskoi's program has been rightly criticized for its excessive reliance on technological fixes and his seemingly willful failure to consider costs, not to mention his propensity for creating "new monopoly-type monsters" that have the potential for being nomenklatura boondoggles--itself a throwback to the Brezhnev and Khrushchev eras--he nonetheless has a number of good points. Most important, over his year or so in office, as he seems to have learned more about agriculture, he abandoned his initial support of individual peasant farms as well as the overall policy of privatization--at least in the short-term--and shifted his attention to more basic, infrastructural problems, particularly the supply of inputs to agriculture and the distribution of agricultural products. And Rutskoi is not alone.

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125 Rutskoi Agrarnaia reforma vRossii, especially p. 61-62 for his opposition to the creation of "primitive" peasant family farms; and on the infrastructure, pp. 68-81, 95-120, 124-135. For his commitment to private landownership and family farms in the long-term, see ibid., pp. 53-54, 92-94. Also see art. in Sel'skakia Zhizn', in 3/13/92, p.1 in RNA, #A27; art. in Kommersant-Daily, 11/17/92, p. 7 in RNA, #A179; V. Konovalov, "Why Rutskoi's Agrarian Program Frightened the Agrarian Deputies," Izvestiia, 4/20/92, p. 2 in CDPSP, XLIV: 16 (1992), pp. 3-6; Rutskoi, "The Agro-
As we continue to follow the somewhat erratic course of agricultural reform in Russia, the observations of comparative students of agrarian reform are relevant, namely, that such reforms, especially radical reforms, seldom, if ever, achieve either their economic or their political goals.\textsuperscript{127} This, of course, suggests that a more gradual and compromising approach is more effective in the long run. In the Russian context, this suggests that the NEP strategy of introducing change in those sectors of the economy that the government truly controls—such as supply and distribution—is likely to be more effective in transforming the overall organizational structure of the producer units than a utopian-style campaign for more radical change at the producer level where outside intervention merely generates opposition.
