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## **DEVELOPMENT OF THE AGRO-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX IN THE USSR IN 1960-1990**

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### **Abstract**

The article deals with the agrarian policy in the USSR in 1960-1990. During the period under study, the USSR had an agrarian system, an important feature of which was the active participation of the state, party-state structures in the regulation of the agrarian economy and all spheres of rural life. The experience of the Soviet era is quite instructive. He clearly demonstrated the great potential of the planned system during the Great Patriotic War. But at the same time, this experience showed certain shortcomings of total control and petty regulation of agricultural production, which most clearly manifested themselves later in the period under review.

**Keywords:** agriculture, history, village, country, peasant.

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

Already from the end of the 1950-s and the beginning of the 1960s, such features began to form in agriculture, which were more fully developed in the 70s as features of the agrarian sector of the economy of developed socialism. The reorganization of the MTS, the acquisition of equipment by collective farms, and other measures taken at the turn of the 1950-s and 1960-s meant a new stage in the development of the collective farm system and the improvement of production relations. Since that time, an advanced, most qualified social and professional group, machine operators, began to actively form among the collective-farm peasantry, and inter-collective-farm cooperation developed more widely. The tasks of developing agriculture for the seven-year period and for the long term were defined in the decisions of the 21st and 22nd Party Congresses and in the Program of the CPSU. The main way to advance agriculture is the consistent implementation of the policy of intensifying agricultural production, increasing its technical equipment, electrification, chemicalization, and improving the culture of agriculture. At the same time, both the growing possibilities of the state in creating conditions for the intensification of agriculture, and the reduction of opportunities for extensive ways of its development were taken into account. By that time, the main mass of virgin lands had been developed, and the labor resources of the countryside had been reduced. In the early 1960s, for the first time in the history of our country, the rural population became smaller than the urban population. In accordance with the decisions of the 21st and 22nd Party Congresses, a number of important measures were taken in the early 1960-s to advance agriculture.



In 1961, prices for collective farms were reduced for fuel, spare parts, tractors, agricultural machinery, and building materials. Purchasing prices for certain types of agricultural products increased, for example, from June 1962 by 35% - for livestock and poultry, in 1963 by 20 - 25% - for cotton and sugar beet. Since 1961, capital investments have been expanding annually to agriculture; for 1961 - 1965 they increased by 1.6 times. Deliveries of mineral fertilizers and equipment, especially to state farms, increased noticeably. The power-to-weight ratio of one worker employed in agriculture increased from 4.4 liters. in 1958 to 7.7 liters. in 1965 - 1.7 times. On the whole, much was done during the years of the seven-year plan to further advance agriculture in accordance with the requirements of the new stage in the development of society.

## II. METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

A critical revision of the postulates of dogmatized Marxism led to the formation of real theoretical and methodological pluralism in modern Russian historiography. Under these conditions, a characteristic feature of most concrete historical research has become the desire to provide a synthesis, a combination of various methodological approaches. At the same time, statements about the need to combine the formational approach with the civilizational approach in historical cognition have become widespread. The author of this work shares this point of view.

The modernization theory within the framework of the civilizational approach makes it possible to free agrarian policy and history from excessive ideologization, to explore the issue of the holistic nature and continuity of the agrarian history of Russia and the USSR, about the dialectic of the objective and the subjective in agrarian policy.

The main result of the reforms of 1965-1970 was the withdrawal of agriculture from the crisis (where Khrushchev brought it) and the achievement of certain positive results. The volume of gross output increased by 23%, while in the previous five years (1961-1965) it amounted to only 12%. Grain production increased significantly compared to the previous five-year plan (by 30%), the production of meat, eggs, milk, sugar beet, sunflower and other agricultural products increased. (Agriculture of the USSR (1971) (Statistical collection)

However, the reform of both agriculture and the economy as a whole was half-hearted, since for its successful continuation it was necessary to change the foundations of the country's planned economy, which was impossible in the conditions of the socialist state of that time. As a result, even her "inspirer" of the reform, A. Kosygin, lost interest in her.

The retreat from reforms began in the middle of 1970, as can be seen from the decisions of the July 1970 Plenum: "To take measures to ensure that every collective farm and state farm engaged in the production of marketable grain, every region, territory, republic, not only fulfills a firm plan, but also were able to sell to the state over the five-year period at least 35% of grain in excess of the plan", "to ensure such an increase in the production of livestock products so that each collective farm and state farm annually sells to the state at least 8-10% of the products in excess of the plan."

Voluntary above-plan purchases thus turned into obligatory deliveries, which completely changed the meaning of the reform.

Since 1970, there has been a decline in the rate of development and an increase in crisis phenomena in the national economy of the USSR, expressed in a decrease in industrial production, failure to fulfill plans for the growth of national income and real per capita income, and, of course, in a decrease in the growth rate of agriculture (on the one hand, on the main types of agricultural products, there was an increase in production, on the other hand, the growth rate of production was declining despite the constant increase in capital investments). The rudiments of market mechanisms are again being replaced by a command-and-control system (increased centralization from the early 1970-s until the mid-1980s), which hinders all undertakings.



A fairly high increase in agricultural production in Russia, achieved in 1951-1960, did not fully solve the problems of the most complete provision of the population with food, especially meat and meat products, milk and products of its processing, vegetables and fruits.

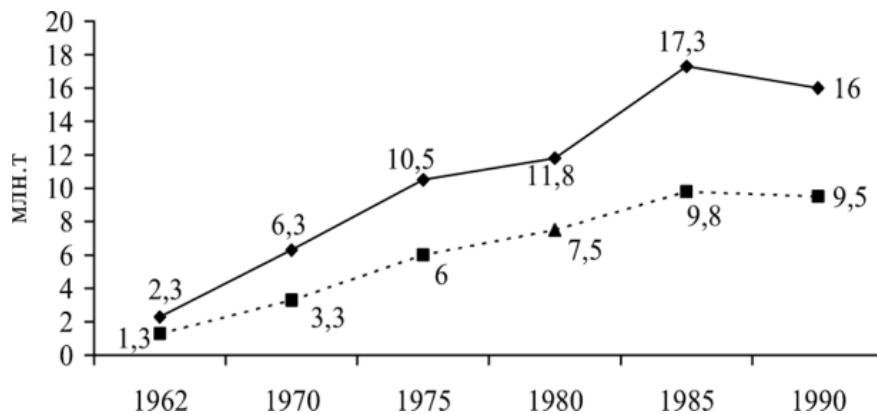
New changes were needed in agrarian policy and management, contributing to the intensification of production, a further increase, primarily in livestock products.

There are many negative assessments of this era in the economic literature. At the same time, these assessments are based on general reasoning and distortion of facts, without taking into account the indicators of the dynamics of development of the ongoing deep transformation processes. So A.A. Nikonov in his work "The Spiral of the Centuries-old Drama: Agrarian Science and Politics of Russia" (XVIII-XX centuries) called this period "stagnation", during which "an economic and social mechanism was formed that restrained the progressive development of society". Similar estimates are given by I.N. Buzdalov, A.V. Petrikov, F.P. Morgun, V.Ya. Uzunom, T.N. Shmelev.

What were the actual processes of agriculture and its services in this era?

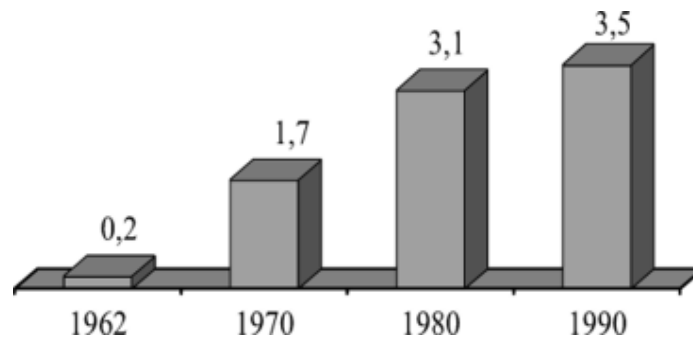
In this era, a decision is made to change the order of planning. Instead of the previous system of supply of agricultural products, a single form of its preparations is being introduced. With the reorganization of the MTS, new conditions are being created in the countryside.

During the decade (1961-1970) the task of mechanization and consistent intensification of agricultural production was set. In the system of measures for the development of agricultural production, along with mechanization, chemicalization and melioration of agriculture occupy a decisive place. At the December (1963) Plenum of the Central Committee of the CPSU, a program for the development of the chemical industry was determined. The resolution emphasizes "Mineral fertilizers are the foundation of the development of agriculture." Their widespread use opens the way for intensive agricultural production. The powerful power of chemistry must be fully used to increase field yields and livestock productivity in order to adequately meet the needs of the country in food and industry".



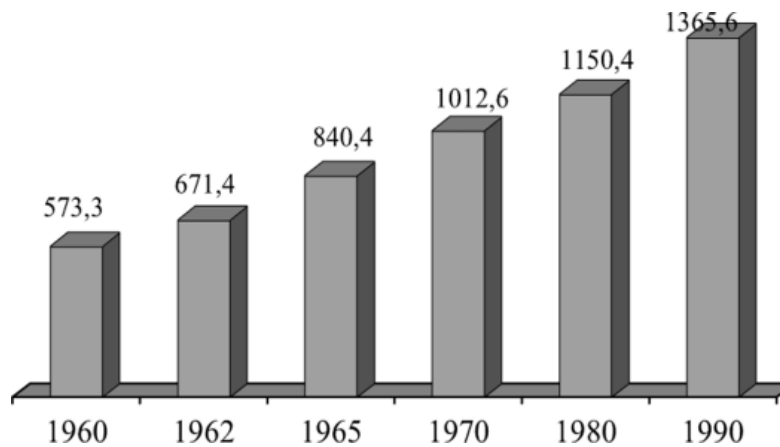
**The development of the chemical industry made it possible in 1970, compared with 1962, to increase the application of mineral fertilizers by 5.8 times, in 1980 - by 9 times, in 1990 - by 12.3 times.**

In 1962, 2.5 kg of mineral fertilizers fell on one hectare of crops, in 1970 - 28 kg, in 1980 - 62 kg, in 1990 - 88 kg. The high rates of development of animal husbandry have made it possible to significantly increase the use of organic fertilizers. In 1962, 0.2 tons of organic fertilizers were applied per hectare of sown area, in 1970 their amount was increased to 1.7 tons, in 1980 - up to 3.1, in 1990 - up to 3.5 tone.



**Application of organic fertilizers for crops in agricultural organizations of Russia (t).**

The material and technical base has changed radically. In 1965, the number of tractors increased by 1.5 times compared to 1960, in 1970 - by 1.8, in 1990 - by 2.4 times.



**Tractor fleet in Russian agriculture at the end of the year (thousand units).**

Work was actively carried out to comprehensively address the economic and social problems of the Non-Chernozem zone of the RSFSR. In the resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR "On measures for the further development of agriculture in the Non-Chernozem zone of the RSFSR" (1974), ways were determined for the accelerated rise in agricultural production, and for raising the material and cultural standard of living of the rural population in this region. For these purposes in 1976-1980. 35 billion rubles are allocated. capital investments (including funds of collective farms). This is almost as much as was invested in the development of agriculture over the previous three five-year plans. During the five-year period, 1.8 million hectares of waterlogged lands are being drained in the Non-Chernozem zone. This allowed almost doubling the area of agricultural land.

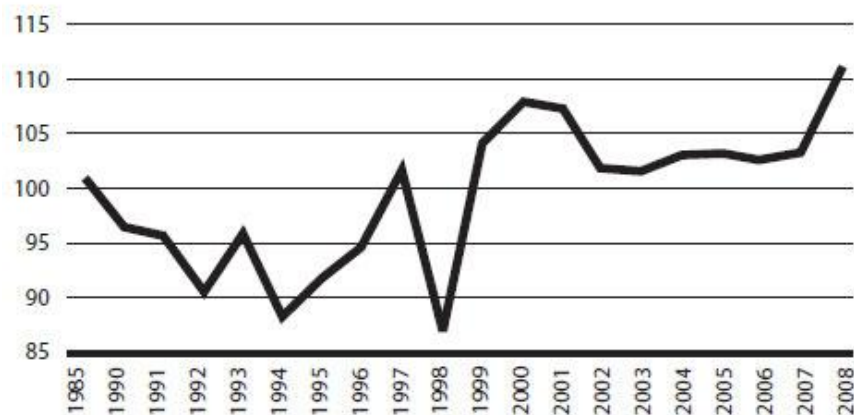
The implementation of measures for the development of the Non-Chernozem Zone in Russia, along with the solution of other problems related to management, made it possible to increase the average annual production of gross output by 30.5% over 10 years, grain by 32.1, meat by 41, milk by 27.2, eggs - by 81.2%.

The transition from a diversified structure to specialized production with a broad development of cooperation and other important processes was considered at this stage as the most important socio-economic task. The decision provided for a significant increase in the production of basic agricultural products by improving production and economic relations in the countryside, rational use of land, labor, material, technical and financial resources, creating effective organizational and economic systems based on a combination of agricultural and industrial production.

In March 1985, a new stage in the history of the USSR began, called "perestroika", which also affected the agricultural sector, but only in terms of agricultural management. In November 1985, a joint resolution of the Central Committee of the CPSU and the Council of Ministers of the USSR "On the further improvement of the



management of the agro-industrial complex" was adopted, in accordance with which a single "owner" appeared on the peasant land - the Agro-Industrial Committee (AIC) with a numerous structure and multi-billion budget investments. Billions of funds were used to write off the debts of state and collective farms, to subsidies and increase purchase prices. However, neither the multi-billion injections, nor even the senseless reorganization of the administration, solved the country's food problem. Agrarian reform had to be carried out below, on the ground, and not to inflate the administrative apparatus. In April 1989, the first sensible step in many decades was taken to allow land leases, according to which, already in the early 1990s, family farms began to emerge as a type of agricultural economy. But due to their small number, they also did not provide the country with food, despite the fact that in the same 1990, under the Law on Peasant Farming and the Law on Land Reform, peasants were allowed to leave collective farms and state farms with their share of public land. In December 1991, the government adopted another resolution "On the reorganization of collective farms and state farms into any standard form of association", and two years later 95% of collective farms were transformed into partnerships that received legal and economic independence without subordination to the Ministry of Agriculture. In practice, the application of these laws often led to the arbitrariness of local authorities. Perhaps that is why, to this day, the peasants are the owners of the land only on paper, they do not have a specific assigned plot, there are no certificates of the transfer of land to their ownership. In turn, collective farmers and state farm workers themselves are in no hurry to take their assets and share plots, since the vast majority of peasants, due to lack of financial resources, cannot create their own farms. At the end of 1991, major decisions were made that marked the beginning of the current stage of agrarian reform. In 1992, the reorganization of collective farms and state farms began, which involved: the first - the transfer of land and non-land means of production to the ownership of the labor collectives of agricultural enterprises, the second - the division of these funds into individual shares, the third - the re-registration of farms into one of the organizational and legal forms permitted by the relevant legislation of that period. Land reform and restructuring of agricultural producers in Russia were based on the division of land into shares. Workers of collective farms and state farms, their pensioners and workers in the social sphere received equal conditional shares in the land use of their farms. These shares were not marked on the ground, and they could be considered as a kind of options: they gave the owner the right to receive the site in kind at any time and without the consent of other owners of the shares, only the location of the site was the subject of discussion. These shares have been the subject of all kinds of transactions. During 1992-1994, about 12 million shares were distributed to rural residents. Some 300,000 households exercised their right to leave collective farms and start their own family farms. The rest of the villagers preferred to retain the status of hired workers, as a rule, they leased their land shares to their farms.



Annual growth rates of gross agricultural output in Russia, %.



Due to the low legal culture and level of law enforcement, land shares were poorly legally formalized, their owners did not imagine the benefits and obligations of owning shares, and agricultural enterprises that actually used the land did not pay rent. Moreover, the lands leased out in the form of land shares were not restricted to the locality. In a federal state, the issues of land regulation were assigned to the sphere of joint regulation of the federal and regional authorities, and in some territories the federal legislation on the division of land into land shares was not put into force.

The situation changed somewhat after the adoption of the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation "On the implementation of the constitutional rights of citizens to land" dated March 7, 1996 No. 337, which obliged all land users to conclude formal contracts with the owners of land shares. From that moment on, the average size of family farms began to grow due to the rental of shares. There was no official data on land transactions between agricultural enterprises, but such a practice existed. The decree motivated the owners of shares to look for more favorable conditions for lease transactions. As a result, a market for land shares has been formed in the country.

### III. CONCLUSION

In the course of agrarian modernization in the 1960s-1990s, mistakes, dramatic collisions, and deformations could not be avoided. However, steps in the agrarian area at this phase of the agro-transition are not limited to depeasantization, as some researchers believe. The real agrarian course had a pronounced paternalistic character. The agrarian policy was characterized by the absence of direct violence against the peasants, the gradual intensification of social construction in the countryside, the strengthening of material incentives, the encouragement of personal subsidiary plots, and measures of agrarian protectionism.

On the whole, the agrarian development of the 1960s and 1990s was distinguished, on the one hand, by a delay in carrying out long overdue reforms, and on the other hand, by forced leaps and the desire to introduce one or another "innovation" everywhere and quickly. The result of such a policy was the growth of crisis phenomena in agriculture.

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## РАЗВИТИЕ АГРОПРОМЫШЛЕННОГО КОМПЛЕКСА В СССР В 1960-1990 ГОДЫ

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### Аннотация

В статье рассматривается аграрная политика в СССР в 1960-1990 гг. В исследуемый период в СССР существовала аграрная система, важной особенностью которой было активное участие государства, партийно-государственных структур в регулировании аграрной экономики и всех сфер сельской жизни. Опыт советской эпохи весьма поучителен. Он наглядно продемонстрировал большие возможности плановой системы в годы Великой Отечественной войны. Но в то же время этот опыт показал известные недостатки тотального контроля и мелкой регламентации сельскохозяйственного производства, наиболее ярко проявившиеся в дальнейшем в рассматриваемый период.

**Ключевые слова:** земледелие, история, деревня, страна, крестьянин.

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