



Canadian Slavonic Papers

Collective Farm Production in East and West Ukraine during the Fourth Five-Year Plan (1946-1950): A Comparative Study

Author(s): DAVID R. MARPLES

Source: *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne des Slavistes*, Vol. 22, No. 4 (December 1980), pp. 496-505

Published by: [Canadian Association of Slavists](#)

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/40870537>

Accessed: 16/06/2014 00:42

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at
<http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.



Canadian Association of Slavists and Canadian Slavonic Papers are collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Canadian Slavonic Papers / Revue Canadienne des Slavistes*.

<http://www.jstor.org>

DAVID R. MARPLES

Collective Farm Production in East and West Ukraine during the Fourth Five-Year Plan (1946-1950): A Comparative Study

This paper will present an analysis of agriculture in Ukraine during the years of the first postwar Five Year Plan, 1946-1950. It cannot claim to be definitive, and my conclusions are only tentative. There are two reasons for this. So far as I know, no other studies comparing the two parts of Ukraine have yet appeared; second, the data used are taken from Soviet statistics, which cannot always be accepted as valid. It is hoped, nevertheless, that this work will make a contribution to our scanty knowledge of the years 1946-1950 in Ukraine.

I will attempt to answer two basic questions. First, how far were the demands of the Plan in agriculture actually fulfilled? Secondly, was agriculture in the already "sovietized" East Ukraine more productive than in West Ukraine? In answering the second question, this paper will examine the availability of labour, livestock and machinery and the impact of the collectivization process upon agricultural production in the western areas of Ukraine.

By June 1941, agriculture in East Ukraine had experienced almost a decade of the collective farm system. In contrast, the former Polish regions of Volyn, Lviv, Stanislav and Ternopil had been occupied for a mere eighteen months, and the Chernivtsi and Izmail regions (annexed from Rumania) for less than a year. Consequently, the Soviets had not had time to consolidate the system in the western areas before the outbreak of the German-Soviet war; only 12.8 per cent of all farms in the western regions had been collectivized, with the highest figures 21.5 per cent in Volyn and the lowest 2.7 per cent in Chernivtsi.¹ This factor was to have a major influence on postwar developments.

A full evaluation of the effects of the German occupation would require a paper to itself. Suffice it to note that the total sown area for all categories of farms in Ukraine decreased by over six million hectares (29 per cent).² At the end of 1945 the heads of cattle were 72 per cent of the 1941 total, for pigs the figure was 31.5 per cent, for sheep and goats 46.3 per cent and for horses 42.8 per cent. In the western regions, the situation was similar. The sown area had been reduc-

1. *Sotsialistichna perebudova i rozvytok sil'skoho hospodarstva Ukrains'koї RSR* (Kiev, 1968), p. 93.

2. *Narodne hospodarstvo Ukrainskoi RSR: statystichni zbirnyk* (Kiev, 1960), p. 129.

ed by 35 per cent, the number of horses by 44 per cent, of cattle by 48 per cent and of pigs by 83 per cent.³

Soviet sources maintain that the Germans destroyed all the collective farms set up in West Ukraine before the war. In Ternopil oblast, the total losses to the *kolhosp*s are estimated at over one billion roubles.⁴ Agriculture in Drohobych oblast had been almost totally ruined by the war and 1,083 peasant homes had been burnt down, while in the Volyn region 519 population points had been destroyed and over 3,500 peasant farms burnt down.⁵

The restoration of the economy was therefore the main goal of the new Five-Year Plan, which was approved by the All-Union Supreme Soviet in March 1946. It should be borne in mind, however, that investment and initiative were devoted primarily to industry. In agriculture the goal of the new Plan was to increase production in the Soviet Union by 27 per cent over the level of 1940.⁶ For the Ukraine the Plan specified a total grain collection of 27.8 million tons at an average harvest of 14 centners per hectare. The harvest of sugar beets was to be raised from the 1940 total of 13 million tons to 15.7 million tons at 190 centners per hectare. The sown area was to be increased from the prewar 21 million to 30.5 million hectares, of which 21.3 million hectares were to be on collective farms. Out of this total 19.6 million hectares were to be devoted to grain crops, 2.6 million to technical crops, 2.8 million to vegetables and potatoes and 5.4 million to fodder crops.⁷

For livestock the Plan stipulated a 50 per cent increase in heads of cattle and oxen, 330 per cent for pigs and 220 per cent for sheep and goats.⁸ In terms of numbers, this meant that by 1950, there were to be 2,629,000 horses, approximately half of which would be on collective farms, over 12 million cattle, 6,780,000 sheep and goats, including 3,100,000 in *kolhosp*s and 9,600,000 pigs with 3,300,000 on collective farms. These figures represent a small increase over those for 1940.

In the difficult postwar circumstances, Stalin and the First Secretary in Ukraine, Khrushchev, sought to increase the level of party representation in the rural areas. In East Ukraine, they were quite successful. In 1946, the number of party organisations in collective farms was raised from 1,431 to 6,690.⁹ By

3. M. K. Iavisiuta, *Narysy istorii kolhospnogo budivnytstva v zakhidnykh oblastiakh Ukrains'koi RSR* (Kiev, 1962), p. 75.

4. *Ibid.* p. 74.

5. *Ibid. loc. cit.*

6. *Sotsialistichna perebudova*, p. 203.

7. *Zakon o piatiletnem plane vosstanovleniya i razvitiia narodnogo khoziaistva USSR na 1946-1950gg.* (Kiev, 1946), pp. 25-26.

8. *Ibid. loc. cit.*

9. V. Iurchuk, *Borot'ba KP Ukrayny za vidbudovi i rozvytok narodnogo hospodarstva (1945-1952rr.)* (Kiev, 1965), p. 101.

February 1947 in the Communist Party of Ukraine (CPU) there were 75,700 *kolhosp* members and in the following year party organisations were operating in 11,895 collective farms, or 42.3 per cent of the total number in East Ukraine.¹⁰

Politically, East Ukraine posed relatively few problems for the Soviet authorities. The main difficulties were administrative, as may be seen from a decree of the All-Union Supreme Soviet in September 1946, "Concerning measures for liquidating violations of the Statute of the agricultural artel on collective farms."¹¹ The defects indicated included the squandering of labour-days due to the usage of excess administrative personnel on collective farms. In East Ukraine, 26,200 party workers were sent from the raion centres into the *kolhosps* to eliminate these mistakes.¹²

Soviet sources consider the 1946 drought as the chief cause of the famine in East Ukraine during this year. Indeed, the crop yields were disastrous. In the Kiev region, for all types of farms, grain was harvested at 6.5 centners per hectare, and in the Kharkiv region at only 3.8; for Ukraine as a whole, the harvest of grain crops dropped from 7 centners per hectare in 1945 to 4.6.¹³ Losses were especially severe in the southern steppe regions, with grain yields of 2.3 centners in Odessa and 2.9 centners per hectare in the Crimea.¹⁴ On the collective farms the situation was even worse, with a total grain collection of 3.8 centners per hectare and a sugar beet harvest of forty centners per hectare compared to 157 in 1940.¹⁵

Nevertheless, although the drought was a major factor in the famine, it was not the only one. Drought conditions, albeit to a lesser extent, were reported in the non-collectivized western oblasts too, yet there was no famine there. The inefficiency of the collective farms in the East was undoubtedly a contributory factor. They had sown only 60 per cent of their winter crops in the appointed time and had ploughed only 30 per cent of the total area under spring crops.¹⁶

In 1946 the losses to livestock on all types of farms were surpassed only by the devastation of the war years. The number of pigs fell from over 2,800,000 on 1 January 1946 to 1,800,000 within the year while the number of horses decreased by 360,000.¹⁷ Since, however, the numbers of livestock on collective

10. Iurchuk, *Borot'ba KP Ukrayny*, p. 101.

11. *Sotsialistychna perebudova*, p. 208.

12. Iurchuk, *Borot'ba KP Ukrayny*, p. 105.

13. *Sotsialistychna perebudova*, p. 212.

14. *Ibid.*, loc. cit.

15. *Narodne hospodarstvo*, p. 190.

16. *Sotsialistychna perebudova*, p. 212.

17. *Narodne hospodarstvo*, p. 216.

farms remained fairly constant,¹⁸ one may surmise that this was due to the delivery of animals from other regions of the Soviet Union.

What were the overall effects of the 1946 famine? First, there was a considerable migration of East Ukrainian peasants to the western provinces, and it is likely that they brought their distrust of collectivization with them. Second, the failure of the Plan to meet its targets in agriculture, especially in animal livestock, was largely due to the famine of 1946.

From 1947 to 1949, East Ukrainian agriculture underwent a gradual improvement. The total sown area was increased by 4 million hectares over the two year period and crop yields began to improve.¹⁹ In terms of centners per hectare, winter wheat rose from 5 to 12.9, spring wheat from 3.4 to 5.2, oats from 5.2 to 9.3, sugar beets from 43 to 98 and potatoes from 55 to 114.²⁰ When one considers, however, that almost half the total grain collection of 1948 was procured by the state, as opposed to 35 per cent in 1940, then it is clear that the East Ukrainian farmer was still living at subsistence level.²¹

In West Ukraine, by contrast, the Soviet authorities were faced in the early post-war years with severe political problems in the form of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA). At the end of the war, the Russians controlled only the major towns in West Ukraine. The villages were hostile enclaves of nationalist resistance. This paper will not give an analysis of UPA, but it must be taken into account that the Russians could make little progress in agriculture until the nationalist groups had been defeated and the rural population could be moved into collective farms.

Further, whereas in East Ukraine, communist and Komsomol forces in the rural areas were substantial, in West Ukraine in the first postwar years, party workers formed only a tiny minority in the villages. The Russians countered the hostility of the local population by dispatching a great number of party and Soviet workers into the western regions from East Ukraine and the Russian Republic. Thus from July 1944 to July 1946, over 86,000 party and Soviet workers arrived in West Ukraine from other regions.²² But even then the great majority of the primary party organizations and communists were concentrated in oblast and raion centres. For example, of 140 communists working in Dolyn raion, Stanislav oblast, only 3 worked in the villages, while in nearby Nadvirna the figure was 15 out of 227.²³ As late as 1 January 1950, only 10 per cent of

18. *Sotsialistichna perebudova*, p. 237.

19. *Narodne hospodarstvo*, p. 129.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 186-89.

21. *Sotsialistichna perebudova*, p. 225.

22. Iurchuk, *Borot'ba KP Ukrayiny*, p. 132.

23. V. P. Stoliarenko and I. K. Sas, "Dzialnist' partorhanizatsii v period kolektyvizatsii zakhidnoukrains'koho sela (1947-1950)," *Ukrains'kyi istorichnyi zhurnal*, 1963 no. 5, p. 72.

collective farm chairmen in West Ukraine were party members.²⁴ In Lviv region, one of the slowest to be collectivized, the number was 5.5 per cent.²⁵

As a result the collectivization of agriculture in West Ukraine proceeded only slowly, and one may estimate that in January 1950 more than 25 per cent of the land remained in the hands of individual peasants.²⁶ (In East Ukraine, at this time, *kolhosp*s controlled 82.1 per cent of the total sown area and state farms 9.6 per cent.)²⁷ Within twelve months, however, collectivization of the western regions was 99 per cent complete;²⁸ all freedom of choice in joining had ended and all resistance was punished by imprisonment or deportation.²⁹

Before discussing production results, it is pertinent to discuss the agricultural priorities in Ukraine during this period. Iurchuk, in a Soviet doctoral dissertation, states that the prime concern of the Soviet authorities was to create a strong fodder base for animals.³⁰ Consequently in April 1949, the All-Union Supreme Soviet recommended that the sown area under perennial grasses should be increased to 5.8 million hectares in 1949 and 8 million hectares in 1950, and for fodder grasses to 3.2 and 3.5 million hectares respectively.³¹

Thus there was a considerable increase in the sown area of fodder and perennial grasses at the expense of grain crops, and animal husbandry was developed by lowering the consumption levels of the population. Thus in Ukraine in 1946, grain crops occupied 75.7 per cent of the sown area of all categories of farms, and fodder crops 7.4 per cent. By 1950, the sown area under grain had been reduced to 65.4 per cent of the total and that under fodder crops had increased to an unprecedented 17.1 per cent.³² By 1953, the area under grain crops was smaller than in 1913.³³ As a result, the wages in grain of the collective farmer suffered a continual decline.

A second priority of Ukrainian agriculture in the postwar years was the amalgamation of *kolhosp*s into large "model" farms and the so-called "agrarian cities." The 26,400 collective farms in East Ukraine at the start of 1950 were

24. I. A. Teterin, *Sotsialistychni peretvorennia v sil's'komu hospodarstvi zakhidnykh oblastei Ukrayiny* (Kiev, 1954), p. 22.

25. *Leninizm torzhestvuie* (Lviv, 1957), p. 219.

26. At this time the *kolhosp*s occupied only 66.4 per cent of the total arable land (*Narodne hospodarstvo*, p. 154).

27. *Ibid.*, p. 140.

28. Ivasiuta, *Narysy istorii kolhospnogo budivnytstva*, p. 122.

29. See, for example, L. Shankowsky, "Ukrains'ka povstancha armiia," in *Istoriia ukraïns'koho viis'ka* (Winnipeg, 1953), p. 811.

30. Iurchuk, *Borot'ba KP Ukrayiny*, p. 111.

31. Borys Lewytskyj, *Die Sowjetukraine, 1944-1963* (Berlin, 1964), p. 52.

32. *Narodne hospodarstvo*, pp. 134-39.

33. Lewytskyj, *Die Sowjetukraine*, p. 53.

united in 14,433 new farms, or 55 per cent of the original number.³⁴ In West Ukraine from June 1950 to June 1951, the number of *kolhosp*s was reduced from 7,191 to 4,450.³⁵ One goal of this measure was to raise the area of individual collective farms, since the larger state farms were thought to be more efficient agricultural producers. But it also served to increase the degree of political control over the *kolhosp*s, as can be seen from the fact that the percentage of communists amongst collective farm chairmen rose from 16.2 to 54.2 through this process.³⁶ However, it was no mean task to organize the giant farms. Farmers who had barely grown accustomed to their original *kolhosp* were now compelled to join an even larger institution. Reports suggest that if the amalgamation led to deficiencies in East Ukraine, in the West the consequence was total chaos.

The third priority of postwar farming was increased mechanization, particularly in the western regions which had been lacking in agricultural implements in the prewar period. In 1946, the Galician Ukrainian regions possessed 501 tractors, 7 combines and 266 threshing machines. By 1950, there were in operation 8,984 tractors, 229 combines and 2,802 threshers. By the end of the Plan, the 237 MTS in West Ukraine ploughed almost 3 million hectares of land for the *kolhosp*s, compared to a mere 334,000 hectares in 1940.³⁷

The raising of mechanization in the western areas was accompanied by an intensification of political control exercised by the MTS over the *kolhosp*s. On 12 December 1949, MTS political sections were created in the western oblasts. These were manned by communists dispatched from various oblasts of the republic.³⁸ Their tasks were identical to those of the political sections organized in East Ukraine in 1933, i.e. to purge MTS and *kolhosp*s of hostile elements, to strengthen collective farm democracy, to ensure the fulfillment of obligations to the state and agreements between the MTS and *kolhosp*s.³⁹

In examining the results of the Fourth Five-Year Plan, I will turn first to animal husbandry. Here, it is evident that for almost every category of livestock the results fell far short of the demands of the Plan. Only the numbers of cattle and oxen combined exceeded the levels attained in 1941 and the net total of just over 11 million was well below the anticipated 12,230,000. The number of sheep on collective farms of Ukraine was 800,000 fewer than the 1941 total and the number of horses fell short of the target by almost 400,000.⁴⁰

34. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

35. *Istoriia selianstva ukrains'koi RSR* (Kiev, 1967), vol. II, p. 403.

36. Teterin, *Sotsialistichni peretvorennia*, p. 23.

37. Ivasiuta, *Narysy istorii kolhospnoho budivnytstva*, p. 131.

38. *Sotsialistichna perebudova*, p. 72.

39. Ivasiuta, *Narysy istorii kolhospnoho budivnytstva*, p. 132.

40. *Narodne hospodarstvo*, p. 216.

As mentioned earlier, the famine of 1946 played a key part in the heavy losses to livestock in East Ukraine, and for many years East Ukraine was to lag far behind the Western regions in this respect. The figures for 1954 indicate that Ukraine averaged 27,500 cattle per one hundred hectares of agricultural land. In West Ukraine however, the average was 36,170, rising as high as 43,000 in Lviv. In terms of sheep, goats and pigs, West Ukraine averaged 29,400 for every one hundred hectares, compared to the Ukrainian SSR average of 22,300. West Ukraine, with 12.4 per cent of Ukraine's arable land in 1950, possessed over 25 per cent of the total horses.⁴¹

The planned increase of the sown area was exceeded by over 100,000 hectares for all categories of farms and by 4 million hectares in the *kolhosp*s. The sown area under technical crops (all farms) was increased from 2,699,600 hectares in 1940 to 2,889,700 hectares in 1950.⁴² For the gross collection of crops, the quantity of grain collected trebled between 1946 and 1950. Yet for all this the total of 1,248 million poods gathered in Ukraine in 1950 comprised only 77.4 per cent of the 1940 collection of 1,613 million poods.⁴³ The yields per hectare were sharply reduced. Thus for all types of farms in Ukraine, the average grain yield in 1950 was 10.2 against the planned 14. Sugar beets were harvested at 177 centners per hectare, whereas the Plan aimed at 190.⁴⁴

Table I
Table of Agricultural Crops in Ukraine
(centners per hectare)

Crop	1940		1950	
	All farms	Kolhosp	All farms	Kolhosp
All grain	12.4	12.6	10.2	9.7
Winter rye	11.1	11.4	11.1	10.2
Winter wheat	12.1	12.3	11.1	11.1
Winter barley	11.2	11.4	5.6	5.5
Spring rye	7.4	6.6	6.9	6.4
Spring wheat	8.4	14.8	6.1	7.6
Oats	12.1	12.4	8.9	8.8
Millet	14.7	14.9	6.5	6.0
Sugar beets	159	157	177	175
Potatoes	101	92	107	66

Source: *Narodne hospodarstvo Ukrainskoi RSR v 1964 rotsi.*

Statystichnyi shchorichnyk (Kiev, 1965), pp. 190-91, 248.

41. *Narodnoe hospodarstvo*, pp. 236-8.

42. *Ibid.*, pp. 129-33.

43. *Ibid.*, p. 174.

44. *Ibid.*, pp. 186-89.

The results of the harvests are illustrated in Table I. It is clear that the harvest of crops for all categories of farms in 1950 was consistently higher than on *kolhosp*s and usually higher than that on the state farms. The total grain harvest attained only 9.7 centners per hectare on collective farms and 9.6 centners per hectare on state farms. Of all the crops sown, the harvest of sugar beets and potatoes alone produced a higher yield than in 1940.⁴⁵

When one considers the problems encountered in Ukrainian agriculture from 1946-50, the failure of the Five-Year Plan was perhaps to be expected. Yet in comparative terms, the results in the "backward" western regions were much better than in East Ukraine. Whereas the harvest of grain crops for all types of farms in Ukraine was 10.2 centners per hectare, the returns in the western regions were as follows; Volyn 10.3, Transcarpathia (the only oblast in Ukraine to fulfill the Plan) 14.6, Lviv 11.6, Rivne 10.5, Stanislav 12.7, Ternopil 11.1, and Chernivtsi 11.1.⁴⁶

The superiority of the harvests in West Ukraine can be seen in almost every category of crops. The fulfillment of the plan for sugar beets in Ukraine, for example, was due primarily to the returns in the western regions. In comparison with the Ukrainian average yield of 177 centners per hectare, the harvest in Volyn was 227, in Lviv 212, in Rivne 231 and in Chernivtsi 262 centners per hectare.⁴⁷ Admittedly West Ukraine provided a favourable climate for the harvest of sugar beets, but there is no indication that the weather conditions in East Ukraine in 1950 were adverse.

It should be emphasised that the higher yields in West Ukraine were achieved in spite of the weaknesses of the collective farms in the area. The output of work per collective farmer in the western regions of Ukraine in 1950 was less than half that of his East Ukrainian counterpart.⁴⁸ Moreover, East Ukraine was much better provided with agricultural machinery throughout the period of the Plan. Each tractor, for example, serviced 140.9 hectares of land,⁴⁹ whereas in West Ukraine there was one tractor for every 440 hectares of land.⁵⁰ The 1946 famine aside, what other reasons were there for the better results in the western areas?

First, the Plan's stress on industry affected East rather than West Ukraine in taking labour from the rural areas. Both regions suffered extensive population losses through the war, but rural labour was more readily available in the west-

45. *Ibid.*, p. 190.

46. *Ibid.*, p. 206.

47. *Ibid.*, p. 210.

48. Teterin, *Sotsialistichni peretvorenija*, p. 22.

49. *Sotsialistichna perebudova*, p. 268.

50. M. O. Butsko, *KPRS - orhanizator vsenarodnoi dopomohy trudiashchym zakhidnykh oblastei URSR v vidbudovi i dalshomu rozvitiu narodnoho hospodarstva [1944-1950rr]* (Kiev, 1959), p. 91.

ern areas which had not been industrialized in the prewar period. Thus the social makeup of the two regions was quite different. In West Ukraine in 1950, over 63 per cent of the population still depended on agriculture for a living.⁵¹ In East Ukraine, the 1959 census (the first since 1939) revealed that only 37.9 per cent of the population was employed in agriculture;⁵² the figure for 1950 was therefore probably about 45 per cent.

The shortage of labour in the villages of East Ukraine was heightened by the migration of workers from East to West Ukraine during the 1946 famine and by the constant transfer of skilled agricultural personnel from east to west during the collectivization process. In the period of the Plan, about 16,000 agricultural specialists were sent into West Ukraine.⁵³ In addition from 1944-50, a considerable number of party and Soviet workers were transferred to West Ukraine to combat the UPA forces. The result was a continual drain on the manpower resources of the eastern regions.

A second reason for the relative success of agriculture in West Ukraine was that this "newer" Soviet region, being preoccupied with collectivization, was exempted from the disastrous agrarian experiments carried out in the Soviet Union after 1949, such as the grassland rotation system. Soviet sources admit that this system was applied wholesale to many areas of East Ukraine, and especially the southern steppe regions, regardless of local soil and climatic conditions.⁵⁴ Although the area of fodder grasses increased over the 1940-50 period by 800,000 hectares in East Ukraine, in West Ukraine it actually declined by over 30,000 hectares.⁵⁵

Third, the low level of production on the collectivized farms of East Ukraine was a direct result of the Soviet policy of reducing the procurement prices on agricultural goods almost to the level of 1927-28.⁵⁶ This policy gave the East Ukrainian farmer little incentive to raise agricultural production and drastically lowered his standard of living. In West Ukraine in 1940-50 the existing *kolhospy* were being "organizationally strengthened" and procurement demands were kept to a minimum. In 1950, the eight western oblasts accounted for only 9 per cent of all grain procured and purchased by the state.⁵⁷ Thus in the period of the Plan, West Ukraine felt few effects of the price squeeze.

51. *Sotsialistichna perebudova*, p. 265.

52. *Narodne hospodarstvo*, p. 9.

53. P. M. Khorolets, "Pikluvannia komunistychnoi partii pro pidvyshchennia kulturno-tehnichnoho rivnia trudiashchykh zakhidnykh oblastei ukrainskoi RSR (1946-1950rr.)," *Ukrains'ky istorichnyi zhurnal*, 1960, no. 5, p. 13.

54. *Sotsialistichna perebudova*, p. 245.

55. *Narodne hospodarstvo*, p. 169.

56. *Sotsialistichna perebudova*, p. 244.

57. *Narodne hospodarstvo*, p. 269.

This comparison of East and West Ukraine has assumed that the two regions are part of an integral whole. Historically, however, the Galician regions had developed a more “westernized” outlook than their eastern compatriots. Thus the energies and resources of the Soviet state in these years were directed towards subduing this nationalist opposition. In turn, the interests of the politically secure East Ukraine were subordinated to the struggle to sovietize the western regions. The dramatic decline of East Ukrainian agriculture in 1946-50 was a direct result of the problems encountered in collectivizing the western regions.