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9. ABSTRACT

Includes summaries of 17 papers presented at Group Farming Conference held at U. of Wisconsin, along with a summary of discussions by participants of ideological, political, economic, social, and organizational issues in various forms of collective farming. The presented papers were on such topics as collective farming in Chile, the Hutterian colony, Chilean agriculture during the Popular Unity of Government, contemporary Kibbutz development, group farming in Tanzania, collectivization of Tunsia, models of collective farming, group farming in Peru, agricultural group activities in Japan, economic and administrative issues, group farming in Dahomey, group farming in Yugoslavia, farm management in Japan, Korea, and Taiwan, experience with the French GAEC, group farming in Sri Lanka, the Soviet kolkhoz, and the communization of Chinese peasant agriculture.

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Report of

GROUP FARMING CONFERENCE*

June 10-12, 1975
Madison, Wisconsin

Group Farming Issues and Prospects: A Summary of International Experience - Peter Dorner and Don Kanel

Summaries of Papers Delivered at the Group Farming Conference - Prepared by Ira J. Cohen and Edward P. Reed, University of Wisconsin-Madison

A Partial Bibliography of English-Language Materials Found Useful by Conference Participants

A List of Group Farming Conference Participants

*Jointly sponsored by the Research and Training Network of the Agricultural Development Council of New York and the Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Because of what I believe to be its significance to agricultural development, this Newsletter is devoted exclusively to the abbreviated proceedings of a conference on group farming, a topic that used to be of interest only to socialist countries. Increasingly, group farming is discussed and experimented with in countries that are predominantly capitalist in nature. Usually these countries are less developed; sometimes they are not.

In listening to speakers at the conference, one over-riding thread seemed to run through the presentations: direct institutional transplantation from one experience or country to another is impossible. Yet in understanding difficulties and successes of past experience, policy-makers in countries embarking on group farming as one possible way of reorganizing their agricultural sectors can learn a great deal.

This conference was organized by Professor Peter Dorner. It was jointly sponsored by the Research and Training Network of the Agricultural Development Council, Dr. Abraham Weisblat, director, and the Land Tenure Center. It was held in Madison, June 10-12, 1975. RTN will also issue a seminar report on this conference.

Much as we might like to, we cannot supply copies of any of the conference papers. All papers are now being edited with the expectation that they will be published in a book as soon as possible. If you are interested in purchasing a copy of the book when it becomes available, please drop me a line and I will pass your requests on to the publisher. The publisher will notify you as soon as the book becomes available for sale.

I am happy to announce that the Land Tenure Center has received funding to continue some of its functions through June 1977.

William C. Thiesenhusen, Director
Land Tenure Center

GROUP FARMING ISSUES AND PROSPECTS: A SUMMARY OF INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE

ADC/RTN/LTC Group Farming Conference
Held at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, June 10-12, 1975

Peter Dorner and Don Kanel

Preface

This conference was sponsored jointly by the Research and Training Network of the Agricultural Development Council and the Land Tenure Center of the University of Wisconsin. The conference was the culmination of a three-year effort by a small planning group that met periodically and exchanged correspondence on review of literature, location of potential authors, defining guidelines for invited papers, etc. Authors were selected on the basis of their past research on group farming in specific countries or their personal and professional involvement in the establishment of group farming systems. The intent was to bring together in a systematic way present knowledge regarding experiences with group farming rather than to sponsor new research.

The term "group farming" was used to include agricultural production cooperatives and other forms of group or collective farming. In many countries of the developing world there is a growing interest in some form of group farming. Sometimes this is advocated on the basis of ideological-political concerns. However, in most cases governments are seeking ways and means of reorganizing their agriculture to deal with such pressing problems as: increased productive employment, a more equal distribution of income, expanded output, including the landless among the beneficiaries of a land reform, introducing new technologies while avoiding the inequities that frequently accompany such introduction, etc. In many cases there is little or no previous experience with cooperative farming. Consequently, countries tend to look for models of these forms established elsewhere. Thus ideas about production cooperatives are often imported and adopted without critical evaluation of the conditions necessary to make them function effectively (i.e., to achieve the purposes for which they were intended). The purpose of the conference, then, was to mobilize international knowledge and experience with cooperative-collective farming with the expectation that such information, widely disseminated, could serve as a useful input for policy-makers in their attempts to formulate programs for resolving agrarian issues.

The following sketch shows the manner in which the agenda for the three-day conference was organized.*

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*A list of all conference participants and their addresses is attached.

Session I. Chairperson, Peter Dorner

Paper 1. Economics and Administrative Issues in Group Farming: Don Kanel and Peter Dorner
Lane Holdcroft, discussant

Paper 2. The Models of Collective Farming: Boguslaw Galeski
Joe Elder and Ira Cohen, discussants

Paper 3. Group Farming Practices in Yugoslavia: Robert Miller
Leonid Hurwicz, discussant

Session II. Chairperson, Bryant Kearl

Paper 1. The Hutterian Colony: A Traditional Voluntary Agrarian Commune with Large Economic Scale: John Bennett
Herbert Lewis, discussant

Paper 2. Dynamics of Contemporary Kibbutz Development: Yehuda Don
Dov Weintraub, discussant

Session III. Chairperson, Judith Graves

Paper 1. The Soviet Kolkhoz--Vehicle of Cooperative Farming or of Transfer of Resources?: Karl-Eugen Wädekin
Robert Stuart, discussant

Paper 2. Communization of Peasant Agriculture: China's Organizational Strategy for Agricultural Development: John Wong
Gilbert Etienne, discussant

Session IV. Chairperson, Abraham Weisblat

Paper 1. Group Farming Experiences in Tanzania: Antony Ellman
Lionel Cliffe, discussant

Paper 2. Group Farming in Sri lanka: Nimal Sanderatne
William Thiesenhusen, discussant

Paper 3. The Collectivization Experience in Tunisia: Richard Fraenkel
Martin Abel, discussant

Session V. Chairperson, Solon Barraclough

Paper 1. Social and Economic Organization of the Chilean Reformed Sector During the Popular Unity Government (1971-September 1973): Jacques Chonchol
Marion Brown, discussant

Paper 2. Some Problems of Collective Farming in Chile's Agriculture: David Baytelman
David Stanfield, discussant

Paper 3. Land Reform and Group Farming in Peru: Douglas Horton
Francisco Oliart, discussant

Session VI. Chairperson, Vernon Ruttan

Paper 1. Problems and Directions of Agricultural Group Activities in Japan: Natsuki Kanazawa
David J. King, discussant

Paper 2. French Experience with Group Farming: The GAEC: Philip Raup

Claudio Barriga, discussant

Perspectives on the Conference: Vernon Ruttan

Four additional papers were prepared and circulated at the Conference, but time did not permit a formal presentation and discussion of them:

1. An Experience of Group Farming in Dahomey: The Rural Development Co-operatives: Moïse C. Mensah
2. Emerging New Forms of Farm Management in East Asia: Shao-er Ong
3. Agrarian Reform in Latin America: 1974 Perspectives and Possibilities: Francisco Oliart and José Emilio G. Araujo
4. Major Economic Problems Affecting Rural Development in Chile During the Allende Administration: Solon Barraclough

There are some very obvious omissions of significant experiences: Cuba, North Korea, and North Vietnam, individual studies of East European countries, among others. A paper on Hungary and one on Egypt and the Sudan were expected, but the potential authors were unable to find the time to prepare these papers. One paper on selected East European systems is still in the process of preparation.

In a "Guide for the Preparation of Papers for the Group Farming Conference" four major categories were suggested as an organizational framework around which to discuss a specific experience:

1. External influences and conditions affecting the establishment of group or collective farming enterprises;
2. Internal operating mechanisms and procedures which characterize such enterprises;
3. Measures of socio-economic performance of these enterprises (relative both to external criteria as well as to objectives set for such enterprises in the legislation or decree under which they were established);
4. Nature of change, transition, and evolution over time, and how changes in 1, 2, and 3, above, may have influenced such evolution.

Obviously all the experiences analyzed in the formal papers did not lend themselves to a rigid application of these categories and the numerous sub-topics suggested under each major category. Nevertheless, they did help to give the papers a unified focus and were useful, we believe, in facilitating communication among conference participants.

In this summary we will first discuss some theoretical issues and a typology of group farming systems. Next we will give brief sketches, based on the papers, of several different types of group farming. Finally, a number of questions and unresolved issues raised at the conference will be summarized.

A Typology of Group Farming

In his paper, Professor Galeski dealt with a classification of group farming. His four types are as follows:

1. Collective farms created by believers in an ideology which places a higher value on noneconomic than on economic goals. This first type includes religious communes, collective farms created by believers in radical social ideas, communes or collectives created by people who reject contemporary industrial civilization with its system of values, and farms created by groups of believers in a particular mission of their nation or class. All these collective farms have one thing in common--they are created to reach ideological goals, although they may incidentally achieve spectacular economic results as well.

2. Collective farms created by landless families who were able to acquire the land but unable to establish and operate individual family farms. Included here are collective farms created by new settlers on land which requires substantial investments, such as irrigation, before it can be used effectively. The investment required may exceed the resources of a single family, or it may be much easier to overcome certain difficulties through group action. Laborers who receive land from a land reform program often find themselves in such a situation. They have no agricultural equipment, or the equipment remaining on the farm is functionally related to the pre-reform large-sized farms. What is common to all these groups is that they are created by landless families who lack experience with individual farming.

3. Collective farms organized by governments in order to achieve nation-wide economic and social goals. This type includes collective farms created by governments with a minimum initiative by peasants themselves. Peasants may or may not oppose such collectivization, but it is surely not their idea. The reasons for collectivization are usually to achieve goals of national development. Collectivization provides some measure of control over production and consumption and over food prices; it facilitates the mobilization of manpower for the construction of industry and infrastructure; it provides administrative control over the former masses of small producers. In some East European countries, however, such as East Germany and Czechoslovakia which already had a large industrial sector, additional industrialization created labor shortages. Lack of manpower was a major motivation for the organization of large farming units. Large, private, profit-oriented holdings could, of course, not be accepted in a planned economy both because they could not be so well controlled by government and because of socialist ideological principles.

4. Collective farms organized by farmers in order to get the advantages of a large operation--more effective use of land, manpower, and capital and consequently higher economic returns. This form exists where there are competitive markets. Farmers combine their resources of capital, land, and manpower in order to produce at lower cost and thus to gain higher profits in the market. The French GAEC (Groupements Agricoles d'Exploitation en Comun) are the best example of this type of collective farm. Cooperative enterprises have a long history of helping small farmers achieve increased returns in competitive market situations, but they usually did not

enter the field of farm production. However, new forms are now being created which are intermediate forms, e.g., maschinenringe in Germany, agricultural circles in Poland, and cooperatives in Yugoslavia which operate on the principle of co-production with individual peasants. These forms could be regarded as steps toward collective farming of the fourth type.

Two qualifications to this typology are suggested by Galeski. First, these types are not mutually exclusive. In some countries virtually every type of collective distinguished above can be found. And second, these are ideal types. In reality there are often several underlying reasons for organizing collective farms. For example, the Israeli Kibbutzim could be regarded as farms founded by groups of believers with a dominant ideological goal. Nevertheless, collective farming in Israel was also created in order to settle people on the land, frequently on land requiring extensive investments in irrigation where individual farming would have been difficult to establish.

Finally Galeski uses several criteria for comparing different forms of collective farming, the two most important being: (1) joint ownership or use of land and of other means of agricultural production, and (2) socialization of work or, more generally, joint farming since it includes both productive labor and management and decision-making. On the basis of these criteria, he establishes a continuum from the least socialized (communal ownership of land but with individual farming and mutual labor exchanges) to the most socialized (communes and the kibbutz) forms of collective farming. Other features or criteria for comparing group farming systems are also discussed: management and decision-making (real access of members to decision-making processes, the free election or appointment of managers), the organization of and degree of socialization of consumption, and the distribution of output. In dealing with the continuum, however, no automatic transition from lower to higher levels of cooperativization is to be expected. Galeski's continua merely depict different levels of integration of existing group farming systems, and not automatic stages of an evolutionary process.

An additional classification was provided by Professor Bennett. Galeski's typology is based on the nature of the origin of the group and its relationship to the larger society. Bennett's typology deals with socio-economic variables and characteristics and is concerned with the distinction between communalism and cooperation.

Bennett describes the significant institutional features for true communal organization as follows:

1. Collective-communal socialization of children allows only a minimal participation of individual nuclear families in this process.
2. Nuclear family units exist, but their activities and interests are subordinated to the collective needs and objectives.
3. All important property (especially land and capital) is communally owned, and personal property is kept to a minimum.

4. The surplus created by agricultural and other productive activities is retained by the collective as capital, with minimal redistribution.
5. Remuneration of labor and services is withheld. Compensation is indirect--motivational. Necessities and some small luxuries are equally distributed.
6. Consumption is formally restrained and governed by explicit rules.

In the discussion of his paper, Bennett outlined several factors that seem to be of critical importance for the establishment and perpetuation of true communal groups.

1. The size of the group is very important. A true communal group must have a fairly substantial number of people--not only people but families. It is a multiple-family operation. This is critical.

2. There is maximum involvement of all the participants in the decision-making process. To be thoroughly communal, everybody must be consulted, even if it is, and it can become, ritualistic. Nevertheless, a bent in this direction is important.

3. Finally, a thorough-going communal group is more than a group of young people who go out and milk goats and write poetry and sell the poetry. These have sometimes been called communal farms, but they usually don't last more than three or four years. Thus there is a rule of duration which must involve generations. There must be biological reproduction of members of the group. There must be socialization of children in the group if it is going to last a reasonable length of time. The duration of these communes is quite variable. Some have lasted for centuries. The Hutterites are one of them--about 500 years.

What is the significance of Bennett's classification and his concern with the distinction between the commune, on the one hand, and the production cooperative-collective, on the other?

It seems to us that there are four important reasons for making this distinction.

1. In any collective, non-communal enterprise there is the inevitable and ever-present issue of accounting: not only of costs and returns, and reserves for investment which are common to any economic enterprise, but of labor time and input of individuals and/or families, classification of tasks, differential earning rates for different tasks, etc. All this is required to achieve a reasonably acceptable system of distribution. Private plots become a key issue. Under a communal system with equal distribution for the necessities of life and sharply constrained consumption, these issues do not arise or certainly not in their stark and visible form as they do in most production cooperative enterprises.

2. In a production cooperative, owned and controlled by members with management elected by the members (this does, of course, not hold for all types of collective enterprises), the role and position of management is

ambiguous. There is a tendency for a growing-apart of management and members, with the latter coming to look upon themselves as "we the workers" and viewing management as "they the bosses." This tendency of a we-they dichotomy is characteristic of most production cooperative-collective enterprises, especially after they have been in existence for some years. In any commune which indeed functions as a commune, the entire group is involved, in one way or another, in decision-making. Communalism requires the consultation of a very large number of individuals in the decision-making process.

3. Where the larger, outside society is governed by behavioral rules that differ widely from those that govern the behavior of the commune members (which is always the case since there are no communal nation-states), it is necessary for the commune to emphasize a special and unique type of socialization of children.

4. Finally, the distinction between the commune and the collective helps to highlight the stern discipline required to achieve continuity and assure survival of the commune, a discipline apparently not easily achieved except by way of a deep and consuming belief in either a religious, otherworldly ideology, or, as in the Kibbutz, a combination of a particular form of secular, utopian socialism and Zionist zeal.

Group Farming: Some Case Studies

Space limitations do not permit us to give much detail on any of the cases of group farming discussed at the conference. Instead, we will classify the cases under four categories, utilizing the typologies discussed above.

1. Communal forms of group farming.

The Israeli Kibbutz and the Hutterian Brethren in North America are the two truly communal forms discussed at the conference. Both fit under Galeski's Type One. They also have a relatively long history of survival, especially the Hutterites. Both are dedicated to the principles of communal property and communal life, and both operate large-scale agricultural enterprises. It is not surprising, then, to find that both have similar problems of management, and both face the need to adjust constantly to the institutions and changes in the surrounding society.

The Israeli Kibbutz has a larger population than the Hutterite colony. In 1971, the 234 Kibbutzim averaged 426 people per Kibbutz, with a total population of almost 100,000. The Hutterites number about 24,000 on 232 colonies, averaging slightly over 100 per colony. They live in the U.S. and Canadian Northern Plains, spread over an area about 3,000 miles in diameter.

The Hutterite colony is kept small by deliberate design. When a colony reaches a population of about 120 people, a new farm is purchased and the colony divides. Lots are drawn and half of the colony moves to the new site. This has provided continual opportunities for upward mobility.

If colony division and expansion should cease due to land shortages or other reasons, other means will have to be found to ensure this mobility since it does create a system of rewards for hard work and dedication.

The Kibbutz does not face this type of problem for a number of reasons. Its people are much more in tune with the general culture of the larger society; indeed, they have greatly influenced the social norms of Israeli society and provided much of the leadership for that society. The Hutterites are frequently in conflict with the larger society's rules or taxes, land titles, education of children, military draft, etc. There is more movement off the Kibbutz than in the case of the Hutterites. Also, the Kibbutz economy has moved to rather intensive industrial development which provides more diverse employment opportunities.

The ability to expand and acquire new land will remain a key issue for the Hutterites. The Kibbutz, despite major contributions to the Israeli society and economy, is also facing new problems. Professor Yehuda Don quotes from N. Golomb, himself a first-generation Kibbutz member of the most doctrinaire movement: "The Kibbutz entered the seventies under conditions of increasing community problems. A sense of fatigue is felt toward the Kibbutz way of life among the first generation, while the second generation is not sufficiently determined to take upon itself the comprehensive responsibility for the Kibbutz with all its problems."

2. National collective farming systems.

The Soviet system of collectives, with emphasis on the Kolkhoz, and the Chinese system of communes were the two major national collective farming systems discussed at the conference. Such national systems have been established in most communist countries and are of Galeski's Type Three--collective farms organized by governments in order to achieve nation-wide economic and social goals. However, there are many operational and organizational variations among (and even within) these systems. This is especially pronounced in Eastern Europe, and of course Yugoslavia and Poland retain a system where most of the farm land continues to be farmed by small, independent farmers but with complex cooperative service structures.

Nor is it to be concluded that the Soviet and the Chinese systems are basically the same. Nor is the Chinese commune, in its present form, a true communal organization with characteristics outlined above and associated with the Kibbutz and the Hutterite colony.

A three-tier organizational structure has evolved in the Chinese communes--the team, the brigade, and the commune. Direct control over day-to-day farming operations (including accounting and distribution) rests with the team and to a lesser extent with the brigade, while at the commune level basic local governmental functions are carried out, including administrative responsibilities for planning and coordinating agricultural production. An effective distribution mechanism has evolved and is reinforced by moral incentives. This provides a balance between ideological requirements for greater egalitarianism and the economic requirement for work incentives. As commune life becomes more complex, further decentralization may be necessary to maintain the viability of this structure.

In both systems the individual family farming plot remains important. This had been eliminated in China when the communes were first established after the "Great Leap Forward." Economic returns from the individual plots may represent 20-35 percent of the family's income. As Professor Etienne points out in the discussion of Professor Wong's paper, individual interests are still so strong that the brigade is too large to be taken as the basic unit of production and accounting since it would lead to an egalitarianism which the richer production teams are not prepared to accept. Thus in both countries regional inequalities continue to exist, with the teams (in the case of China) or the Kolkhoz (in the case of the Soviet Union) in the most favored resource situation having higher income than those less favorably located.

Since the Chinese and the Soviet cases are the major national experiences with a history of 25-50 years, the authors and discussants were asked to give some thought to the lessons to be learned and possible transferability of certain aspects of these experiences to the less developed countries. One of the points stressed by both Professors Wädekin and Stuart concerning the Soviet case is the change that has occurred in the Kolkhoz over the past 25-30 years. The average size increased from 500 hectares in 1940 to 3,000 hectares in 1970; quality of managerial and technical personnel has been improved; the introduction of better cost accounting methods and substantially increased money incentives have helped to generate increases in labor productivity; there has been a major injection of state aid.

Professor Wädekin compares the circumstances existing in the Soviet Union during the 1920s and 1930s with those of current less developed countries in order to assess the relevance of the Soviet type of cooperative farming for these countries. The following similarities are noted: the Soviet Union was an agrarian state with most people employed in small-scale peasant agriculture; some traditions of communal land ownership were present; there was a high rate of population growth and a surplus of farm labor; economic and social infrastructure was underdeveloped in most parts of the country; political democracy, although not entirely absent, was not fully developed; the ruling elite was predominantly of urban origin; rapid industrializaton was seen as an urgent need by this elite as well as by some other segments of the non-farm population; capital was in short supply.

But there are also a number of dissimilarities: a number of major industrial growth centers already existed along with the economic infrastructure and an industrial working class; the peasantry in large parts of the country had shown its capability for innovation; food production was sufficient to allow substantial exports; the country possessed deposits of raw materials (many already being exploited) necessary for an industrialized economy; an administrative structure, supplemented by the unique Bolshevik Party organization, existed over most of the country; capital aid and loans from the industrialized nations were not available or not sought.

Thus Soviet Russia was generally (except for the possible use of foreign aid) in a much more favored position than most developing countries today. The government had the power to enforce a fundamental reorganization of agriculture. And, as history has shown, the country could stand

a substantial decrease in agricultural output, brought about by the rapid and imposed collectivization, although this did mean starvation for a part of the rural population. Given the food/population ratios in many of the less developed nations of today, it is doubtful that many of these could withstand a similar decrease in output without catastrophe.

With respect to China both Professors Wong and Etienne agree that it would be most difficult for a developing country of today to emulate the Chinese organizational strategy without having first achieved a thorough social and political revolution. Furthermore, one cannot ignore the tremendous influence of China's long history and civilization on current developments: traditional intensive agricultural techniques, ability to mobilize the masses for rural works, sophisticated bureaucracies, etc. But the Chinese experience can serve to highlight for many Third World countries the problematic areas in their own agricultural development policies. The main thrust of the bold commune experiment in China has demonstrated that group-organized farming, even in the context of a peasant agriculture, can be a viable alternative to the time-honored system of individualistic, small peasant farming provided that group activities are properly organized with sufficient flexibility and pragmatism. The Chinese model, however, has also served to demonstrate that organizational strategy alone is not sufficient to achieve development. It must be supported by appropriate non-urban-biased government policies and by a leadership not alienated from the peasantry. Organizational strategy has to be sustained by real progress in technical transformation. The communes can furnish the structural framework for the mobilization of human and material resources, but they are not intended to be substitutes for modern agricultural production techniques.

Perhaps the idea of transferability is best summarized by Dr. Elliot R. Morss (Director of Research, Development Alternatives, Inc.) in a comment on the Kanel-Dorner paper received after the conference. He relates a story that he has recently heard:

> An Asian educated in the West recently had dinner with Mao Tse-tung after having spent a week studying the agricultural system of China. Mao asked the visitor what was the primary lesson he had drawn from his examination. The visitor said he had been tremendously impressed by all aspects of Chinese farming and urged Mao to make some of his farm experts available to advise other countries that were not doing as well. At this point Mao looked very pained and said he was very disturbed if this was the major impression the guest had retained. Needless to say, this troubled the guest, and he asked Mao what his primary impressions should have been. Mao replied that there were no easy solutions, that the complex system the Chinese use had evolved over many years and had entailed many mistakes. Mao said it would be wrong to attempt to apply the Chinese approach elsewhere, and that the only thing that was replicable from the Chinese experience was the slow, painful, dialectical process of

experimentation that the Chinese had pursued over a number of years.

Mixed collective-individual farming systems.

The country experiences under this category discussed at the conference included Yugoslavia, Tanzania, Sri Lanka, Chile, Peru, and Tunisia. A paper on Dahomey was available but not presented. Most of these would come under Galeski's Type Two. However, the correspondence here is not so clear as in those discussed in the two preceeding sections. Yugoslavia presents a particularly ambiguous case with respect to Galeski's classification. Galeski himself suggests that Yugoslavia may be considered in his fourth type, along with other intermediate forms. In the present summary, we will discuss the Yugoslavian experience separately.

All cases other than Yugoslavia represent countries from the developing continents of Latin America, Africa, and Asia. Physical and climatic conditions vary greatly; these countries have different historical experiences with colonialism; current governments range from democratic socialism to military rule; and the countries are at various stages of industrialization with the proportion of the population in agriculture ranging from less than 25 to over 75 percent.

The experience (and experimentation) with group farming is also quite unique in each country: an announced policy of rural villagization and group farming to eventually encompass all of agriculture in Tanzania (although progress has been relatively slow and the areas where farming is the most commercialized have not been included thus far); a relatively small (at least to date) program of settlement and group farming on some large estates and new land in conjunction with new land reform legislation in Sri Lanka; a large experiment in Tunisia most of which was abandoned after less than a decade; a massive land reform in both Chile and Peru, establishing group farming enterprises on the reformed land but thus far at least retaining small- and medium-sized farmers on their individual farms; and a still relatively limited, though with possibilities of expansion, experience with group farming in areas of Dahomey devoted principally to the production of oil palm for export. The initially established group farming, rural development cooperatives in Dahomey have existed for 12-13 years. In all cases of countries discussed (excepting again Yugoslavia) the experience is quite new--mostly within the past 10 years.

There are unique situations and innovations in each country, and it would be difficult to maintain that these countries have followed any "outside" model. One common issue faced by all is the co-existence of a private farm sector (in most cases still dominant) and a cooperative, group farming sector. This results in some ambivalence in government policy, and also in the expectations of farmers in both sectors. In some cases (Peru) the private farmers complain that they are not receiving sufficient government support and that all government effort is devoted to the newly established production cooperatives. In Sri Lanka, the lure of private property and the expectation of becoming private landowners in the future is still much on the minds of those within the cooperatives. In Chile,

the entire experience and its future has been clouded since the military take-over in September 1973.

One of the issues that both Chile and Peru have struggled with has been the incorporation of landless workers or holders of very small pieces of land into the production cooperatives. The tendency has been for former resident workers to resist the incorporation of outsiders. While the Allende government in Chile had every intention of achieving this, it was not too successful.

Yugoslavia, as we have said, presents quite a special case. There have been a number of basic changes in policy with respect to agriculture. Collectivization during the late 1940s and early 1950s attempted to establish Kolkhoz-like units. Although the ruthless character of the Soviet collectivization was avoided, the Yugoslav effort at establishing collective farms was abandoned. General farmer cooperatives (OZZ) were the forms then introduced to organize and eventually socialize the peasant sector. These were more or less traditional-type, multi-purpose cooperatives formed by 10 or more peasants. Farmer cooperatives along with worker-managed, agro-industrial combines and agricultural estates comprise the socialist sector of Yugoslav agriculture. But even today, individual peasant producers comprise almost 40 percent of the total population and own and operate about 85 percent of the agricultural land.

All three major types of socialist farms (combines, estates, and farmer cooperatives) have been performing similar functions: a) production on their own land; b) procurement and processing of agricultural products; c) wholesale (and often retail) marketing of agricultural products; and d) providing various technical and financial services to individual peasant farmers. Under the increased emphasis on the cooperatives announced in 1957, the OZZ were charged with the introduction of modern farming methods in the peasant economy. Peasants were to be given access to newly increased capital investments in agriculture, but only by tying their activities to the cooperatives. It was expected that the growing material dependency of the peasants on the socialist sector would lead to their gradual integration into the socialist economy. But because of problems within the cooperatives, and a vacillation of government policy in terms of the consistency of support for the cooperatives and their mission, such integration has not occurred.

The close association of the cooperatives with the state has, however, had some positive benefits. Especially in those periods when the socializing aspects of the OZZ have been emphasized, the government has been willing to expend substantial amounts of capital on agro-technical and other forms of assistance to the private peasants. The result has been a considerable improvement in the technical level of peasant farming and a general rise in village living standards. Had this mission been consistently pursued, concludes Professor Miller, the results might in time have conformed in large measure to the objectives of the regime. However, the periodic flirtations with market-type relationships forced the cooperatives to neglect their more popular service functions. The consequence has been a feeling of insecurity and cynicism on the part of the peasants toward the officially sponsored cooperatives.

4. Group farming in industrialized countries.

Two papers discussed experiences with group farming in two of the more industrialized nations having systems of private property and relatively competitive market economies. These papers concerned group farming in Japan and in France. These experiences, which are included under Galeski's Type Four, are, of course, quite different from any discussed thus far. In Japan, a major reasons for farmers joining together in various forms of group activities is the shortage of labor as well as, at least in some cases, the more efficient use of water and machines in rice farming. With rapid growth in the industrial sector increasing the demand for workers, part-time farming with attendant labor shortages, especially in some seasons, has become a phenomenon of overwhelming importance. Likewise, labor shortages have led to more extensive land-use patterns (e.g., eliminating winter cropping). The Japanese forms of group farming (from joint use of machinery and transplanting, coordination of farm operations with formal agreements, through cooperative management in which production, marketing, and profit-sharing are all included) are essentially a spontaneous development undertaken at the initiative of the farmers themselves.

The French GAEC (Groupements Agricoles d'Exploitation en Comun), by contrast, have been authorized by specific legislation adopted by the government in the early 1960s. Here the motive was essentially to take advantage of economies of scale and the more efficient use of land and capital. The GAEC are considered corporate entities under law, and they are intended for the partial (and perhaps temporary) merger of small- and medium-sized peasant farms.

The situation in both Japan and France is, of course, quite different from that in the less developed countries. The countries are industrialized; the farm population is rapidly declining; population growth rates are low; farmers are generally more advanced in the use of modern technology; etc. Nevertheless, these experiences are of interest and could provide significant lessons in the future. But again, only time and more research can provide an objective evaluation of their prospects and the possible lessons to be learned that might be of use elsewhere.

Questions and Unresolved Issues

The open discussions following the formal presentations were quite lively and a number of significant questions and unresolved issues were raised. We can do no more than merely touch upon a few of these.

1. Internal organizational problems, member commitment, motivation and morale, and the ambiguities in roles of both managers and members of group farms were issues frequently up for discussion. Members are supposed to be both workers and participants in policy-making; managers are supposed to supervise the workers and at the same time be responsible to them. The outcome may be ineffective management, on the one hand, and poor work discipline and absence of effective participation in policy-making by members, on the other. This "we-they" split within the organization may result in mutual suspicion between members and managers, with members having little

feeling of identification with or control over the organization. It seems that only within the true commune, where there is nearly universal consultation with members before any major issue is brought to a vote in the general assembly, that the we-they split has been successfully avoided.

2. An issue raised by Professor Galeski is the type of socio-economic system within which the group farm is to function. He distinguished two types of socio-economic system--the interactive system (basically a market system) in which the behavior of consumers directly influences rewards and/or losses reaped by producers, and the directive system (basically a planned economy) where producer rewards and/or losses are dependent on the actions of the state planning agency and geared to the producers' ability to meet their assigned contribution to the national plan. Returning to his earlier typology, Galeski maintains that neither Type 1 nor Type 4 could exist in a directive system, nor would Type 3 be able to operate in an interactive system. Only Type 2 could emerge in either system, according to Galeski.

3. Another issue (somewhat related to number 2) concerned the degree of centralization of decision-making vs. autonomy within the unit, sometimes also expressed as an issue concerning the degree of coercion vs. consent. There was some feeling (and evidence from some of the older experiences with group farming) that the degree of centralization may be greater initially, and more autonomy is given to individual units as the system becomes more fully institutionalized. On the matter of coercion, some maintained that the amount of coercion in traditional agrarian structures is very great, perhaps greater than that involved in converting to a group farming system. In the same general context, the comment was made that the decision as to whether or not to establish a system of group farming cannot be viewed as an isolated decision, but must be viewed within the broader, long-run context of a government's development strategy.

4. The question of transferability (or adaptability) of various group farming experiences to other countries was raised frequently. Most of the authors tended to look upon the system they were describing and analyzing as unique--specifically adapted to the physical, climatic, socio-cultural, and political circumstances of the state or region. There was a general consensus that a wholesale transfer of such experiences as the Chinese, the Soviet, the Hutterites, or the Kibbutz was impossible and any attempt quite inadvisable. But to drop the issue with such a conclusion would be to miss the major lessons to be learned--negative as well as positive. There seem to be several universal imperatives for a successful commune, as outlined earlier and substantiated by the experiences of the Hutterites and the Kibbutz. There are likewise a set of requirements in production cooperatives concerned with internal organization, discipline, incentives, and accounting-distributional aspects that cannot be ignored if these units are to become and remain economically sound enterprises. And it is quite likely that none of the specific "solutions" on any of these matters can be transferred directly, but will always require that "painful, dialectical process of experimentation" over a period of years. But a knowledge of such requirements and the experiences of others in attempting to meet them should be most helpful to policy formulation wherever group farming is being considered.

The point was made that one should seek an analytical model for systematically studying the transfer process without attempting to transplant the group farming model itself. In studying group farming institutions, one should inquire into the extent to which they are rigid and closed, or open and flexible: are they linked to and embedded within a comprehensive institutional structure of the larger socio-economic and political system, or are they relatively autonomous?

5. There were a series of issues concerning the mixed system, with production cooperatives being more or less an appendage of a system organized along other lines vs. a system where they constitute the central organizational form within the agricultural sector. There is a dilemma here: can, or should, a government go "all the way" in transforming its agriculture into a group farming system with the uncertainties and hazards involved, or should part of the existing agricultural sector remain organized as it is currently, which may involve the risk that the modification of other institutions necessary to make the production cooperatives viable will not be brought about with sufficient speed, leaving the production cooperatives to fend for themselves, perhaps even in a generally hostile environment. This issue is, of course, so fundamentally political that it is difficult to arrive at any resolution. It is true that in the Third World countries discussed at the conference, where group farming has been introduced partially, these group farming enterprises have thus far not met all the expectations that were expressed by governments when they were established. However, all these experiences are relatively new and experimentation and change continue.

6. Finally, a large number of other questions and possible topics for future research were suggested by authors as well as other participants at the conference. Again we can mention but a few, but these will indicate the range of concerns.

(a) Have the goals set for group farming actually been achieved, not only the political-ideological ones, but the economic and social goals as well?

(b) What is the appropriate size of a group farming unit, and how may this vary with the stage of overall development?

(c) It would be instructive to study certain types of partial group farming experiences such as joint purchase and use of machinery, tube wells, etc., since this might have a wider applicability for most of the developing countries at present.

(d) It is important to study carefully the existing farming system which the group farming system is expected to replace, so that the new can be better conceived as a whole system which must meet the entire range of social and material needs of the people in a manner hopefully more adequate than the existing system.

(e) We need to know more about the origin of managerial personnel in a wide range of group farming enterprises and analyze the associated differences in several measures of socio-economic performance.

(f) What has been the experience in terms of socio-economic performance where government involvement with the group farming enterprises (especially managerial and financial) has been more or less permanent vs. those in which governments have, after an initial period, cut these ties to the group farming enterprises and left more decisions and autonomy to the groups concerned?

(g) Distribution problems are so central, since any departure from individual farming requires a group decision to dispose of the product jointly produced which will involve the incentive structure, degree of egalitarianism, etc., that much more comparative research should be done on these questions.

(h) More needs to be known, in a comparative setting, about the interrelations between the family household and the cooperative farm, both in production and consumption.

(i) It would be instructive to study the applicability of and the differences in group farming under labor- vs. capital-intensive processes of agricultural production.

(j) Much more research is needed to determine the relationship (and the potential) of group farming to resource conservation strategies and needs, especially as related to such factors as management continuity and economies of scale.

Bibliography

(See attached.)

List of Participants

(See attached.)

Summaries of

Papers Delivered at the Group Farming Conference

June 10-12, 1975

Madison, Wisconsin

Prepared by Ira J. Cohen and Edward P. Reed
University of Wisconsin-Madison

Paper delivered at the Group Farming Conference, June 10-12, 1975
Madison, Wisconsin

David Baytelman, "Some Problems of Collective Farming in Chile's Agriculture."

As a participant at the highest levels in the Allende government's agrarian reform program, the author reappraises the approach to reform taken by the Popular Unity, summarizes the major political and economic difficulties encountered, and explores the relation between the agrarian problem and the Chilean revolution as a whole.

Unlike the previous Christian Democratic government, the Popular Unity government was dedicated to the goal of extending the benefits of reform to all campesinos (the majority of whom existed on minifundios) through the long-range development of underutilized latifundio lands on a collective basis. The author points to solid economic reasons for the government's collective organizational policy, but notes the serious difficulties with the existing asentamientos (especially the membership restrictions and the remuneration system) and the rising disenchantment among some campesino elements.

Political problems prevented a direct modification of the asentamiento system, so the government created new organizational forms. The Agrarian Reform Centers (CERAs), while open to incorporation of new campesino members and more democratic, failed to correct the remuneration problems and were designed without sufficient campesino input. These errors and opposition propaganda ensured campesino suspicion and nonacceptance of the CERAs and forced the use of the transitory "campesino committees" in most areas.

The author discusses in some detail several key problems that seriously disrupted implementation of agrarian reform. First, since agriculture was not the most important economic sector, and since the Popular Unity government was constantly engaged in a struggle for political power and economic reorganization of the industrial and distribution sectors, somewhat less attention was given to agrarian reform until 1972. Second, the political and social awareness of the campesinos, only gradually developing after generations of oppression, was fragile and easily swayed by opposition scare tactics. Finally, unremitting opposition to the reform program came from both rightist and far leftist elements. The Right attacked the whole concept of collective organization as oppressive and inefficient and attempted to manipulate the campesinos in order to paralyze the entire movement. The author shows that the drop in agricultural production in 1972-73, used against the governmntt by the Right, was actually due to a complex of factors (especially severe weather and the truckers' strike) and not to collective organization per se. Meanwhile, the Left accused the government of being "reformist" and called for immediate implementation of the most radical steps which served only to alienate important allies.

In reviewing the theoretical foundations and implications of the socialist path to development, the author notes the key importance of patiently

and gradually building new agrarian structures based on voluntary and active participation by the campesinos at every step. Reassessing the Chilean experience, he sees a fundamental error in the government's lack of flexibility in organizing the expropriated sector. By giving the campesinos a freer hand to organize themselves while providing strong incentives for collective structures, perhaps political problems could have been surmounted and the social and economic goals attained in the long run.

In spite of these difficulties, the author feels strongly that many campesinos benefited from the Popular Unity's short-lived agrarian program, and that the experience gained there, coupled with the suffering now being endured in the Chilean countryside, will be the seeds of a new agriculture in the future.

Paper delivered at the Group Farming Conference, June 10-12, 1975
Madison, Wisconsin

John W. Bennett, "The Hutterian Colony: A Traditional Voluntary Agrarian Commune With Large Economic Scale," Washington University at St. Louis.

In this paper John Bennett summarizes the findings from his extensive research project on the comparative study of communal agrarian units with emphasis upon the Hutterian communities. His primary interest here is in determining those points of general interest to scholars dealing with communal agricultural organization and practices.

The author begins his work with a presentation of a theoretical scheme that differentiates cooperative-communal organization on the basis of the size of groups involved and the principal motives which define and encourage sharing patterns. After a process of elimination from within the categories of his scheme, Bennett concludes that 1) the dominant values associated with cooperative-communal forms of agricultural organization are, simultaneously, altruism and self-interest (which Bennett argues are not contradictory); 2) as the population of the cooperative-communal unit rises, more institutionalized patterns of sharing are necessary. These patterns include ideological values, collective decision-making procedures, and means for conflict resolution.

Bennett next turns his attention to a distinction of communal farm cooperative groups. By categorical examination of five empirical cases in the form of a chart, he is able to delineate six characteristics of a true communal organization. They are:

1. Primary emphasis on socialization of children by the unit as a whole.

2. Subordination of nuclear family to the group.

3. All important property is communally owned.

4. Surplus production is held as capital by the unit.

5. Remuneration of labor and services is withheld. Compensation is motivational. Personal goods are distributed equally.

6. Consumption is formally restrained and governed by explicit rules.

After noting the Judeo-Christian heritage of communal activity, attention is next turned to the Hutterian colony which is the type case of a traditional voluntary agrarian commune, i.e., it embodies all six characteristics. Hutterian colonies began in sixteenth-century central Europe and underwent a revitalization in the eighteenth-century Ukraine. From the Ukraine they migrated to the Great Plains section of North America. Bennett traces the origins of their unique theological beliefs and the pursuant emphasis upon large-scale agricultural and craft-industrial organization.

With regard to the agricultural regime of the Hutterian colonies, Bennett indicates their diversification. Many different crops and necessary goods are internally produced in an attempt to maximize self-sufficiency. The Hutterians absorb new production techniques quite easily.

The Hutterian colonies are entrepreneurial units oriented to both local retail and national wholesale markets. There is no formal overall Hutterian economic organization. There are three councils called Leute which deal respectively with social, doctrinal, and financial problems of all of the Hutterian colonies. These Leute assume responsibility for colonies that have encountered economic or social difficulties. Economic assistance does occur between colonies on the basis of "consciousness of kind" among Hutterian brethren. Thus, the capital pool of all Hutterian colonies is quite large.

The material circumstances of the Hutterites are based upon collective decisions on expenditures and religiously sanctioned restraints upon all nonegalitarian consumption patterns. There are no wages. All necessary goods and services are distributed by the colony. Thus, both income and expenses contribute to overall economic efficiency. Furthermore, mobilization of large amounts of labor for specific tasks is quite easily accomplished. In an emergency, other colonies will lend as much labor and capital as needed. Hutterian colonies accept all valuable modern technology as soon as they can acquire it. This too contributes to the efficiency of the colony.

The Hutterian colonies are administratively organized on a strict hierarchical basis. There are executives, managers, and laborers. There is a cultural tension between this hierarchy and the belief in the equality of all men (women are considered subordinate). To resolve this tension the Hutterian hierarchical system allows for a mobility system of responsibility based upon age. All men eventually may become managers. This mobility is assisted by the division and resettlement of parts of each colony after it reaches a population of about 120 or more. The mobility patterns are also facilitated by the extended family kinship network found within Hutterian colonies. Kinship and administrative hierarchies are somewhat merged. Nevertheless, in the operation of daily activities all kin respect the egalitarian religious norms rather than family norms. The author notes that the effect of the structure of roles and responsibilities is the emergence of communal principles of harmony and conflict resolution at those points in the operation of the colony where integration of activity must be maintained.

To conclude his paper, Bennett notes the theoretically significant point that achievement norms and communal social organization are not antithetical, at least within the Hutterian context. The differentiation of function necessary to operate a communal colony has a tendency to produce differentiation of status and prestige. But Hutterian beliefs proscribe open displays of ambition. Preparation for achievement thus develops on a sub rosa basis. Social arrangements of families and labor allow for this development. But the appointment to important positions is nevertheless made by democratic election. The result is an orientation toward individual advancement that is present but subordinate to the normative beliefs in the best interests of the group. Brotherhood and selflessness are thus balanced with the needs for recognition and aspiration.

Paper delivered at the Group Farming Conference, June 10-12, 1975
Madison, Wisconsin

Jacques Chonchol, "Social and Economic Organization of the Reformed Sector of Chilean Agriculture During the Popular Unity Government (1971-September 1973)."

This paper traces the efforts of the Popular Unity government of Chile to deal with the complex of problems inherited from the land reforms begun under the Frei administration and to successfully carry out its own program of creating new forms of organization in the reformed sector. The immediate operational problems of the already established asentamientos included excessive government paternalism, excessively egalitarian remuneration system, inefficient accounting, status and attitudinal problems among campesinos, inadequate size of land units, and irresponsibility in use of funds. An effort at correcting some of these was made by assigning the function of financing asentamientos to the State Bank. The Agrarian Reform Corporation (CORA) was to concentrate more effort on matters other than providing credit and collecting loans.

In addition, two new post-expropriation organizations were created. The transitory "agrarian reform centers" (CERA), formed by joining two or more expropriated farms, were designed to overcome one of the key problems of the asentamientos by maximizing campesino participation and including as members workers other than the pre-reform resident campesinos. There was also a general emphasis on increasing employment opportunities, creating work incentives, and establishing strong links with outside campesinos. "Production centers" were permanent state enterprises to be formed in special cases and to be managed by state representatives, but with campesinos participating and partaking in the profits. However, implementation of these new forms met with serious organizational and political obstacles which created disorientation and confusion in the reformed sector. In spite of some attempts to overcome these obstacles, especially by speeding up the assignment of communal lands to campesinos, serious difficulties with the internal functioning of the various organizational forms existed up until the overthrow of the Popular Unity government.

Paper delivered at the Group Farming Conference, June 10-12, 1975
Madison, Wisconsin

Yehuda Don, "Dynamics of Contemporary Kibbutz Development," Bar Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel.

In this paper the author presents an overview of the development of kibbutzim from their origins to their current status within Israel. The study thus focuses attention upon the long-term changes and continuities with regard to these classic cooperative farms.

The author first reviews the origins of kibbutzim (circa 1910-1925) in terms of the response of immigrant settlers to economic and cultural circumstances. The development of the kibbutz was facilitated by the inability of Israeli immigrants to maintain a "European" standard of living without benefit of cooperative labor. Simultaneously, the ideological predisposition of the immigrants emphasized socialist principles of cooperation. These factors led directly to three fundamental principles of the organization of kibbutzim: self-labor, self-management, and direct democracy. The collectivist principle of labor organization was a direct result of post-World War I infusions of ideologically committed immigrants into the previously temporary organizational arrangements of kibbutzim.

There are pronounced similarities between all contemporary kibbutzim. There is a complete detachment of material rewards from the physical and mental efforts exerted in the various processes of production. All economic and managerial structures and policies are affected by this circumstance. The basis of the separation of production and distribution rests upon the ideological principles which have been conserved and cultivated over the last half-century by the kibbutzim.

The arguments with regard to the size of the kibbutz are reviewed by the author. It is observed that although size correlates positively with productivity on the kibbutz, it also correlates negatively with the psychic benefits which the kibbutzim offer and which the members desire. Although debate about size has continued from the origins of the kibbutz movement, it is currently agreed by most that an optimum size from 100-600 members is appropriate.

The author next reviews the qualities of maximum collectivism and equality which characterize current kibbutzim. Various conceptions of equality are reviewed. It is demonstrated that the majority of kibbutz members hold the opinion that equal quantities and qualities of goods and services are distributed to all kibbutz members. In reality, the distribution system is bifurcated, with one part dealing with those goods which are equally rationed and the other with those items distributed on the basis of individual need.

The most important rewards to kibbutz members are social, i.e., power, influence, and social status improvements. Nevertheless, altruism counts

for much of the extra effort exerted by members of the kibbutz. A sense of duty toward national objectives also characterizes kibbutz members. Many Israeli political leaders have come from the kibbutzim. Leaders of the Israeli economy, the military, and university research have originated on the kibbutzim. The result has been a pronounced influence of the principles of kibbutz organization upon the various spheres of Israeli social life. The author finds that recent trends suggest that the social influence of the kibbutz is on the decline while the economic influence is increasing. The percentage of activity which involves intensive industrialization on the kibbutzim has increased over the past fifteen years. It is this fact which accounts for some of the increase in economic influence.

The author concludes with a review of the accomplishments and shortcomings of the kibbutz over the past fifty years.

Paper delivered at the Group Farming Conference, June 10-12, 1975
Madison, Wisconsin

Antony Ellman, "Group Farming Experiences in Tanzania," Agrarian Research and Training Institute, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

This study traces the origins of the Tanzanian rural development strategy, describes the process and progress of Ujamaa villagization, outlines the village organizational structure, and briefly assesses the Tanzanian approach to mobilization for rural change. The author points to certain special features present in Tanzania--a communal ownership tradition, a relatively poor economic base, abundance of unutilized land, a single-party political system committed to socialist ideology--which have led to the emergence of a government commitment to group farming, as well as to favorable conditions for its realization.

After an initial experiment with government-sponsored village settlement schemes in the early 1960s, the Arusha Declaration inaugurated the voluntary formation of Ujamaa villages based on minimum government investment and maximum member participation and effort. Considerable progress in villagization and collective cultivation was made in poorer parts of the country where population was previously sparse and scattered, but progress toward socialization of production on already developed land was much more limited. With few exceptions, collective farming was found only where it did not disturb existing property relations or power structures.

The external influences and conditions affecting the formation and operation of the Ujamaa system--international, socio-economic, socio-cultural, techno-economic, political, and administrative influences--are assessed, as are the internal operating procedures which have developed in response to the process of mobilization and the specific conditions confronting the farms. Descriptions are given of the procedures adopted for planning and managing the group farms, for maintaining high labor productivity, for catering to differing consumption requirements and labor availabilities of families of different size, for financing and financial control, and for ensuring adequate savings and reinvestment for long-term development.

A conflict is noted between the principle of voluntary initiation of Ujamaa villages, and the need to proceed fast enough to stem the growing inequalities in the rural areas which are becoming increasingly apparent. The government and party have, in recent years, taken an increasingly active part in promoting the formation of Ujamaa villages, but this has introduced the risk of alienating the peasants, of temporarily disrupting production, and of distorting the objectives of the Ujamaa policy. A series of waves can be identified in Tanzania's progression toward the target of Ujamaa: first a phase of slow voluntary change, then a more rapid adventuristic phase with some elements of coercion, followed by a consolidation phase after which the cycle beings again. Supported by an analogy with

Paper delivered at the Group Farming Conference, June 10-12, 1975
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Richard Fraenkel, "The Collectivization Experience in Tunisia," University of Minnesota.

This paper concerns the problem of establishing the "unity" of the cooperative system in Tunisia. The cooperative system is taken to be a formal, hierarchical organization (and, hence, not a cooperative, in the usual sense of the word). Organizational unity depends on rational calculation by policy-makers and compliance with their orders at the operational level. The necessary condition of both is information.

The principal argument of this analysis is that, because of resistance in rural Tunisia to the implementation of the cooperative policy, compliance was obtained by the application of a high amount of coercion. There is an inverse relationship between coercion and information; the upward flow of information from the operational to the policy-making level stopped. Decision-makers could not receive evaluative or factual information from subordinates at the operational level, on which rational calculation and the monitoring of compliance depended. The cooperative system was a highly inefficient mechanism of resource allocation because of irrational decision-making at the upper levels, unmonitored noncompliance (or sabotage) at the operational level.

The analysis is based on available documents and fieldwork in the farming locality of Ebba-Ksour. Ebba-Ksour is located approximately 25 miles east of the Tunisian-Algerian border and 100 miles south of the Mediterranean. Fieldwork focused on the behavior of local administration and its interaction with the farming population.

Tunisia has vacillated since its independence between market and cooperative (i.e., administrative allocation) modes of industrial organization. The official ideology of the cooperative period was essentially a statement of goals; these were the usual "agricultural development" goals of increasing production and improving income distribution. The ideology, however, ignored the problem of means. In its choice of methods for establishing the cooperative system as an organization of decision-making and compliance, the Tunisian experience was not unique. It greatly resembled other collectivization experiences such as that of the Soviet Union.

There were actually two types of cooperatives, designated as Type I and Type II. The problem of establishing the unity of each type was wholly different. The present analysis applies only to the type where decision-making and operations were separated for the first time by the establishment of the cooperatives. This was not the case on the Type I cooperatives. These were the large, "modern" farms taken over from colonial farmers by the independent Tunisian state.

The collectivization experience in Tunisia, as elsewhere, was accompanied by a "theory of history" which supposedly informed the decisions of the policy-makers. The Tunisian policy-makers believed (or pretended to believe) that they faced the same "preconditions" for establishing organizational unity as the Cuban policy-makers faced (as analyzed by Zeitlin). They said that the vast majority of the rural population had been "proletarianized," or decapitalized, by the colonial experience, and therefore had nothing to lose from the transition from a system of private property and market exchange to an administrative allocation system. In this self-serving judgment, they were mistaken. The large and small farmers were linked by mutually beneficial and other extrinsic relations of the "patron-client" type. For this reason, there was a great deal of resistance by a virtually united rural population to the implementation of the cooperative policy.

Following a documentation of the degree of coercion in the Tunisian case is an analysis of the consequences of the cooperative system for the efficiency of its production activities. The two major activities in the locality studied were wheat and livestock production. The consequences of centralized decision-making were different for each activity. This may be explained by the different information requirements of these activities and the different possibilities of substituting information-saving technology. The information requirements of wheat production may be reduced by the adoption of mechanical technology. Machinery provides an "impersonal mechanism of control." The problem for efficiency was that mechanization was inconsistent with the local factor endowment. At the same time, the centralization of decision-making led to the rapid diffusion of the high-yielding varieties of wheat and associated improved practices.

Decision-making for livestock production, unlike that for wheat, is continuous; it therefore has a high information requirement. No technology was available to reduce the need for a great deal of local information. Livestock production fell drastically during the cooperative period, in part because local units were left no discretion in the cooperative system, and operating units had no flexibility in responding to local changes.

Section VI is a discussion of the distribution of benefits within the cooperative system. In this discussion, a distinction is made between the consequences of the transition from the market to the administrative system and the distribution of benefits by the cooperative system itself.

The conclusion that the cooperative system failed because it was not a "feasible option" is based on the familiar argument that spontaneous or voluntary collectivization is possible only where so-called "capitalist relations of production" or interclass reciprocity has broken down almost completely, and where large-scale, capital-intensive "forces of production" are already in place. Neither of these preconditions existed with respect to the Type II cooperatives in Tunisia. And forced collectivization proved to be infeasible.

Paper delivered at the Group Farming Conference, June 10-12, 1975
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Boguslaw Galeski, "Models of Collective Farming," Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences.

This paper presents a set of typologies that subsumes most of the significant features of collective farming. Galeski begins this project with a delineation of four ideal types of collective farms distinguished with reference to the goals of their organizers. They are:

Type 1) Those organized by believers in an ideology that holds noneconomic values in higher esteem than economic ones.

Type 2) Those created by landless families who acquired land but not the skill and/or equipment to manage agricultural activities.

Type 3) Those organized by governments in order to fulfill economic and social goals.

Type 4) Those organized by farmers in order to take advantage of a large operation--and consequently higher economic profits.

After discussion of these typologies in the abstract, the empirical case of the kolkhoz in the USSR is treated in terms taken from the typological scheme. In this passage Galeski also discusses the structure and the history of Soviet collectivization.

Attention is next turned to the examination of organizational models of collective farms. The two relevant criteria are:

1) The form of ownership or use of land and other means of agricultural production.

2) The form of work.

Both criteria are taken in the context of the collective experience. Galeski also notes that the current mode of ownership on a collective farm is influenced by the pre-existing land tenure system and subsequently influences such other organizational features as distribution of income, social relations of members, ties with the state, and others. He then proposes a continuum of collective ownership of means of produciton. This continuum moves from individual farmers who share some portion of their land or facilities to an upper extreme where all land and all facilities are jointly owned.

The author next turns his attention to a second classification of group farming organization--the socialization of work:

1) The percentage of work which members or member family units contribute to collective agricultural production.

2) The percentage of collective farm production activity performed by members versus nonmembers. Galeski again proposes a continuum to rank socialization of work. At the low end are different forms of mutual assistance and at the high end are relatively autonomous labor units.

A major point of the discussion of the continua of socialization of means of production and socialization of labor is that the two processes of socialization are interrelated. The increase on either continuum indicates circumstances in which a rise can be expected in the other continuum. But Galeski cautions that the notion of spontaneous transformation from a lower to a higher level of socialized organization of collectives is a fallacy. "Simple forms" of cooperation found among peasants are often relics of traditional, pre-capitalistic farming. No easy transition to higher levels of cooperativization is to be expected. Thus, Galeski argues that his continua depict different levels of integration of existing group farming systems, but not automatic stages of an evolutionary process.

Attention is next turned more briefly to three other organizational features of collectives. They are:

1) Management and decision-making.
2) Organization of consumption.
3) Distribution of output.

Galeski outlines three aspects of management differentiating group farming systems:

1) Real access of members to decision-making processes.
2) The degree of free election of managers.
3) The salience of managerial decisions.

Galeski discusses the organization of consumption on collective farms as well as the distribution of collective output among members. He suggests four criteria for evaluating equality on collective farms.

In the final typology the author presents a continuum of collective organization. From simple to complex, this continuum includes:

1) The Russian obszczina, a village ownership of land.
2) Equipment cooperatives.
3) Marketing, credit, or consumer cooperatives.
4) Contracting and production services cooperatives.
5) Temporary land settlement cooperatives such as those found in Britain during World War II.
6) The kolkhoz type of state socialization.
7) The communal cooperative farm such as the kibbutz.

In a final passage Galeski cautions that in assessing the success of various cooperative forms of organization it is most important to understand the goals of the membership as well as at least a simplified notion of various social, economic, cultural, political, and natural conditions. These, of course, require a separate analysis.

Paper delivered at the Group Farming Conference, June 10-12, 1975
Madison, Wisconsin

Douglas Horton, "Land Reform and Group Farming in Peru," International Potato Center, Lima, Peru.

In this case study of the land reform programs initiated in Peru under the Velasco government, the author describes the economic and social setting, the objectives, and the institutional aspects of the reform and assesses performance based on several key variables.

Under the new Land Reform Law, promulgated soon after the military government came to power (1968), comprehensive plans for land redistribution and rural organizational restructuring have been drawn up on a zonal basis through regional planning units (PIAR). New institutional structures have come into being under the reform:

1) Agrarian Production Cooperatives (CAP): Worker-owned and managed units in which all production assets are collectively held and remuneration is on a basis of the number of days worked. CAPs have been set up in all parts of the country, but those in coastal areas, where estates were centrally managed before reform, are more fully collectivized.

2) Agrarian Social Interest Societies (SAIS): Quasi-cooperative institutions in which management and profits are shared by the workers themselves and by members of neighboring peasant communities. Most have been established on highland livestock estates, and some of the benefits from the production on the reformed lands are to be used for the advancement of peasants in the affiliated communities.

3) Communal Cooperatives have been organized for collective exploitation of reform land granted directly to traditional peasant communities. Traditional usufruct plots have usually not been affected.

4) Regional Central Cooperatives at the PIAR level and Specialized Central Cooperatives for export commodities have been established to serve the reform sector, though serious opposition has been encountered to the former.

At the time of this study, about 40 percent of total cropland was held under these new institutions, but only 12 percent was in the form of fully collectivized CAPs. The author's survey indicated that CAPs and SAIS have been able to maintain or modestly surpass pre-reform levels of production, while investing heavily in both productive and social capital. However, they have not been able to increase employment significantly, and member participation has not been enthusiastic. For numerous reasons (related ultimately to natural conditions, production patterns, technology, and pre-reform estate organization, and more directly to peasant attitudes and managerial problems) it is concluded that fully and partially collectivized reform enterprises have the greatest potential for success in areas of irrigated crop production and in areas of extensive livestock production, respectively, while the prospects for group farming in rainfed agricultural areas are not considered bright.

Paper delivered at the Group Farming Conference, June 10-12, 1975
Madison, Wisconsin

Natsuki Kanazawa, "Problems and Direction of Agricultural Group Activities in Japan," Department of Agricultural Economics, University of Tokyo, Japan.

In this paper, the author makes a broad analysis of all forms of group agricultural activities in Japan, and he links the development of these activities to traditional forms of cooperation and to modern agricultural sector issues (the outflow of farm labor, the increase in part-time farming).

Important antecedents to modern cooperative forms are seen in the traditional buraku, a local, partially self-governing unit for the coordination of water management and irrigation necessitated by the introduction of transplanting in rice cultivation, and ui, a form of labor exchange. The author classifies modern group activities into two broad categories: 1) Farmers' Production Organizations, which include joint transplanting, joint use of machinery, contracting, and "group farming" (coordination of farm operations through formal mutual agreement); and 2) Cooperative Management, by which production, marketing, and profit-sharing are carried out on a cooperative basis. In most cases, cooperation is based on a combination of several of these practices.

"Group farming" is seen to have special significance because of its spontaneous development at the initiative of the farmers themselves in response to the fall in the farm labor supply and its flexibility in the face of changing conditions. This form has developed in stages from simple agreement between several farmers as to seed varieties and timing of fertilizer and chemical applications, to joint plowing, transplanting, and harvesting in consolidated fields. This rather widespread type of group activity has resulted in higher land and labor productivity and has also provided a framework for cooperation between large, initiative-taking farmers and small, part-time farmers that is leading to a more efficient functional differentiation in the agricultural sector.

Special note is made of the village Community Farm System, developed in Akita Prefecture, which links the "group farming" system to diversification of rural activities through the introduction of multicropping and rural industry. By providing local employment for part-time farmers, it is seen as a model for developing individual, but closely coordinated, viable farms in Japan through group activities.

Paper delivered at the Group Farming Conference, June 10-12, 1975
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Don Kanel and Peter Dorner, "Economic and Administrative Issues in Group Farming Systems," Department of Agricultural Economics and the Land Tenure Center, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

This paper explores some of the critical economic and administrative issues in the development of agriculture (increased productive employment, a more equal distribution of income, expanded output, including the landless among land reform beneficiaries, etc.), and examines the manner in which such issues can be addressed under a system of group farming (with a few comparisons to other systems). Allowing that specific circumstances will vary, the conclusions that emerge are the following: the economic rationale for a system of group farming is likely to be based on the possibilities of effectively mobilizing labor, combining agro-industrial development with farming, making it easier for governments to service and have a somewhat greater degree of control over the agricultural sector, promoting a more egalitarian distribution of the benefits of economic growth, etc., rather than on the prospects for more efficient farm production, greater economies of scale, or facilitating the introduction of new technology.

The primary problems of group farming are recognized to be those of effective internal organization and of member commitment and morale. The roles of managers and members are more ambiguous in group farming than the roles of comparable groups in large private farms, state farms, or in peasant farming. It is not realistic to assume that group farming, incorporating substantial numbers of peasants, can achieve the degree of participation in management that is found in the kibbutz or the Hutterite community. Instead, it is suggested that the real challenge in setting up successful group farms may be recognition of the validity of the separate interests of members, managers, and the state, and institutionalization of ways to negotiate among them.

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Moise C. Mensah, "An Experience of Group Farming in Dahomey: The Rural Development Cooperatives," Assistant Director-General, Regional Representative for Africa, Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations, Accra, Ghana.

In this study the author outlines the background, organizational structure, achievements, and problems of an experience in group farming in the densely populated southern region of Dahomey. This decade-old project is a broad-based rural development effort aimed primarily at solving land tenure problems and boosting production of the main export crop (oil-palm), but which also includes food crop and livestock production, cottage industries, and health and education services.

Cooperation has been organized by making landowners' contribution of land (for which a proportionate number of interest-earning shares is given) compulsory and by allowing laborers to earn shares through their labor. Owners retain title, but not use-rights, to their land, and may work on the land as well, if they choose. The member assembly elects a board of trustees as well as a managerial staff, though government representatives are also assigned to each unit.

Production is carried out collectively only on oil-palm areas (which usually cover 50 percent of the cooperative land), while the remaining area is distributed in plots for individual cultivation of other crops with cooperative and extension technical assistance. In the collective sector, individual productivity is stimulated through a supervised piecework system. Cooperative profits are distributed according to number of work days earned and not shares held.

The major achievements of this enterprise pointed out by the author are the land reform (though only use-rights have been redistributed) and agrarian reform (the introduction of new techniques for the improvement of rural economic and social life). Other observed changes include an improvement in the social and economic positions of women and youth, a slowing of rural exodus, and the emergence of an effective rural pressure group. It is noted that the cost of the project has been met largely by foreign assistance.

The author outlines several difficulties which the project has encountered: 1) an unusually long period of drought; 2) overcoming farmers' resistance to the introduction of new techniques in the individual plots; 3) insufficient economic returns to farmers and to the government due especially to climatic conditions; 4) attacks on the project from diverging socio-political interests; 5) inclination of cooperative members to behave more as employees--claiming their job rights--than as employer-managers.

In conclusion, the author feels that, in spite of the difficulties encountered, the experience thus far has shown that with adequate resource allocation, good management, and persistent education efforts this scheme could become the spearhead of rural development in Dahomey.

Paper delivered at the Group Farming Conference, June 10-12, 1975
Madison, Wisconsin

Robert F. Miller, "Group Farming Practices in Yugoslavia," Australian National University.

This paper presents a detailed report of the historical development of Yugoslavian cooperative farming. Attention is focused upon both the internal operation of cooperative farm units as well as the overall political-economic, administrative, and social structures in which Yugoslavian agriculture has been embedded. An assessment is also made of the socio-economic performance of these units in light of both initial policy plans and the purposes which were actually served. In a final section, current developments and future trends in Yugoslavian agriculture are briefly assessed.

From the middle 1950s until the middle 1960s the farmer cooperative was a central feature of all plans made for the socialization of agriculture. Movement for collectivization during the late 1940s had attempted to develop kolkhoz-like units (SRZ). Although the drastic character of the developmental process of the kolkhoz was avoided, the SRZ proved to be dramatic failures. General farmer cooperatives (OZZ) were thus a second-best form of agricultural organization for the Yugoslavian leaders. These were somewhat traditional multi-purpose units supported by ten or more peasants on the basis of limited liability. The Yugoslavian government financed the initiation of these units, which were integrated into the basic structure of policy planning for the Yugoslavian economy. The OZZ were intended to integrate the social and economic activity of the peasant with national development processes. Greater cooperativization was expected to follow on the basis of the value of the OZZ to the peasants.

The OZZ cooperatives and associated contractual linkages with the peasants were successful in making many peasant functions easier. Aside from benefits to their own membership, the cooperatives served as a developmental agency by distributing innovative information. But as an agency for massive socialization of agricultural activity they failed. Much of this failure can be attributed to the decrease in direct financial support by the Yugoslavian government in the mid-1960s. A fall in the cooperative share of agricultural output was one result of these policies. Peasant disaffection with the unreliability of state-run agricultural units was another. As of the early 1970s, individual farmers are once again being pressured to associate with the socialist sector. Measures have also been taken to improve the individual peasant farm through a tied-credit system. The effectiveness and ultimate direction of this campaign are difficult to forecast at the present stage.

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Shao-er Ong, "Emerging Forms of Farm Management in East Asia--With Special Reference to the New Development in Taiwan," Agricultural Development Council Associate for Thailand.

In this paper the author reviews the current status of the forms of agricultural organization in three nations, i.e., Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. Special note is made of the new cooperative forms of agriculture emerging in Taiwan.

After the land reforms of the late 1940s and 1950s, the average size of farms within the three countries surveyed was reduced. This situation has been found to persist. Land reform has, however, benefited great numbers of rural people. Voting records and general observations are demonstrated to support this conclusion. The result has been an accelerated rate of productivity in each country. With high rates of growth and equitable distribution of farm income, governments have been in a strong position to guide and to cooperate with the rural sector in promoting changes in technology and life style.

Land reform has increased the number of individual farm families who own private land. This has placed the burden of decision-making within the family. In order to facilitate the private farms, many services are necessary. For these the farmer has turned to forms of service cooperative effort. Many of these service coops are the descendants of traditional forms of cooperation.

An outstanding factor in recent developments in the organization of agriculture in Japan, South Korea, and Taiwan has been the increasing role of the industrial sector in each nation. The influence of this factor has reduced the size of the farm labor force and thus forced small farmers to seek cooperative means of maintaining their activities. The governments in these nations have also assisted in the maintenance of small-scale farming.

The structure of decision-making on these farms generally is synonymous with the family. Decisions with regard to crops, off-farm employment, and arrangements during crises are made within the family.

In regard to cooperatives, the author notes the high level of membership in these three countries in service cooperatives, as well as the difficulties in extending cooperativization to include production activity. Cooperative production activity that has been developed includes joint management and contract farming. These arrangements have usually developed after labor shortages have forced farmers to pool their resources. Joint management involves one or a few of a farmer's activities which are run on a basis of mutual investment and decision-making. Contract farming, on the other hand, is a leasing arrangement for all authority over farmlands.

The author notes that the trends among small farmers toward forms of mutual assistance indicate that a multilevel mode of decision-making may be inevitable for the management of small farms. In the final section of his paper, the author supports his preceding observations with a survey of the historical development of agriculture in each of the three nations under consideration. One major discussion concerns the situation of Taiwan. Here, farmers' associations have been developed to support government programs in agriculture. A multilevel decision-making structure enables an overall policy to be formulated. Thus, agricultural cooperation has developed in synchronization with government policy.

Paper delivered at the Group Farming Conference, June 10-12, 1975, Madison, Wisconsin

Philip Raup, "French Experience with Group Farming: The GAEC," University of Minnesota

This paper deals with one of the few cases in the western world of a group farming experience that has been institutionalized on a legal basis, the French GAEC (i.e., Groupements Agricoles d'Exploitation en Commun). Raup traces the group farm activity in France from its origins in the French Catholic left after World War II until the legislation of GAEC by the French government in the period from 1962-1964.

GAEC legislation facilitates the common management of farms under conditions similar to family farms. The GAEC are considered corporate bodies under private law. These bodies are intended to include the partial merger of small and medium-sized peasant farms. GAEC must be chartered and supervised by agencies of the state. Individual liability is restricted to twice the value of member investment. All previously existing tenant-landlord arrangements are maintained apart from GAEC arrangements. (Members retain legal interest in crops or livestock which are comingled for marketing or processing.)

To illustrate the description of the GAEC, the author presents several case studies. Among the observations from these studies several salient points emerge. GAEC have allowed members to shift from intensive care of animals to the development of field crops. The scale of business increased, thus allowing other shifts in agricultural production. In one case, two generations of a family were held together by common participation in a GAEC. The merger of several family farms is a common method of forming GAECs.

The author then presents a discussion of the growth of GAECs in France from the mid-1960s to 1972. The total number of GAECs as well as social composition of membership and regional distribution are reviewed. In the subsequent presentation, the development of GAEC since the mid-1960s is assessed and implications for the future are drawn.

Paper delivered at the Group Farming Conference, June 10-12, 1975, Madison, Wisconsin

Nimal Sanderatne, "Group Farming In Sri Lanka," Economic Research Department, Central Bank of Ceylon.

This paper discusses the external influences affecting the establishment of group farming in Sri Lanka and focuses detailed attention on the nature and problems of two recent cooperative farming experiments. Limited and small-scale attempts at group farming--many of which were short-lived or abortive--have been carried out within an environment characterized by a predominating move in the direction of private family farming units, and by a lack of a serious ideological commitment to group farming within the government or among the farmers and settlers.

The pressing problem of large numbers of unemployed, educated youth led to the Youth Settlement Schemes which cleared virgin lands cooperatively, but almost all of which later divided into private plots because of internal organizational problems and the prevailing esteemed value of private ownership. The more recent Cooperative Settlements, springing from the Land Reform Law of 1972, seek to organize laborers cooperatively on expropriated large private estates. Though these settlements are still operating, serious problems have been encountered: the need for large investments, extensive outside control, lack of practical training, a payment system unrelated to work performed, lack of proper accounting procedures, and the unresolved issue of private plots. Though it is too early to properly evaluate these efforts, the author feels that the final decision as to whether group farming will become the predominant form of agricultural organization in Sri Lanka will be based not on their economic performance, but on political considerations.

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Karl Eugen Wädekin, "The Soviet Kolkhoz--Vehicle of Cooperative Farming or of the Transfer of Resources?" Institut für Wissenschaftfarschung der Justus Liebig-Universität.

This paper deals with the history of Soviet collectivization from the conceptual perspective of present-day economic development strategies. The major conclusions of the work delineate points of correspondence and contrast between the Soviet kolkhoz system of collective agriculture and that of present-day less developed countries.

Wädekin finds eight points of correspondence between the developmental circumstances of the kolkhoz (circa 1920-1930) and, at present, of less developed countries:

1) The Soviet Union was an agrarian state with a majority of the population being small-scale peasants.
2) Traditional communal land ownership, although declining, was still practiced.
3) A high rate of population growth and a surplus agricultural population.
4) Underdeveloped economic and social infrastructure.
5) Only a weak system of political democracy existed.
6) A ruling elite of basically urban origin.
7) Nonagricultural segments of the population as well as elites perceived the need for industrialization.
8) A shortage of capital: there was transfer of capital from agriculture to industry.

There were also several unique circumstances that contrast with present conditions in less developed countries:

1) There were several well-developed centers of industrial growth and development of a proletariat.
2) The peasantry had demonstrated a willingness to accept innovation.
3) Sufficient agricultural production allowed for exports.
4) All major raw materials necessary for industrial development were possessed in abundance.
5) A national administrative structure existed and was supplemented by Bolshevik Party organization, both directed by an able and ruthless dictator (Stalin).
6) No capital aid or loans were requested or obtained.

Paper delivered at the Group Farming Conference, June 10-12, 1975
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John Wong, "Communization of Peasant Agriculture: China's Organizational Strategy for Agricultural Development," University of Singapore.

This paper traces the process of the emergence of the Chinese commune as a viable rural institution, highlights its long-term problems and its impact on agricultural development, and evaluates this organizational strategy, especially with regard to the transferability of the Chinese experience to the Third World.

During the 1950s Chinese agriculture went through a radical institutional transformation sparked off by land reform and proceeding through gradually higher forms of socialist organization--Mutual Aide Teams, Agricultural Producer Cooperatives (APC), Higher APCs (collectives)--to the formation of the communes during the Great Leap Period. The speed, momentum, and smoothness with which this transformation was carried out is attributed, in large part, to the crucial role of the Mutual Aide Teams, an intermediate form of cooperation especially suited to the agronomic and economic realities of peasant farming that were based on traditional and familiar forms of cooperation in China.

A three-tier organization structure has evolved in the communes--team, brigade, commune--which leaves direct control over day-to-day farming operations at the lower levels, while the commune level has certain administrative responsibilities but provides only a broad framework to coordinate agricultural production. An effective distribution mechanism, which has evolved gradually and is reinforced by moral incentives, strikes a balance between the ideological requirements for greater egalitarianism and the economic requirement for work incentives. (As commune economic life becomes more complex, further decentralization may be necessary to maintain the viability of this structure.)

Overall agricultural production in China has grown at a fairly rapid rate compared to other Asian developing countries, but the trend has not been smooth. Grain production which followed a relatively stable but rising path over the early period of transformation was radically disrupted--shooting very high, then plunging--during the Great Leap, and returned to a stable path in the 1960s. Though the communes are seen as a major contributing factor to the crisis of the late 1950s, assessment of the movement must be balanced by the positive role played in shifting policy attention to technological transformation and in providing the viable institutional framework for this shift.

In spite of the unique factors that make direct transfer impossible, it is generalized that the Chinese experience not only holds valuable lessons for many Third World countries, but also serves to highlight the problematic areas in their own agricultural development policies. The commune experience has forcibly demonstrated that group farming in the context of

peasant agriculture can be a viable alternative to the time-honored system of individualistic small peasant farming, provided that group activities are properly organized with sufficient flexibility and pragmatism. However, it has also shown that, in addition to organizational strategy, political leadership in close touch with the peasantry as well as sound technological progress are just as vital for attaining the goals of agricultural development.

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