This paper is mainly concerned with the degree of "peasantness" which we can attribute to the Soviet agricultural population, and will concentrate on economic aspects, particularly the nature and use of the private plot. The collective and state farmers of the U.S.S.R. have been called "an analytically marginal group" by T. Shanin (Shanin, 1971, p. 16) and whilst this may be a legitimate approach in relation to the study of social types which closely conform to an "ideal type" peasantry, for the student of contemporary Soviet rural life we need to focus on those aspects which are central to the social organisation of the population concerned, and this involves the study of both peasant and non-peasant elements, and, as Mintz (1973) has argued in another connection, it also necessitates the study of the interdependence of peasant and non-peasant elements. I shall argue that there is a distinct and important element of "peasantness" in the economic structure of the Soviet agricultural population, but that this is no longer the dominant feature of their existence except in a minority of cases. Consequently I feel it is appropriate to apply the term "worker-peasant", developed in Polish sociology, to this population. Firstly, I wish to look at one or two general problems of categorization.

One of the major characteristics of peasantries put forward by writers on the subject concerns their basis in family agriculture. Galeski stresses as the major characteristic of peasant organisation the fact that it shares features both of an entreprise and a domestic economy. (Galeski, 1972, pp. 10-11). It is thus a particular type of family farm, one in which the satisfaction of basic needs of the domestic economy is the overridding goal of productive activity. Included in this concept is a notion of the essentiality of the farm.
Nomadic pastoralists such as the pre-collectivisation Kazakhs and Kirghiz of Soviet Central Asia would seem to be excluded (yet since their settlement in collective and state farms, and their access to a private plot of land, an element of peasantness has developed as part of their social make-up).

Because the peasant farm is both an enterprise and a domestic economy, it operates, according to Galeski, on dual principles – one the production of exchange values and the other the production of use values. (Galeski, 1972, p. 11). He considers that Chayanov underrated the importance of the enterprise features of the peasant farm, and whilst this may be true to some extent, when production for consumption is essential to the provision of the necessities of life, and marketing would not result in an alternative means of such provision then the consumption orientation is the most important feature of the farm's productive activities. I would agree with Galeski that the most appropriate criterion for defining the various type of farm should be the extent to which the farm possesses the features of an enterprise or a domestic economy. (Galeski, 1972, p. 13). Such is very relevant to the private plot in Soviet agriculture: I shall, therefore, consider the contribution of the plot to the family's total income and the degree of market orientation evident in the use of the plot.

Another important question is the problem of exploitation/oppression of peasants. Wolf and Shanin to a lesser extent have both stressed this aspect as an essential feature of peasant societies. (Wolf, 1966, pp. 3, 10). However, I would maintain that whilst political subjugation and economic exploitation are usual features of peasant life, they are not of its essence. Perhaps this is a trivial distinction, but Shanin names Cossacks and Swiss armed peasants as analytically marginal on this basis. Presumably South African boers and American homesteaders before their commercialisation and the allodial peasants of North and Western Europe in the early middle ages (see Bloch, 1965, p. 248), would similarly be classed as analytically marginal, not as true peasants. Whilst it is valid to distinguish between peasants who are exploited/subjected and those who are not, it seems to me that both types are peasants providing they meet the basic criteria of farm production primarily oriented to the basic consumption needs of the family plus some level of exchange with other communities or groups. It is this "essence" of peasantness which we must look for among the Soviet agricultural population.

Such an approach would also seem to devalue the importance of "traditional culture" as a defining characteristic of peasantry. Whilst
the majority of hitherto known peasant societies have reproduced themselves and their farming activities to a large extent through the transmission and use of "folk wisdom", religious values and at times rather rigid forms of conduct, the replacement of such traditional culture, as has happened to a high degree in the Soviet Union, by a science-oriented State education system and a system of active propaganda against "survivals of the past", does not necessarily stop the farming population from acting like peasants, even though they may lose some of the features normally associated with peasants.

Thus in the Soviet Union the recent blossoming of rural studies have shown that almost the whole agricultural population has at least an elementary education; only a minority (mainly old and female) still hold to religious beliefs and superstitions, and an active minority are professing communists. Attendance at the cinema, lectures and rural clubs is high, particularly among the young; radio and television are growing in importance and, more particularly among the higher socio-occupational groups and the better educated, newspapers and artistic, political and professional literature are widely read. It is true that a large proportion of agricultural workers and their children have a deep desire to leave the countryside for the town, being no doubt influenced by the discrepancy between expectations created at school and the reality of life in the Soviet countryside. (Zaslavskaya, 1970). However, these features of rural cultural development do not seem to have greatly affected the remaining population's ability to act in a peasant-like fashion in relation to their private plots. Relevant here is a comment made by Galeski regarding Polish rural youth. Whilst there is a widespread desire of peasant children to leave farming and "make it" in the towns, even amongst those who actually inherit the farms, these latter in time become farmers and act as such. (Galeski, 1972, p. 43). Despite the possibility that they might use modern machinery and techniques, it is the way in which the farm operates which defines these owners and their families as peasants or not. The extent to which they are guided by "traditional" culture, while important in other respects would appear to be irrelevant to their peasantness. We must qualify this statement, however. For the decline of traditional culture may well have assisted the movement, which Wadekin notes, (Wadekin, 1973, p. 167), towards a greater market orientation in the use of the private plot. Education and mass communications spell greater knowledge of opportunities, which are increasingly taken advantage of. And it is precisely those who are least educated, most religious and superstitious, and least oriented
Some problems concerning the Soviet agricultural population

towards reading, radio and television who are most dependent on their private plots.4 However, we should not press this too far: there are other factors at work, and the converse may equally be true in some areas. Arutiunian found that communist party members usually had an above average plot and were more likely to have a cow than ordinary kolkhoz members. (Arutiunian, 1971, p. 134).

I argued earlier that relations of domination between peasants and some other social group are not of the essence of "peasantness". However, they are a usual feature of peasant societies, though the forms of domination and economic exploitation vary considerably – from labour service, sharecropping, taxes, rents and bondage payments to unfavourable terms of trade within a particular economic community. It would thus seem appropriate to examine, albeit briefly, the ways in which an agricultural surplus is extracted in the Soviet Union. Firstly we might look at the type and organisation of work in Soviet agriculture. An obvious feature of work on socialized land – be it collective or state farm – is the relatively high degree of specialisation of task performance. Despite the fact that the majority are employed in unskilled manual work, in field cultivation and livestock tending, and that these are traditionally peasant occupations, the dominant feature is a far higher degree of division of labour than current with the peasant farm: the individual is not involved with the complete agricultural cycle. Further, since the function of management is largely divorced from that of production, especially in regard to control over the distribution of the product, the renumeration of the individual is linked to his work in a manner which is not always clear, but is certainly different from the relationship on a peasant farm, despite the partial payment in kind (grain and fodder). The relationship of work (in the "socialist" sector) to the domestic economy is also different, though some elements of similarity exist.

The above section refers to the dominant "brigade" form of work organisation in Soviet agriculture: a brigade is composed of a brigade leader and his team of skilled or unskilled workers who are given work according to the overall needs of the farm and are not necessarily employed on the same piece of land for any length of time. There is also a variant: the "zveno" or "link" form of organisation which has been defined by Pospielovsky as follows: "an informal team of several peasants(1) to whom a plot of land and all the necessary implements and seed are loaned by the parent kolkhoz or sovkhoz (i.e. collective or state farm) and who are then allowed to run their plot autonomously and are rewarded only by payment for their final
produce.” (Pospielovsky, 1970, p. 411). There are variations within the general pattern, but a common feature is that a whole cycle of production is undertaken and payment is much more closely allied to performance. In some cases the link actually sells its produce to the parent farm according to a contract, the price of course being fixed by the farm. (Pospielovsky, pp. 418-9). Some writers think (or fear) this system is a step back to private property, and in the case of those links formed on a family basis (which appear the most stable and in which there are few of the arguments over the division of earnings which appear to characterise non-family based links (Pospielovsky, p. 429) the conclusion would appear to be justified. However, in all cases the orientation of the zveno, as of the brigade, is towards the market and not towards consumption, so the zveno should be seen more as a modified form of co-operative commerical farming and not a move towards peasant family farming.

Two main methods have been employed to extract a surplus since collectivisation. One has been to tax the private plot. This used to be very burdensome, but has now been reduced to an insignificant amount, (Wadekin, 1973, pp. 157, 248, 339) since the result was harmful to both private and public agriculture. The other method has been underpayment for labour put in on the state farm, or more especially on the collective farm. Whilst most state farm workers have always been permanent employees with guaranteed wages, these have usually been below the level of industrial workers, but substantially above the majority of collective farm workers. The latter must perform a minimum number of work day units and if they do not, because of the low return on their labour, they are liable to have their plots reduced or even removed. (Wadekin, 1973, p. 23).

Thus the use of the plot (i.e. the opportunity for more labour) has been part payment for labour on socialised lands, and this has been possible, as Wadekin points out, because the private plot can provide subsistence, albeit a poor one. Wadekin (1973, p. 185) indicates that the farms keep, on average, 20% of their revenue for investment, but this has not always been the case. The farms have had to give up most of their produce for what has usually been an amount too small to provide adequate investment. Various institutions have been responsible for the supervision of surplus extraction, notably the Machine Tractor Stations until 1958. Throughout most of its history the M.T.S. was not adequately financed by the state, it was poorly equipped, and services to subordinates (e.g. ploughing) were badly carried out. Contracts between collective farms and the M.T.S. were
always one sided in the M.T.S.'s favour, and contracts with sugar and fruit factories were not much better. The original purpose of the M.T.S. was to help produce more from the soil. In practice it produced more from the labour force.

However, the continuing poor output of Soviet agriculture has led to a number of concessions which have made agrarian relations less exploitative. In addition to the zveno, procurement prices have been raised, as have wages to workers, and guaranteed wages were gradually introduced on collective farms in the late 1960's. Together with relaxations on private plot usage, these moves represent a shift from administrative towards more commercial methods of extracting a surplus.

The socialised sector of Soviet agriculture is geared to the production of a surplus. We might see a manorial system in much the same way. However, if the bulk of the agriculturalist's time and sustenance derives from labour expended on the manor's behalf, we would not consider him properly to be a peasant. On the other hand, if labour for the lord was only a minor part of the agriculturalist's work and probably provided little or none of his income, then we could rightly consider him a peasant if the rest of his activity fulfilled the criteria we set out earlier. I think we must take a similar approach with the Soviet "farmers". A difficulty might possibly arise where labour for the dominating partner (landlord or collective farm) forms the major part of the individual's working time but provides him with only a small part of his income, which has frequently been the case in the U.S.S.R. I would argue that in such cases, in which unpaid or underpaid labour serves as a qualification for use of the peasant farm, that the latter, in providing the bulk of the livelihood of the farmer, is of greatest significance in his life and thus defines his social character, i.e. in such circumstances he is still a peasant.

In this connection we must therefore concentrate our further attention on the private plot of the Soviet rural population and in particular to two aspects: (a) is the plot mainly oriented towards satisfying the consumption needs of its users? (b) what contribution does the plot make towards the maintenance of the peasant family?

It would seem necessary to indicate that nearly all rural inhabitants have access to a private plot, though its size and the number of animals kept vary with region, occupation and legal status (in relation to an employing organisation). (Wadekin, 1973, pp. 22, 34). For the biggest group of plot users, the collective farm workers, the maximum size is one half of a hectare (= 1.4 acres) (Wadekin, p. 22) but in fact
the average size is often lower. Collective farm workers usually have bigger plots than state farm workers, although among lower income groups the differences are not significant. State farm workers do less well in the private rearing of livestock, however. (See Table 1).

### Table 1: Private Landholding and Livestock by Social Group in Two Areas of U.S.S.R.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socio-occupational Group</th>
<th>Kalinin</th>
<th></th>
<th>Krasnodar</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Coll. Farm</td>
<td>State Farm</td>
<td>Coll. Farm</td>
<td>State Farm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Management</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Management</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routine White Collar</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mechanized and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skilled Workers</td>
<td>92%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unskilled Workers</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Arutiunian, 1971, p. 131.

Wadekin, p. 107, remarks that in the State Farms there has been from time to time a conscious anti-private plot policy.

Besides the rural inhabitants, there were (in the mid 1960's) also 14-17 million urban household plots and collective garden, representing possibly 10% of the urban population. (Wadekin, pp. 96, 125). Not all these plots are sufficiently important to supply an important part of the consumption needs of their users, or are sufficiently integrated into the domestic economy to be classified as peasant in character.

Despite the small size of the plots, they are responsible for large amounts of produce, particularly potatoes, vegetables, fruit and animal produce. Most of this produce is consumed by the producers, the amount which is marketed by one means or another being most often estimated at 20%. Whilst the absolute production of major private crops has increased the proportion marketed has declined in respect of eggs, milk and potatoes, showing greater consumption of these products. Other products have shown an increase in the marketed level, but without, except for wool, a decline in consumption. Wadekin interprets these shifts as an increasing specialisation, with more attention being paid to products which fetch a higher market
return, whilst simultaneously guarding the consumption level of staple foods. He notes sharp changes in specialisation in particular areas when the market has changed and cites examples of regional specialisation: beekeeping in Armenia, vines in Dagestan (and Georgia), cucumbers in Suzdal, fruit, tomatoes in Ukraine and the South generally.

Whilst Wadekin considers that, in general, "the volume and structure of production is determined more by consumption needs than by market orientation" (1973, p. 158), in particular cases this is not so, and even where it is, the 20% or so which is marketed "is sufficient to influence the nature of private production significantly" (p. 166). The availability of markets and the effectiveness of the state retail system appear to have great importance: where it is difficult to sell goods, there is no point in specialising. Where it is also difficult to buy goods the plot is the major and often the only alternative which provides the family with the goods it needs. Thus market orientation is greater around large cities and also in the south of European Russia, North Caucasus and the Ukraine. (Wadekin, 1973, p. 158). It is least in areas of poor communications, poor supply and low demand, notably Western Siberia, where, among other areas, it has been noted in recent years that collective farm workers could not have kept themselves alive without their plots. This could have equally applied to most areas of the U.S.S.R. at some time in its history.

It is not only the balance in the use of the plot between consumption and market orientations which is important for our purpose. Whilst if the plot is primarily market oriented its users cannot properly be defined as peasant, in order for a consumption orientation to imply "peasantness", the plot must also contribute significantly to the total income of the household, as only then can it become meaningfully integrated into the domestic economy. In 1966 in the Russian republic (RSFSR) over 90% of the collective farmers' consumption of potatoes, fruit, meat, milk and eggs and quite a high proportion of vegetables was produced on their own plots. The only major foodstuffs obtained by the kolkhozniks from the public sector were grain and sugar. (Wadekin, 1973, pp. 56-7). This would seem to indicate a high degree of "peasantness" in the operation of the average collective farm plot. For "workers and employees" the proportions are considerably lower, but for some areas, notably West Siberia, they are still quite high, especially for potatoes (83%) and eggs (58%). (Wadekin, p. 94).

According to the Soviet Constitution, (Article VII) the private plot is supplementary to the basic income from the collective farm; in
other words the plot cannot officially provide the basic income of the household. However, with most basic foodstuffs consumed by the family produced on the plot, it would seem well on the way to providing the basic income. In fact, if we equate plot production and income in kind from the collective with money income, we find that the plot has frequently been the basic, sometimes the only, source of income for collective farmers. (Wadekin, p. 44). Table 2 shows the changing balance of income by source in the U.S.S.R. between 1960 and 1969. Table 3 covers a longer period, but refers to the R.S.F.S.R. only. These figures show the effect of rising income from the socialist sector, particularly the kolkhoz, in this period, and especially in the late 1960's, on the monetary importance of the private plot. This does not mean that the plot is no longer of great importance to its users, for it is still very difficult in many areas to obtain many staple foods through the state-collective retail system, in the cases of both collective and state farms. (Wadekin, 1973, pp. 67, 208). Arutiunian found in the late 1960's that whilst for low paid workers the plot was considered essential because of low pay, for the better paid, e.g. the rural intelligentsia, the plot was thought necessary because it was the only reliable means of obtaining many foodstuffs. (Arutiunian, 1971 p. 137). What this does mean is that the plot now makes a smaller proportionate contribution to total family income and may therefore be seen as less significant.

**Table 2: Share of Income arising from the private plot – U.S.S.R.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collective farmers</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State farmers</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The remainder arises not only from collective farm and state farm work, but also industrial work and various pensions.

**Table 3: Share of Income arising from the private plot – R.S.F.S.R.**

<table>
<thead>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collective farmers</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State farmers</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Arutiunian, 1971, pp. 128-9; Wadekin, 1973, pp. 192-3*
Some problems concerning the Soviet agricultural population

Regionally, the plot varies in importance. It provides a higher than average share of income in Belorussia, the Baltic States and Georgia, where according to Wadekin, earnings from the public sector are relatively low. On the other hand the plot was of least importance in Kazakhstan and Kirgizia. (Wadekin, p. 191). The RSFSR showed significant internal variations, with the Volga-Vyatka region (51.1%) and Central Region (48.1%) contrasting with the North Caucasus (33.7%), the Far East (34.9%) (Grigorovskiy and Alekseev, 1968, p. 63) and the North West. (Wadekin, p. 193).

What I think we can now say is that where the plot is overwhelmingly consumption oriented and at the same time forms a significant part of the income of its users, then there is an important element of "peasantness" in the make up of that plot holder. Where this is actually the case is more difficult to establish exactly, but it is most likely to occur in the more isolated villages of Central Black-earth Russia and the Volga-Vyatka Region and Belorussia since (a) in these regions the plot is most significant in the proportion of income it forms and (b) the degree of market orientation depends to a large degree on proximity to towns, good communications and the local suitability of cash crops. Thus it must be doubted that Georgian collective farmers, in being nearest to uncollective agriculture due to the 79% private contribution to their incomes in the mid 1960's (Matthews, 1972, p. 166) are therefore necessarily most "peasant" in character since in Georgia the market orientation seems quite high (vines and other fruit). In such circumstances the operation of the private farm cannot be integrated into the domestic economy in the way of peasant farms.

As far as different occupational groups are concerned, it is clear that the plots of the lower paid groups - unqualified field workers and livestock attendants do not shift the balance of inequality in rural society. (Arutunian, p. 133). However, despite the fact that higher paid groups frequently earn more from their plots than do lower paid groups, the income which the latter receive forms a much greater proportion of their total income, satisfies more of their basic food requirements, and is thus more integrated into the domestic economy. For some groups it is evident that the plots are by far their chief source of subsistence. Arutunian quotes a figure of 9 million in 1939 whose only income was from their private plot. Some of these were pensioners (4m.) but many of the remainder were "able bodied" and doubtless included widows (with children) who did not work on the collective farm, but also, it seems, unemployed "mechanizers".14
Provided their plots are oriented towards consumption needs these people could be said to be the only ones capable of unqualified categorisation as peasants. It seems there are now very few, if any, “individual” peasants left, though in Western Regions they formed a sizeable minority in the 1959 census. For the remaining population I think we must invoke the terms common in Polish sociology, of “worker-peasant” and “peasant-worker”. Where work for the “socialist” sector provides the majority of income, these people would be “worker-peasants”; in the reverse case, “peasant-worker” would be appropriate.15 We must exclude (a) those whose private sector income is negligible due to miniscule size of plot and livestock holdings (Lewis, 1973, p. 50) or to high socialist-sector earnings and (b) those whose private farming is directed primarily towards the market.

We could, therefore, interpret the growth of the public sector’s contribution to the earnings of the kolkhozniks as a shift in social type from peasant-worker to worker-peasant.16 In the majority of cases state farm workers would be classified as worker-peasants for most of the time since they acquired the right to a plot.

The designation of Soviet agriculturists as “worker-peasants” must be qualified in two ways; firstly by the special relationship between the collective farm and the household, and secondly by reference to the structure of work and income internal to the household. The use of a private plot in the U.S.S.R. is usually legally dependent on the maintenance of the relationship of worker to employing organisation. In addition the parent farm normally supplies fodder and the use of grazing land for privately owned animals. (Wadekin, pp. 30, 108). This “constant support from the socialist sector”, (Grigorovskiy & Alekseev, 1968, p. 23), whilst being at the same time a hidden means of extra payment to and control over the individual plot holder, does not, I think, obviate or significantly lessen the peasant character of the plot’s operation. Despite the source of this assistance, it is materially part of the private economy of the individual since it is used by him in the operation of his private farm and he receives it as a right and not in return for specific work performed for the parent farm.17

S. Mintz has pointed out that peasantries frequently live in close association with landless, wage-earning agricultural workers, and that alternative and simultaneous participation by large groups of people in both peasant-type and agricultural labourer-type activities is a common feature of societies where this association exists. (Mintz, 1973, p. 91). He points out that we should not overlook the extent to
which the peasantry as such achieves or maintains its viability through the existence of these other groups. Whilst we must state that this need not always be the case, it would appear that the dependence of the private plot on the collective or state farm is an excellent example of the kind of activity Mintz refers to.

Concerning the "alternate and simultaneous participation" we might also look at the Soviet rural household. Different members of the household tend to be more concerned with one sector (public or private) than the other. Whilst active male kolkhozniks spend only small amounts of their working time on the plot, and most of it in the socialist sector, young teenagers, retired people and many women spend almost their whole working time on the plot. This indicates that work in the plot and in the kolkhoz or sovkhoz are not just alternative forms of employment but are closely interweaved within the structure and cyclical development of the family. It is for this reason, as Wadekin points out (1973, p. 29), that the income from all sectors (including work outside the agricultural sphere) is pooled and allocated among the family members according to the needs of the household. It seems doubtful, in view of the close involvement of the husband at a decision making and budgeting level, (Arutunian, 1971, p. 213) and of many wives in work for the collective or state farm, that we should conclude that the wife is a peasant and the husband a worker. We must look at the household as a whole when deciding how to categorise its members. Since both peasant and worker elements are strongly represented and mutually supporting in these families, it is appropriate to employ the term worker-peasant for the group as a whole.¹⁸

Why has this exercise been necessary? There are four reasons which I consider important. (1) Firstly, within the orbit of Soviet Studies, the use of the term "peasant" is rather inconsistent and legalistic. Officially a peasant is a member of a collective farm, and the expression "Collective farm peasantry" is used in connection with Stalin's class theory, which is still accepted by the party and the majority of academics. Sometimes it is restricted to labourers on collective farms; sometimes "mechanisers" are included; often they are not. Then we have the problem of state farm workers many of whom are so close to their occupational counterparts in the collective farms that the distinction between "peasant" and "worker" is almost meaningless. It is no answer to this problem to simply deny that they are peasants, since there is a distinct element of "peasantness" in many of the population. (2) This element of "peasantness" needs to be
investigated, even if we accept the categorisation under the notion of an "analytically marginal group". (3) Such an approach allows comparison with other rural societies and situations. (4) It also constitutes an avenue of entry into the study and understanding of the social structure of the contemporary Soviet population.

NOTES

1 I will cover the cultural aspect only briefly: I have discussed this more fully in another paper to be published by Soviet Studies, entitled, "The end of the Russian Peasantry?". However, I shall in the present paper qualify the importance imputed there to certain cultural patterns.

2 It would seem apparent that the concept of "domestic economy" does not preclude primary groups, other than the family per se, being in a position to be rightly called peasants, provided they function in a way which involves (a) the interlocking and interdependence of agricultural and domestic activities and (b) the continuation of the farm through generations. Thus besides the small family farm, we might also include the large extended family, even possibly the tribal, or communal or co-operative farming groups basically dedicated to satisfying their communal needs.

3 And understandable in view of the poverty of the majority of Russian peasants in the period leading up to Chayanov's study. (Chayanov, 1966). Perhaps the decision to concentrate on production for consumption only when the market offers little or no return is to demonstrate the "enterprise" nature of the peasant farm, at least where market orientation has previously been important.

4 See Arutiunian, 1971. What we do not have however, is a clear indication of which groups (occupational, educational, age) show greatest market orientation in the operation of their plots.

5 This has not been universal of course. Many farms have been operated at good profits and have paid their members well.

6 Wadekin, p. 214. Belov, (1936) indicates that in the early post war period successive extra procurement quotas reduced the payment in kind (the only kind of payment then) to starvation rations. Solzhenitsyn, (1974) p. 75, quotes the case of a peasant arrested in the 1930's for asking why they had had no payment from the collective farm in the last 7 years.


8 Wadekin, p. 166; Arutiunian, 1971, p. 127, gives "15%-20%".

9 Wadekin, pp. 63, 124, 145, 149, 194. He also cites cases where individual plot holders became quite wealthy by out and out commercialisation of their plots.

10 Zaslavskaya (1966) and Khodonov (1968), quoted in Wadekin, p. 194.

11 Perhaps I should point out that Soviet statistics, following Stalin's rather dogmatic class theory, identify all agricultural workers on the State farms as "working class" whilst all members of collective farms are called "collective farm peasantry". Despite the fact that the situations of agricultural labourers on collective and state farms share more common features with each other than do state farmers with industrial workers, (especially since the conversion of many collectives into State farms and the introduction of guaranteed pay for collective farmers) this distinction is followed by most Soviet sociologists and economists. There are notable exceptions, such as Arutiunian.
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12 Wadekin, p. 191. However, according to Arutunian’s figures for 1968, the Baltic States were among the highest earnings for kolkhozniks. (Arutunian, 1971, p. 121). The answer to this paradox may lie in the time factor - Wadekin is probably referring to a few years earlier. Since the Baltic States - particularly Estonia - had made the most impressive gains in this field since 1953, this could be important.

13 Arutunian, p. 126. Whilst the numbers of “individual peasants” had declined since then, the proportion of retired people in the countryside has grown, with the migration of young people.

14 Wadekin, p. 109. He also mentions large numbers of unemployed persons in small towns in non-industrial areas, whose major occupation is private farming. One would expect these to be relatively highly interested in marketing their produce, though not exclusively.


16 This shift may be partly discerned in the attitudes of kolkhozniks, particularly their work attitudes. Whilst a private plot orientation is inculcated at an early age through work socialisation (as shown by V. I. Selivanov, 1969), there is some evidence that higher pay for collective work and a more meaningful correlation of work and income in the socialist sector has led to a greater concentration on and interest in such work. (Shcherbina et al, 1970, p. 114; O. I. Zotova and V. V. Novikov, 1969, p. 209)

17 Some extra payment of fodder may be given for work done, however. Some of the haymaking work is performed on a sharecropping basis where fields are unsuitable for mechanical mowing. (Wadekin, pp. 223-4) whether this operation represents peasant activity or “labour for the lord” is a moot point. Most probably in our case it represents the latter, since there are no rights to land use on the part of the sharecropper. Nevertheless the majority of the individual’s share goes towards the feeding of his own animals.

18 Bearing in mind, of course, that some families are more “peasant”, others more “worker” in their characteristics. The case of low paid members of the intelligentsia, such as rural teachers, raises questions as to the legitimacy of employing a hybrid category for them too where their plots make the same kind of contribution as those of the less qualified agricultural workers. There is a precedent for such an approach, in that many 19th century priests also tillled the soil and were “often indistinguishable from the peasants”. (Treadgold, 1968, p. 100).

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SUMMARY

This article is an attempt to investigate certain aspects of the social make-up of collective and state farm workers in the U.S.S.R., in particular the contribution of the “private plot” of agricultural land and private ownership of livestock to the social character of these people. In fact, it is asking, and attempting to answer positively, whether, as a general rule, the operation of the miniature private farm means that in this respect these people are still “peasants” in a meaningful sociological sense.

Whilst the validity of ideal-type definitions of peasantry such as that of Shanin, involving economic, social, cultural and political elements is not denied, it is argued that such characterisation, together with the delineation of some groups as “analytically marginal”, directs attention away from what is the most characteristic element in any peasant group, namely the particular relationship between the farm as an economic (productive) unit and the household as a domestic (consuming) unit, which is present in many of the social groups categorised as analytically marginal.

In the case of Soviet agriculture, the high level of contribution of the private enterprise to the income of the family, coupled with the overwhelming consumption orientation of production in that enterprise, means that they retain an important element of “peasantness”.

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However, in the case of state farm workers this element has always been a minor one, and most collective farm workers would now appear to be in an almost similar position, though for the bulk of their history they have obtained the preponderance of their income from private efforts. For these reasons it is argued that Soviet agricultural workers can be best understood as "worker-peasants" (a term more usually connected with Polish and German "part-time" farmers) which implies that the "worker" element is dominant.

RÉSUMÉ

Dans cet article on essaie de rechercher certains aspects sociaux des travailleurs agricoles d'État et en collectivité en URSS. La contribution que donnent les terrains privés cultivables et la propriété du bétail pour l'empreinte du caractère social de ces gens se trouve donc au premier plan.

La question qui demande une réponse définitive est: Si les gens sont en général, encore, des paysans dans le sens sociologique du terme à cause de l'exploitation d'une ferme privée minuscule?

La validité de définitions typiques idées du paysan comme par exemple celle de Shanin qui contient des éléments économiques, sociaux, culturels et politiques ne seront pas combattus.

Une telle caractérisation ensemble avec la désignation de quelques groupes en tant que marginaux dans le sens analytique dans le sens analytique, détourne pourtant l'attention principale de l'élément caractéristique le plus important pour chaque groupe social paysan, c'est à dire de la relation spécifique entre la ferme en tant qu'unité économique (productive) et la famille en tant qu'unité privée (consommatrice), ce qui est à trouver dans tant de groupes sociaux analytiques marginaux designés. Dans le cas de l'agriculture soviétique, la haute contribution de cette affaire privée signifie pour le revenu des familles, ajouté à l'orientation prévalorisante de la production vers la consommation, qu'un élément important de la paysannerie reste toujours.

Cependant dans le cas du travailleur agricole d'État, cet élément n'était toujours que faiblement empereint et, il semble que les travailleurs réunis dans les collectivités seront victimes du même processus bien qu'ils aient tiré la plupart du temps dans leur passé la partie principale de leur revenu d'une activité privée. Pour cela, les travailleurs agricoles soviétiques peuvent être regardés comme «ouvriers paysans», (une notion qui est appliquée normalement aux paysans
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Im Fall der sowjetischen Landwirtschaft bedeutet der hohe Beitrag dieses privaten Geschäfts für das Familieneinkommen zusammen mit der vorwiegenden Konsum-Orientierung der Produktion, daß ein wichtiges Element von „Bäuerlichkeit“ übrigbleibt. Im Fall der staatlichen Landarbeiter war dieses Element jedoch immer schon nur schwach ausgeprägt und den in Kollektiven zusammengeschlossenen Arbeitern scheint es nun ebenso zu gehen, obwohl sie während des größten Zeitraums in ihrer Vergangenheit den überwiegenden Teil ihres Einkommens aus privater Tätigkeit bezogen. Deshalb können die sowjetischen Landarbeiter am besten als „Arbeiter-Bauern“ verstanden werden (ein Begriff, der normalerweise auf polnische und deutsche „Teilzeit“-Bauern angewendet wird), was bedeutet, daß das „Arbeiter“-Element dominierend ist.