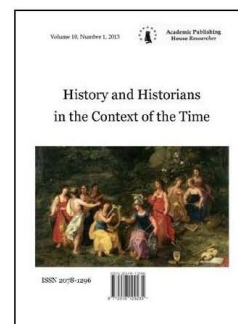


Copyright © 2014 by Academic Publishing House *Researcher*



Published in the Russian Federation  
History and Historians in the Context of the Time  
Has been issued since 2014.  
ISSN: 2078-1296  
Vol. 12, No. 1, pp. 55-61, 2014

DOI: 10.13187/issn.2078-1296  
[www.ejournal3.com](http://www.ejournal3.com)



UDC 93

### **Various Causes of the Stagnation of Rural Production in Slovakia During the Collectivisation 1951–1952**

Vladimir Varinsky

Matej Bel University, Slovakia  
40 Tajovského Str., 974 01 Banská Bystrica  
Ph.D. (History), Professor  
E-mail: [vladimir.varinsky@umb.sk](mailto:vladimir.varinsky@umb.sk)

**Abstract.** According to the study, unrealistic assumptions on better economic results generated especially through the fast transformation of collective farming (JRD) into higher forms of production were one of the main reasons behind the failure to fulfill targets in agriculture in Slovakia during 1951 and 1952. Though these forms achieved higher profitability compared to private farmers, they lacked the production condition needed to substitute a private sector.

**Keywords:** collective farms, profitability, administrative and directive management, the law of value, controlled market.

#### **Introduction.**

After the international situation got worse in 1951, the government in Moscow put pressure on Czechoslovakia to rework the tasks outlined in the 5-year plan. Priority was given to heavy industry and all other parts of the national economy were subordinated to this aim. Agriculture was no exception.

#### **Materials and Methods.**

The study is based on the research of archival documents of party political provenience (the Presidium of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Slovakia and the Secretariat of the Central Committee of the Communist party of Slovakia), published statistical data and period specialist literature related to economic issues. The direct method of research was used predominantly; however, an indirect approach was also employed in ascertaining the reliability of statistical data. Considerably different results in management of collective farms have been found.

#### **Discussion.**

During the later part of the 5-year plan, agriculture in Slovakia was supposed to increase production from the originally planned 27,3% to 64,5% (from 1951 it was an increase of 37%) and an increase in plant production was one of the main goals [1]. Such a drastic increase of plans in agriculture had no real justification and caused unrest, mainly because even lower plans were not fulfilled during previous years. This increase was to be achieved by increased initiative of the workers, the shock-worker union and by finding new forms of work. However most was hoped from the fast transformation of collective farming (JRD) into higher forms of production. In other words, the transformation into socialist mass production in agriculture, which was represented by

collective production in farming was supposed to fulfil these aims. This was caused by the naive assumption regarding mass production that the horizontal integration of private economies will bring substantial increase in global production including agriculture [2]. Later it was revealed that the increase of work productivity is an important, but not the most important condition in agricultural production [3].

National goals regarding productivity in Slovakia were to be fulfilled by the same transformation of collective farms into higher production forms, which was supposed to increase the interest in creating new collective farms (JRD). The preference of collective farms and state properties (ŠM) was rationalised by their higher relative effectively regarding market price [4], because in this figure the collective farms and state owned properties showed higher numbers than the private sector [5]. However, the fact that the collective farms and state owned farms had only a negligible share in agricultural production was purposely omitted. The ratio between these types of farming was levelled off in 1959 [6]. Similar results were seen in the other sectors of economy, where the ratio was levelled off in 1958 [7]. This shows that the better results of the collective farms and state owned farms were not because of better production rates, but were the effect of pressure from government structures. This meant that the collective farms and state owned farms were compromising with the government and offered higher amount of products at their own costs and needs. To be more precise, it has to be stated that the collective farms were creating fictive numbers because of the so called evidence repurchase. This was caused by the efforts of the repurchase agencies to fulfil plans as fast as possible and because of that they bought the products only on paper without them actually moving. This was the case especially with grain which was bought even before the harvest, without any guaranty that there will be enough grain [8]. These realities underlined that the collective farms and state owned ones were not in a condition to replace the private sector. There is no doubt that the people involved knew what was happening, but they rather kept their eyes shut and omitted the problems [9]. This was also because of propaganda aims, to show that collective farming was more efficient than the private sector, however the truth was that the agricultural production stagnated. Paradoxically this pressure on collective farms, which were to become the shop-window to the private sector, caused the stagnation of agricultural production in Slovakia.

The next cause, which negatively influenced the agriculture in Slovakia, was the way the national economy was governed. In Czechoslovakia the first 5-year plan was gradually transformed to a centrally governed system, which did not include possibilities of personal interest and rather created a bureaucratic form of leadership. The formation of a centralized system of government was justified by the theses of the incompatibility between socialist planned economy and the free market. Socialism was seen to be completely organized and controlled society [10]. The most important control apparatus was the plan. The goal was that the whole agricultural production would follow the plan. In Czechoslovakia like in other people's republics, the so called normative economics was the way how the plan was fulfilled. The plan was seen as the will of the society, and so the goals of the plan were the needs of society and not the capacity of economy [11]. This understanding of economy connected with an administrative way of leadership meant that the plans were too complicated (for example each agricultural company had to deal with exactly one type of product, size of land which is to be sowed and the rate of production), too optimistic and not suitable due to the landscape and earth type. The pages of economic newspapers were filled with demands to fulfil plans in spite of unsuitable weather and other conditions and that one has to fight the nature so that the society can prosper [12].

The negative aspects of bureaucratically created plans for agriculture meant the transformation of immediate producers into plan fulfillers. These plans however were in contrast with the actual experience and capabilities of agricultural production. This change also meant that the workers in agriculture lost interest in increasing production figures, because they were constrained by the detail planning. This attempt to control agriculture through administrative means was increased during 1951–1953 and culminated in 1952, and was the main cause of the stagnation of agricultural production.

It has to be stated that even within the centralized system, there were possibilities to use economic instruments, especially in the repurchase area. The aspects of the newly-created repurchase system [13] stated that the workers themselves should assist in creating agreements between production and supply companies, which was supposed to motivate them. At the same

time it was expected that purchase of products would only take a certain amount of goods from the collective farms and the rest could be sold on the free market, which would stimulate production increase. This form represented an improvement compared to the strict supply system of 1945–1948; however it was not successful in Slovakia. To completely eliminate free trade, the state created the so called above-contract purchase system, which bought up the rest of the farm production and put it in state funds. According to statistics, state purchase bought up only a small amount of total market production up until 1954. The main part of market production was bought by state repurchase.

The causes were the aspects, how the individual farmer was supposed to fulfil the plan. The size of the consignment was supposed to be discussed; however their real size was set up according to the whole plan, without considering the real production capabilities. Each increase in production usually meant an increase in supplies. Of course this praxis meant less interest of the individual worker to increase production [14].

In the situation where the production and supply demands were increasing every year, the real value of the products was usually ignored, which meant lesser stimulation of agricultural producers [15]. The usual form was that the agricultural producers were forced to sell at a lower price to the state, as the real market price. This meant that the production costs were not taken into account and were usually higher than the sell price [16]. High supplies and low prices took considerable resources away from private owners, as well as collective farms and they were often not able to guarantee simple reproduction. These deficiencies were most prevalent during 1951–1952.

The private sector had its own specifics. It owned the majority of agricultural land and formed the main part of market production; however it did not form the main part of industrial demand. The causes were mainly a decrease of production of consumer goods and small businesses (like they were not existent anymore) [17], as well as a lower demand by private agricultural workers [18]. In time this was interpreted as insufficient propagation of farm seed exchange between worker [19]. However the main cause was the insolvency of the private sector or in other words, the unfair exchange between the state and the farmers.

In spite of these adverse conditions the first plan for private farmers from 1951 stated that they were supposed to increase production and supply [20]. The difference between the needs and real capabilities got bigger. The private sector had only limited capability in this regard, especially because of the uneconomical sell of agricultural products to the state. Repurchase was therefore a forceful act and did not become a productive aspect of the relationship between the farmer and the state. The situation was especially complicated in Slovakia, as there was pressure to even out the supply from Czech lands. This caused a supply demand increase of 100 to 400% in 1949. If the farmers did not sign the contract, the local national council could impose it [21]. This would explain, why market production increased each year, but real production stagnated. This situation eased in 1955, when the freedom of creating contracts was re-established for some less important agricultural goods. This was agreed upon during the X. rally of the Communist party of Czechoslovakia.

The collective farms were in a relatively different situation. Their prosperity was the main aim of the regime. The intensity of the support varied, but it remained a long term aim to support the collective farms at the cost of the private sector [22]. Increased investment in agriculture during 1951, were meant to support collective farms. A double increase in investment into agriculture aimed to mechanise the field work, as well as compensate the drop of workforce in the sector. This aim was not fulfilled. In 1951 the investments in Slovak agriculture rose only slightly and compared to other sectors, they decreased. During 1952 and 1955 this tendency started to show in absolute numbers [23]. More important changes were made in the structure of investments. The orientation to create new collective farms with common economy began in 1950 and it was necessary to move the investments into the building sector to create stables, stall and other buildings. As these investments were small in Slovakia, they could not fulfil the demand. Investments into mechanisation were also lowered, between 1951–1953 in spite of the fact that the workforce drop was 15% compared to the expected 5%. This meant a total of 330 thousand people would move away from agriculture. Approximately 100 thousand from this number included Slovakia. This sharp decrease was not compensated by mechanisation and the collective farms suffered.

After the rally of the Communist party of Slovakia in May 1950, a campaign was started to rapidly increase the number of production collectives. The number of collective farms increased threefold [24], but it also created a sharp contrast between the number of the workers and the size of the land owned by the collective farms [25]. Due to this a significant number of small collective farms were created. They possessed little land and adjacent agricultural establishments. This situation was made worse when they received so-called foreign land. And so it happened that in 1951, a single workforce in collective farms of the III. and IV. type had to work on 7,21 ha of agricultural land. This was in sharp contrast to the private sector where only 3,13 ha of land were managed by a single workforce [26]. The negative effects of having insufficient mechanised equipment were especially apparent in collective farms. This was the case of industrial crops, root-crops and livestock production where mechanisation was almost non-existent [27].

The severe workforce deficiency in collective farms was increased in late 1951 due to the stiffening of the food-card system (the food-card system was again introduced in early 1951) and industrial product card system. According to the edict of the Minister of inner commerce from the 19<sup>th</sup> December 1951, the members of collective farms whose farms did not fulfil plans to 100% were not given cards to certain products [28]. For example if a collective did not supply enough meat or eggs, but oversupplied with grain its members were still not given cards for sugar or clothing. The repercussions soon followed. Collective farms were not able to fulfil supply due to various reasons. Therefore 95% of collective farms suffered from the card system [29], what negatively affected the workforce number. At the beginning of 1951 collective farms in Slovakia had 58 756 stable workers and this was lowered to 19 710. The migratory process within the collective farms was further increased in the first half of 1952. Great numbers of workers, metal workers, builders (mostly communists) left the collective farms, even though they previously followed the orders of higher types of collective farms [30].

On the other hand, the card system further decreased the interest of farmers to work on their fields. They rather moved to work on their own crofts [31]. The effect was that in 1951 the collective farms had severe problems to meet deadlines for agricultural work. In 1951 collective farms in Slovakia were able to finish spring work only thanks to voluntary work. The interesting fact is that two-thirds of the stable workers did not even take part in the spring works [32]. Of course this also caused little interest of the young population to join the agricultural sector. This concluded the devils ring of various actions and reactions. At that time it was seen by high representatives of the party that only harsh administrative and directive orders could solve the situation. Because of this from 1951 onwards, formal contracts were not very important and increased plans were created by the administration. At the same time cases started to appear where the local national councils forced farmers to work a certain amount of time on the collective farms [33]. Collective farms, especially in the problem-ridden Prešov County, started to become a part of the repressive system.

Based on the presented facts, it is clear that even though the collective farms were widely supported, they suffered greatly because of the various negative economic policies of the state. In spite of clear evidence that the creation of higher types of collective farms is a wrong way to increase agricultural production, the party and state organizations planned to speed up the creation of these from June 1952 onwards. Party functionaries in counties and districts saw this as a clear move towards collectivisation. The results of this campaign were contradictory. Three months after the declaration 403 collective farms of the III. and IV. type were created in Slovakia [34]. On the other hand, farmers who were forced to join collective farms were not actively participating in common works and felt deep resentment towards the government. The fast creation of collective farms quickly worsened the situation. In addition the mechanisation lacked considerably as the farms were created too quickly. Because of this (the year 1952 is classified as infertile) plans for the harvest for 1952 were met only in very minor aspects, livestock production was insufficient and the tempo of agricultural production in Slovakia was lowered overall [35].

### **Conclusion.**

This was not the case of one year. The goals of the 5-year plan were also not met. The gross agricultural production in Slovakia in 1953 compared to 1948 was a little higher than in the Czech lands; it still did not meet the planned numbers. Livestock production which was supposed to increase by 98%, got up by only 28,3% and plant production only by 16,6% [36]. The agricultural

production from 1953 in the whole country in general was lowered by 2,1 % compared to 1950 and livestock production was lowered by a staggering 17,5%.

### References:

1. Zasadnutie ÚV KSS v dňoch 18. – 20. apríla 1951. Bratislava: ÚV KSS, 1951. P. 68. (Gathering of the main body of the Communist party of Slovakia)
2. Look at: Vydra V. Úloha výkupu v ekonomickém svazku dělnické třídy a rolnictva. Období industrializace ČSSR. Praha: ČSAV, 1963. P. 101.
3. Even though work efficiency in agriculture rose two-fold by 1960, real agricultural production was less than pre-war levels. Look at: Vývoj československého zemědělství v období 20 let (v číslech). Praha: MZLH, 1966. P. 53, 59.
4. It's a category which defines market production from total agricultural production.
5. In 1953 collective farms had marketability of 48,6%, state owned farms 78,4% and private sector 36,5%. The numbers are from: Vojáček A. Vývoj socialistického poľnohospodárstva na Slovensku. Bratislava: Príroda, 1973. Tables P. 186, 187, 236, 237, 265, 266.
6. For example in 1953 total agricultural production came: from collective farms 25,8%, private sector 65,7%, state owned farms 8,4%. Numbers are from: Vojáček A. Vývoj socialistického poľnohospodárstva na Slovensku. Bratislava: Príroda, 1973. Tables P. 186, 236, 265.
7. In 1953 market production from collective farms was 29,1%, private sector 55,5%, state owned farms 15,5%. Numbers are from: Vojáček A. Vývoj socialistického poľnohospodárstva na Slovensku. Bratislava: Príroda, 1973. Tables P. 187, 237, 266.
8. For example repurchase organizations bought up grain and potatoes that was later sold as food to the collective farms. The collectives then again sold these to repurchase organizations. Differences were only in price. A similar case was for barley. Compare: Vydra V. Úloha výkupu v ekonomickém svazku dělnické třídy a rolnictva. Období industrializace ČSSR. Praha: ČSAV, 1963. P. 102-103.
9. During the cold war, this was attributed to enemy activity and sabotage. Compare: Štefanský M. Studená vojna. Slovensko 1946-1954. Bratislava: VHÚ, 2008. P. 150-153.
10. The transformation towards centralized planning and leading the national economy ended in 1952. Vojáček A. Vývoj socialistického poľnohospodárstva na Slovensku. Bratislava: Príroda, 1973. P. 548.
11. The idea to build the plans according to the needs of the society was stated also by V. Široký during the meeting of the Communist party of Slovakia in november 1949. Roľnícke družstevné noviny. 1. december 1949. P. 572
12. Look at: Kňákal J. Některé problémy plánování zemědělské výroby. / J. Kňákal // Plánované hospodářství. 7/1951. P. 489.; Volavka A. O novém způsobu sestavování plánu v zemědělství / A. Volavka // Plánované hospodářství. 7/1952. P. 529.
13. From 1949 the total repurchase system was dissolved in Czechoslovakia and a new one was created based on contracts. From 1950 only a single contract was signed with the whole village or community. This form was not applied in Slovakia. Look at: Vojáček A. Vývoj socialistického poľnohospodárstva na Slovensku. Bratislava: Príroda, 1973. P. 553.
14. Vydra V. Úloha výkupu v ekonomickém svazku dělnické třídy a rolnictva. Období industrializace ČSSR. Praha: ČSAV, 1963. P. 57.
15. During this time there was the notion that in socialism only necessary essential items are to be created and the price is not that important. Vydra V. Úloha výkupu v ekonomickém svazku dělnické třídy a rolnictva. Období industrializace ČSSR. Praha: ČSAV, 1963. P. 55.
16. Compare: Vydra V. Úloha výkupu v ekonomickém svazku dělnické třídy a rolnictva. Období industrializace ČSSR. Praha: ČSAV, 1963. P. 139, 142. For example in Slovakia the price for 1kg of tomatoes was equivalent to the price of the plant. Some products had such low prices that, it was not productive to actually harvest them. This was also the case for some grain types. 1kg of corn cost 354 Kčs, and the farms had to buy it for 398 Kčs. To produce 1l of milk cost 9Kčs, but it was sold for Kčs. Slovenský národný archív (Slovak National Archive (SNA)) Bratislava, krab. 838. Zasadanie Predsedníctva ÚV KSS dňa 23. mája 1953.
17. Fišera Š. O vzniku a upevňovaní robotnícko-roľníckeho zväzku. Bratislava: SVPL, 1956. P. 222.

18. For example in 1950 13 672 wagon carts of fertilizer were sold to the private sector. In 1951 only 11 470 wagon carts. In the same year only 384,5 wagon carts of grain (in 1950– 803) and 96,5 wagon carts of rye (in 1950 – 203). *SNA Bratislava*, krab. 804. Zasadnutie Predsedníctva ÚV KSS dňa 12. mája 1951.

19. Compare: Vojáček A. *Vývoj socialistického poľnohospodárstva na Slovensku*. Bratislava: Príroda, 1973. P. 554.

20. Market production was rising steadily in Slovakia. Gross agricultural production stagnated until 1955 and rose only slightly afterwards. Look at Vojáček A. *Vývoj socialistického poľnohospodárstva na Slovensku*. Bratislava: Príroda, 1973. Tab. P. 186, 187.

21. In 1949 a total number of 403 505 of contracts were made in Slovakia and 22 128 (5,4%) of them were forced by the Local national councils. In the following years the numbers increased to 5-10%. Vojáček A. *Vývoj socialistického poľnohospodárstva na Slovensku*. Bratislava: Príroda, 1973. P. 553.

22. Administrative and economic restrictions of private farmers were supposed to force them into joining collectives. This was the case for prices regarding essential fertilizer, seeds, machinery and others. For example a private owner 1949 had to pay 34,60 Kčs per litre of fuel. The collective paid only 9,60 Kčs. *SNA Bratislava*, krab. 790. Zasadnutie Predsedníctva ÚV KSS 3. 2. 1949.

23. Look at: Vojáček A. *Vývoj socialistického poľnohospodárstva na Slovensku*. Bratislava: Príroda, 1973. Tab. P. 85, 86.

24. On the 15<sup>th</sup> January 1950 there were 520 collectives of the I. type. On the 31.12. 1950 there were already 1400. From this number there were 324 collectives of the II. type and 484 of the III. and IV. type. Vojáček A. *Vývoj socialistického poľnohospodárstva na Slovensku*. Bratislava: Príroda, 1973. P. 235.

25. There were collective farms, which did not have a single workforce to work the fields. For example in Nový Ďúr the collective had only 260 ha of land and only 6 workers. *SNA Bratislava*, krab. 804. Zasadnutie Predsedníctva ÚV KSS dňa 5. mája 1951.

26. Numbers are taken from Vojáček A. *Vývoj socialistického poľnohospodárstva na Slovensku*. Bratislava: Príroda, 1973. Tab. P. 25, 205, 254, 255.

27. For example sugar beet production rose by an index of 183, but efficiency was lowered to an index of 67. This was the case for potatoes, corn and so on.. Look at: Fišera Š. *Nedocenená podmienka združstevňovania. Dvadsať rokov JRD na Slovensku*. Bratislava: SVPL, 1970. P. 39-40.

28. *SNA Bratislava*, krab. 815. Zasadanie Predsedníctva ÚV KSS dňa 1. apríla 1952.

29. *SNA Bratislava*, krab. 33. Zasadanie Sekretariátu ÚV KSS dňa 16. mája 1952.

30. During 1950 they were represented in collective farms by 50% and additional organs by 65%. *SNA Bratislava*, krab. 797. Zasadanie Predsedníctva ÚV KSS dňa 26. augusta 1950.; From the 1.1.1952 to 1.4.1952 3600 communists left the collective farms. *SNA Bratislava*, krab. 815. Zasadanie Predsedníctva ÚV KSS dňa 1. apríla 1952.

31. The report for the central agency of the Communist party of Slovakia stated that small fields worked by individual farmers became the main income for members of the collective farms of the III. and IV. type. *SNA Bratislava*, krab. 810. Zasadanie Predsedníctva ÚV KSS dňa 22. decembra 1951.

32. Look at: Cambel S. *Roľnícka politika KSČ v období výstavby socializmu na Slovensku / S. Cambel, V. Skrip, A. Vanko*. Bratislava: Pravda, 1978. P. 65.

33. *SNA Bratislava*, krab. 806. Materiál o výsledkoch JRD v Prešovskom kraji prednesený na rokovaní Predsedníctva KV KSS v Prešove dňa 1. augusta 1951.

34. *SNA Bratislava*, krab. 822. Zasadanie Predsedníctva ÚV KSS dňa 30. augusta 1952.

35. Compare: Vojáček A. *Vývoj socialistického poľnohospodárstva na Slovensku*. Bratislava: Príroda, 1973. Tab. P. 186, 187.

36. Vojáček A. *Vývoj socialistického poľnohospodárstva na Slovensku*. Bratislava: Príroda, 1973. P. 550.



УДК 93

**К некоторым причинам стагнации сельскохозяйственного производства  
в Словакии в период ускорения коллективизации в 1951–1952 гг.**

Владимир Варински

Университет Матея Бэла, Словакия  
974 01, г. Банска Быстрица, ул. Тайовского 40,  
Кандидат исторических наук, профессор  
E-mail: vladimir.varinsky@umb.sk

**Аннотация.** Статья, как одну из главных причин неудачи сельского хозяйства в Словакии в 1951–1952 гг., рассматривает нереальную идею достижения выших задач с помощью ускоренного перехода сельскохозяйственных кооперативов (JRD) к более высоким производственным формам. Хотя и имели лучший доход, не были в такой производственной кондиции, чтобы заменили частный сектор.

**Ключевые слова:** Сельскохозяйственный кооператив, доход, административные и предписывающий управления, закон стоимости, регулируемый рынок.