

FOREWORD

Since the Hungarian people settled in the Carpathian Basin, in the centre of Europe, nearly 1,100 years ago, they have lived through numerous historic changes in their fortunes. They have won the friendship and recognition of neighbouring peoples through hard work and a courageous struggle to survive. They have learnt the skills of farming and developed their industries in order to create a modern economy as a basis for their future well-being. In recent decades the emergence of large-scale agriculture, which this book discusses, has also served this purpose.

It is true that in a modern society and economy, industry plays the decisive and leading role, but food production and supply cannot be neglected either. It is a historical fact that in the most advanced industrialized countries agriculture and food production are both very modern and of a high standard. From this it is obvious that an advanced society can rely only on well-developed agriculture.

In countries like Hungary, where the natural endowments for farming are relatively favourable so that increasing food consumption by the population can be satisfied from domestic production, and where there is, in addition, considerable potential for exporting agricultural products, agricultural policies play a key role in the life of the country. It is therefore understandable why in the past 25 years one of the main aims of the policies of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party (HSWP) and the Hungarian government has been to solve the agrarian-peasant question, and to make the modernization of agricultural production the keystone of Hungarian social and economic development, thus harmonizing the development of agriculture, industry and commerce as a form of maintaining the dynamism of the food economy. Fruitful agricultural policies, and the favourable effect of the application of these policies on the Hungarian economy and on the life of the whole of Hungarian society, are factors which have won international respect for Hungary.

How was it possible to establish large-scale farming in Hungary while simultaneously increasing production, raising the standard of living of the peasantry, and improving their living and working conditions? What are the reasons for these internationally recognized agricultural achieve-

ments? These are questions which engage the attention of foreigners, of Hungarians living abroad, of our friends and of all those who take an interest in what is happening in Hungary. The answers to these questions can be found in the effective agricultural policies of the HSWP, which in recent decades have been increasingly permeated by the recognition that in our era food is increasingly becoming a strategic commodity, like oil and other sources of energy. Consequently Hungarian economic policy has treated the development of agriculture in accordance with its importance as an integral part of the economy as a whole. Among the conditions influencing production, the human being has been given pride of place: adequate attention has been devoted to the material and moral recognition of the working peasantry. At the same time necessary technical and technological modernization has been introduced and the production structure has been adapted to deal with both domestic and external demands. It has also been acknowledged that an indispensable condition for continued agricultural growth is a versatile and flexible company (farm) structure, in which state-owned companies and co-operatives, large and small farms grow in harmony with social requirements and the demands of the economic rationality. Hungarian agrarian development has therefore been characterized by a rational combination of state farms and co-operatives, of large and small-scale production units. Economic control and management which continuously reconcile social, company (co-operative) and personal interest, and which tie financial and moral recognition to economic performance, form an organic part of this.

This book deals with these questions. The authors have tried to present the fullest possible picture of the situation in Hungary with regard to the development of agriculture and the changing village. At the same time they have attempted to group together all the issues which would be of particular interest to the foreign reader.

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