

DIE BETRIEBLICHE INTERESSIERTHEIT UND DER MECHANISMUS IHRER DURCHSETZUNG IN DEN STAATSGÜTERN. By *Ferenc Vági*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1977. 151 pp. \$9.00.

RURAL TRANSFORMATION IN HUNGARY. Edited by *Gy. Enyedi*. Studies in Geography of Hungary, 13. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976. 116 pp. Fold-out maps. \$7.00.

ECONOMIC STUDIES ON HUNGARY'S AGRICULTURE. Edited by *Iván Benet* and *János Gyenis*. Translated by *Jenő Rácz*. Translation revised by *György Hajdn*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 1976. 194 pp. \$12.00.

The system of socialist agriculture may be defined as the coexistence of interdependent yet, to a varying degree, independent units. Because its success depends on the interaction of those components, evaluation of particular aspects is useful for assessing the economic performance of the total system. In Hungary, agricultural development was accelerated by measures incorporated in the New Economic Mechanism (NEM) established at the end of the 1960s. Two striking features of the NEM had a fundamental effect on state farm operation: increasing attention to the profit position of individual operation, and adjustment of remuneration to levels prevailing in other sectors of the national economy. Professor Vági's study analyzes the relationship between post-NEM planning for profit and material interest of workers engaged in the operation of state farms. The detailed synopsis of the postreform wage structure and the analysis of the socialist principles regulating both profit and profit distribution help clarify the nature and the impact of their interrelation. Western students of socialist agriculture may pay particular attention to sections 6 and 7, where the author identifies the means of indirect profit regulation (or promotion), such as, favorable depreciation schemes, subsidies, and the like. He then presents an interesting model based on the interaction of the structure, elements, constraints, and conflicts embodied in the concept of material interest of state farm workers. The first (Hungarian) edition of Vági's book was published in 1973, and the 1977 German version is an unchanged edition. Thus, the statistical data end with 1970—two years after the inception of NEM—and this is the major shortcoming of this otherwise valuable and innovative study.

The six essays integrated by Enyedi into one volume on rural transformation deal with various components of the transformation process which created a new landscape in rural areas. The contributors discuss the demographic characteristics of transformation (Vörösmarti), the development of rural industries (Tatai), and other pertinent aspects of the development. Barta's paper on changing living conditions of the rural population (pp. 89–110) is a brief but comprehensive study which provides quantified information by strata and takes into account the geographical, professional, and social stratification of the rural population. Enyedi's essay on the importance of rural transformation is the most enlightening section of the book. He aptly stresses that "the most characteristic economic function of rural space is of course agriculture" (p. 17), and concludes that "socialist agriculture in Hungary . . . attracts to the rural sphere activities that were previously regarded as urban" (p. 20). The role of private farms is quantified by their contribution to the national food supply, and the symbiosis between private and socialist farm sectors is emphasized. This reviewer regrets that a scholar of Enyedi's stature is compelled to make the following one-sided statement: "American type suburbs are practically unknown in Hungary . . . [because] there is no neighbourhood segregation along class lines . . . the city centers are in much better shape . . . and public safety is very good everywhere" (pp. 15–16). Apart from the third argument, this reasoning contradicts unbiased observations in urban and rural settlements in Hungary. The predicament of people living in areas

geographically comparable to American suburbs has been thoroughly analyzed by G. Berkovits, a Hungarian sociologist, in his book *Világvaros határában (In the Periphery of a Metropolis)*, in which he points out the absence of infrastructure, poor housing conditions, and the misery of commuters in the "suburbs" of Budapest.

Although nine papers are incorporated into the book edited by Benet and Gyenis, the introduction by Academician I. Friss, outlining the goals of current agricultural policy is the most important contribution. He maintains that state farms and cooperatives have already reached the optimal size desired for efficient operation, which seems to indicate that Hungarian planners reject the trend toward the gigantic that characterizes agriculture in the Soviet Union and Bulgaria. The elimination of discrepancies between town and country as well as between agricultural and industrial labor is a prominent goal of national policy; the convergence of two forms of socialist property is another target. Friss's introduction is the first instance of a prominent member of the Communist Party emphasizing the need for a long-term agreement with developed capitalist countries. The first part of the book consists of an evaluation of the basic factors of production—land, labor, and capital—and includes projections until 1985. The second part contains two analyses of cooperatives and examines their structure and contribution to the national food economy. The social aspects and the economic significance of private farms is the subject of Toth's paper, while Gyenis deals with the various types of specialized cooperatives and their position in the cooperative movement.

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KREDITNA TRGOVINA U SREDNJOVJEKOVNOM DUBROVNIKU. By Ignacij Voje. Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, Djela, vol. 49. Odjeljenje društvenih nauka, vol. 29. Sarajevo: Akademija nauka i umjetnosti Bosne i Hercegovine, 1976. 390 pp. Illus.

Dubrovnik's trade in the late Middle Ages was part of Mediterranean commercial activity and, more specifically, of thriving Italian trade. Because of its close links with Italy, it is not surprising to find very early in Dubrovnik many of the advanced commercial techniques and patterns that one finds in developed Italian cities. Voje's study deals with one of the most important of these techniques—credit operations in Dubrovnik. After a lengthy survey of the archival sources for his subject, the author describes in great detail the organization of credit operations and their volume for the period from 1282 to 1500. Furthermore, he devotes a whole chapter to the role of credit in the development of textile production in Dubrovnik. After an all too brief German summary, Voje presents, in eighteen tables, a wealth of data on the volume of credit operations and on the structure of creditors and debtors.

Although one might question particular numbers that the author cites, especially in his tables, there is no doubt that Voje's work is soundly based on a large number of archival documents and that it reflects a great research effort. It contains a great deal of information on many aspects of Dubrovnik's economic life: influences from abroad, circulation of coins, monetary relations, textile production, and so forth. But perhaps the most fascinating aspect is his data on the social structure and on the origin of creditors and debtors. Voje's tables clearly show the local nobility's preponderance as creditors over craftsmen, merchants, foreigners, and others. Among foreign creditors, Italians definitely predominate, with people from the Adriatic coastal cities and from the Balkan hinterland following at a great distance. As for debtors, the local common people were by far the most numerous, with noblemen and foreigners behind them. Voje gives a rather detailed analysis of the debtors from the hinterland (Bosnia and Serbia).