

closely modeled after its Stalinist prototype in the Soviet Union. The first five-year plan called for the intensive development of heavy industry and for the collectivization of agriculture. The methods of collectivization were cruel and coercive. Peasant farmers were given compulsory delivery figures at very low prices. If the peasant failed to make delivery, his land and property were confiscated. If he somehow managed to make the delivery quota, his quota levels were raised. Ivan Volgyes writes, "And while it is true that [the brutality in Hungary] did not match the brutality of the Soviet collectivization drive of the 1930's, it certainly came close to it" (Volgyes, "Dynamic Change" 372).

The attempt at collectivization was an abysmal failure. By 1953, only one third of the peasant population had joined the collective farms, many of whom had been landless. Of those who had owned land, many were so demoralized at the loss of their land that they refused to work. Private peasant households produced twenty percent more per hectare than did the state and collective farms. Total agricultural production volume in 1950 was 89 percent of what it had been before the war, and Hungary became a net importer of grain (Fischer, "Agriculture and Rural Development," 32).

After the death of Stalin in March 1953 and with the ascent to power of Imre Nagy, forcible collectivization was ended. In May 1954, the Third Party Congress decided to focus on strengthening existing cooperatives while allowing anyone who wanted to leave a cooperative to do so. The number of cooperative members soon decreased from over 369 thousand to just under 230 thousand. Forcible collectivization was resumed in August 1955, however, at the order of Matyas Rakosi who replaced Nagy as General Secretary of the Communist party. Again, the collectivization program failed as many peasants who were forced to give up their land simply moved to the urban centers to seek jobs in the industrial sector. The