

MUNICH, 7 August 1962 (Non-Target Communist Area Analysis: Soviet Union - cz)

The grain harvest in Kazakhstan appears spotty this year: in some regions the standing grain in the fields is dense and tall while in other areas it is sparse and short.

"The fate of the harvest now lies with the mechanizers and officials responsible for bringing it in".

This is the substance of a progress report on the harvest made at a special plenary session of the Central Committee of the Kazakh CP held July 27 at Tselinnograd.⁽¹⁾

The Kazakh republic normally supplies twenty to twenty five percent of the grain stocks in the Soviet Union, about 80 percent of which come from the five northern oblasts, collectively named the Tselinnye krai (virgin lands territory).

First Secretary Kunaev, whom Pravda had recently criticized for failure to correct the lag in repairing harvesting machinery, reminded the gathering that the Tselinnye territory stands with a two years' debt before the State for non-fulfillment of both production and procurement goals in grain. The outlook, however, is that the territory has "real possibilities" of delivering 700 - 710 million poods of grain this year, Kunaev affirmed.

A favorable factor in the race against the inclement weather of the harvesting period is that the season is fully two weeks earlier than usual. However, a three weeks' drought along with hot weather in July offset this advantage. Thus much of the grain is short and to avoid losses needs to be harvested with tractor-drawn combines, not the self-propelled type, party secretary Sokolov warned. But of the tractor-drawn combines (which can pick up short grain) over 21,000 stand unrepaired.

Over 107,000 combines are planned to participate in the harvest this year, which is scheduled to last from 15 - 18 working days in the oblasts, and to be fully completed no later than the 10th of September.

(1) Kazakhstanskaya Pravda, 29 July, 1962.

In the accepted pattern, the obkom secretaries, whose careers are at stake with the harvest outcome, uniformly called attention to the "difficult" or "unfavorable" weather conditions during the growing season but nevertheless pledged the plans would be fulfilled. Three of the five Tselinnye territory party chiefs blamed the "Soyuzselkhoztechnika" for the lack of spare parts to repair farm machinery - another hardy excuse and self-defense reflex among party bosses. It is symbolic of the irrationality of the system that the surplus spare parts are not released forthwith.

On balance, the struggle for the harvest in Kazakhstan will again be determined by the same variables of previous years: the race against bad weather, supply bottlenecks, mismanagement, negative work incentives because of backward living conditions on the farms, and finally, the impact of capital rationing on overall performance in the fields.

~~THE~~ The area sown to wheat was expanded by 1.4 million hectares this year, about a 14 percent increase, in line with Khrushchev's anti grasslands/fallow policy of the past winter. So the total grain area is at a record level, Kunaev declared, or over 23.5 million hectares. hecta

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