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Maurer to Arrive in Rome on January 17

According to an RFE Special from Rome of January 11, Prime Minister Maurer will arrive in Rome on January 17 at the invitation of Premier Aldo Moro for a three-day official visit. Maurer, who will be accompanied by Foreign Minister Manescu, is to remain in Italy for a few more days on an unofficial basis. The talks to be held between the Italian and Rumanian statesmen will probably explore possibilities for widening and diversifying economic cooperation between the two countries. The recently signed trade agreement for 1968 provides for exchanges worth 272 million dollars, a 52 per cent increase over 1966.

For more information on the visit, reference is made to Rumanian Situation Report, RFER, of 27 December 1967.

Scanteia Reports Kardelj Speech

On December 30, Scanteia carried a 90-line report on the speech made by Edward Kardelj in Belgrade on December 28, before the Central Committee of the Yugoslav League of Communists, commemorating the 30th anniversary of the election of Tito as Secretary General of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia. The Rumanian coverage of the article left out Kardelj's specific criticism of the Comintern, but included those passages of the speech in which he spoke of the "independent responsibility of each Party toward its working class and people, avoiding anything which could lead to dependence and inequality, irrespective of differences of views which have arisen under the current complex conditions of the struggle of socialist forces." Scanteia also quoted the passage on Tito's conflict with Stalin saying that "Tito had the courage to offer resistance," but refrained from going into specifics.

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Thus although the Rumanian Central Committee Declaration of 22 April 1964 was critical of the way in which Yugoslavia had been expelled from the Cominform, and although Ceausescu personally criticized various activities of Comintern (such as its interference in the internal affairs of the RCP) in his 7 May 1965 speech, it appears that the Rumanian leaders do not want to get involved now in a polemic over Tito's feelings about Comintern, with all the touchy issues of the past that this would recall (such as the Balkan Federation schemes of 1946-47).

The selective approach of the Rumanian Party daily in covering the Kardelj speech may have been prompted by Rumania's stated reluctance to take sides in open polemics between third parties, but in view of the timing (on the eve of Ceausescu's visit to Yugoslavia), one may ask whether the cautious attitude was not also determined by certain unsolved problems of Rumanian-Yugoslav relations, such as the attitude toward the Middle East conflict and possibly also the Budapest meeting, which the Yugoslavs have been openly criticizing, while the Rumanians, though consulting Belgrade and probably coordinating their policy on this issue with the Yugoslavs, have preferred to avoid taking an openly provocative stand.

As for the results of the Rumanian-Yugoslav meeting, a number of Western papers believed -- on the basis of the rather restrained communique of January 4 -- that the lack of any stated agreement or unanimity on international problems and the situation prevailing within the world Communist movement indicated that the two sides had in fact agreed only on the development of bilateral relations, as the communique stated. However, in view of its informal, hunting-lodge character, it could be assumed that this was a working meeting, and that, perhaps, both sides were more interested in a synchronization of foreign policies than in any demonstration against Moscow and Budapest.

Economic News

Rumania in UN Development Program. According to RFE Special/Endrst of January 12, the governing council of the UN Development Program has approved the sum of 1,377,200 dollars for a project involving planned breeding and feed projection. The Rumanian government will contribute a counterpart equivalent to 5,800,000 dollars. The program is to run for four years.

It should be recalled that the UN Special Fund approved in January 1965 the establishment and operation of pilot irrigation stations in the Danube plain, allocating 1,113,300 dollars while Rumania contributed 7,290,000 dollars, and that the UNDP decided in January 1967 to provide 1,882,500 dollars for the establishment of a center in Bucharest to train supervisory and managerial personnel; in this project, Rumania's contribution was fixed at 3,118,000 dollars.

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Galati Siderurgical Combine in 1968. According to Agerpres of January 10, Rumania's biggest furnace (1,700 cubic meters), as well as the 1150 mm universal slabbing mill will be commissioned in 1968. During this year the Galati combine will produce 720,000 tons of pig iron, 600,000 tons of steel, 635,000 tons of metal sheeting, as well as "significant" quantities of metal structure, siderurgical equipment, spare parts, etc.

According to current plans, a second furnace of the same size will be built in the first stage (by 1970) and two additional furnaces, each of 2,000 cubic meters, will be built during the second stage. Thus far the planned deadline for the construction of the latter two furnaces has not been announced.

Trade Contracts with Singapore and Thailand. Agerpres of January 9 reported that important trade contracts have been concluded with Singapore and Thailand, involving a total value of 29 million dollars. Rumania will supply these two countries with over 1,000 wheeled tractors, rolling stock, telecommunication equipment, jeep-type vehicles, machine tools, chemicals, textiles, furniture, etc., and will receive in return natural rubber, jute and jute bags.

Rumania and Singapore signed a trade agreement on 31 January 1967, but there is no trade agreement in force between Rumania and Thailand.

Contract with British Firm. UPI of January 11 reported that the British Plessey Co. Ltd. will supply Rumania with equipment and licenses for the large-scale production of Plessey capacitors and resistors. The new factory will be built in Bucharest, and until it is commissioned, Plessey will deliver its own products to Rumania. The firm is already training Rumanian staff in England. The total value of the deal is 1.29 million dollars.

Strength of Merchant Fleet. According to Probleme Economice of September 1967, the capacity of Rumania's merchant fleet amounted to 183,000 tons as of 1 January 1967. The five-year plan 1966-1970, provides for a total of 450,000 tons by 1970. There are five shipyards in Rumania (at Galati, Turnu Severin, Oltenita, Braila and Constanta), each specializing in the construction of different types of ships.

A large share of the Rumanian-built ships are exported, mainly to the USSR, the UAR and China. On 29 March 1965, a contract for the delivery of 140 ships of various kinds (total value 100 million rubles) was signed between the USSR and Rumania. These vessels were to be delivered during the 1966-1970 period. In 1965, Rumania signed a contract with the UAR for the delivery of 80 barges, up to the value of 12.05 million dollars.

It is known that the Galati shipyard plans to launch during 1968 nine cargoboats (4,500 tons each) and one ore-carrier (12,500 tons), but it has not been revealed how many of them will be exported.

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New Distribution System in Handicraft Cooperatives. Victor Balta, director of the planning directorate of the Union of Handicraft Cooperatives (UCECOM), declared in a Radio Bucharest interview of January 11 that in cases whose profits reach the plan provisions in 1968, the remuneration for members of the handicraft cooperatives will increase by 33 per cent over 1967. As a material incentive, an additional payment will be granted if the planned profits are exceeded by up to ten per cent (40 per cent of the surplus profit) and by 45 per cent if the surplus is more than ten per cent.

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