EURO—YUGOSLAV BOOK CLAIMS EAST EUROPEAN AGRICULTURE STAGNATING

Munich, May 10 (Stankovic) — Agriculture in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Bulgaria and East Germany has not shown adequate progress since the war because the teachings of Marx, Engels and Lenin have not been correctly applied. This is the gist of a book which appeared at the end of last year in Belgrade under the title "Post-War Development of Agriculture in East European Countries".

The author of the book, Mme. Draginja Arsic (pronounce: Arsich), claimed that the chief reason for "agricultural stagnation" in Eastern Europe has been "the method of general collectivization" which has found peasants not showing any special interest in increases in production. In other words, "it is the system of socio-economic relationships" in these countries which has slowed the progress and brought about many failures in agriculture. Consequently, only if the peasants become managers of production "and active participants in the distribution of the social product" could one expect an improvement in the situation, Arsic said.

She wrote her book obviously in the period when considerable propaganda was made about Yugoslavia’s agricultural miracle and when official announcements were made in Belgrade that Yugoslavia ceased for the first time after the war to import wheat, with a small quantity even exported to Hungary. Only later it was admitted that Yugoslavia’s agriculture, in spite of bumper harvests in 1959 and 1960, suffered heavy losses because the investments were much greater than the results achieved.

Concessions Made to Dogmatism

Also Ljubisa Markovic, from the Yugoslav Institute for International Politics and Economics in Belgrade, who wrote the introduction to Arsic’s book, claims that the system prevailing in Eastern Europe has been one of the main obstacles to any progress in agriculture. Said Markovic:

"The long standing stagnation of agriculture in Eastern Europe has not come because all efforts were concentrated on industrialization — as it is often claimed in these countries — but above all because of the general conception of economic policy. In a definite sense this policy has represented a concession to dogmatism and conservativism in the ideological field. In the course of past few years in the economies of the East European countries, as in other fields of life, have come to permanent conflicts between dogmatic conceptions... and practice which negates them..."
In Markovic's opinion "administrative control" practiced in the East European countries has been the chief characteristic for the "whole economic system" which simply negates "many economic laws". It goes without saying that Markovic stresses "the significant progress made in Yugoslavia's agriculture...in a relatively short period".

Madame Arsic herself comes to the conclusion that "agriculture has represented the weakest point of the post-war economic development of all countries here discussed". In all these countries "the Soviet system was simply imitated...regardless of specific conditions prevailing in individual countries". This system has not been abandoned even today so that even the measures taken to improve the situation have been only "partly successful". Consequently, in the countries in which collectivization was not completed "a greater number of collective farms even today has neither higher yields nor profitable production than same well organized individual farms", Arsic said.

Various Degrees of Development

In Arsic's opinion Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Rumania "represent from the standpoint of the camp's wholeness and its interests the least problems as far as agriculture and the socialist transformation of countryside are concerned". As to Rumania herself Arsic said the following:

"Political processes in Rumania's agriculture have so far been characterized with the relatively greatest balance. There are reasons to conclude that Rumania has less than other East European countries neglected agriculture in her post-war development..."

As far as other countries are concerned Arsic mentioned Bulgaria as "occupying the place of the first agriculturist in the camp" while Poland "very slowly is recovering from the errors made in the agricultural policy of the first years of the Six-Year Plan". For Hungary, Arsic said it has been a country "subjected to the greatest amount of hesitations and changes" while in Czechoslovakia "collectivization has not met any great difficulties".

Especially bad results have been noted in state farms in all East European countries. However, the greatest losses have been in the Polish state farms.

In Arsic's opinion great failures in animal breeding -- "especially in Bulgaria" -- are the best proof that the "socialist sector" in agriculture of the mentioned countries has been ineffective. In two countries -- Bulgaria and Czechoslovakia -- "in which the pace of collectivization was the quickest, the animal breeding fund until 1958 did not reach the pre-war level (except for pigs)..."

Even though the Comecon organization has been trying to solve the problem of "agricultural specialization" in the Soviet bloc, the existing obstacles have not been overcome especially because "the problem of prices has not been solved".

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