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"MIDDLE OF THE ROAD" AGRICULTURAL POLICY IN HUNGARY

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News Background

MUNICH, May 21, (COLLINS)... Certain gains of the Hungarian peasantry as a result of the October revolution were reaffirmed in an important statement of agricultural policy made (May 19) by Lajos FEHER, member of the Central Committee of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party. FEHER declared that the Party resolutions on agriculture passed in 1953 and 1956 were good but that conditions for the realization of the aims of these resolutions were bad.

To wage a successful ideological fight against the "opportunism and anarchism of the right," FEHER pointed out, "we have to conquer the dogmatic errors of the left." the October events, he continued, proved the correctness of the teachings of Marxism-Leninism, according to which the "left dogmatists are allies of the right deviationists."

FEHER also reaffirmed the declaration of Istvan DOBI, made on March 3, to the effect that the KADAR Government was not willing to return to the "ruthless and inhumane" methods which characterized past Hungarian efforts to collectivize the Hungarian peasantry. FEHER stated that "Stalin's erroneous point of view" on the intensification of the class struggle as "socialism" is being built characterized the Party's past efforts toward the socialistic "transformation" of the countryside and caused great damage. To revive Stalinist methods, FEHER said, "would be a grave error."

FEHER also admitted that the agrarian policy of the Hungarian first Five Year Plan was the source of serious tensions in the countryside and that "neither objective nor subjective conditions existed in Hungary for the socialist transformation of the countryside at the end of the Five Year Plan."

In this connection, FEHER said the gravest error of NAGY in formulating his New Course agrarian policy was "to deny the leading role of the working class" in the socialist transformation of the Hungarian countryside.

The KADAR regime's future policy toward the "collectives" FEHER declared, would consist of increased investments, granting of credits and technical assistance.

He also stated that the principal direction of agricultural collectives would be left to the "local councils" while state direction of the "collectives" should be equally expressed

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through the work of the Machine Tractor Stations, by the investment and credit policy, and by the policy of prices and production contracts.

In reference to "Kulaks", FEHER declared that "we cannot make life impossible for them." He also said that it was necessary to permit them to work but at the same time force the "kulaks" to meet their "civic obligations" while limiting their "speculative activities."

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FEHER's speech, delivered before the Communist sponsored "Political Academy", was in many respects similar to the "middle of the road" course as outlined by GOMULKA at the 9th Plenum of the Polish United Workers' Party concluded yesterday in WARSAW. FEHER called on the Party to fight equally against the "deviationism and revisionism" of the right (ed. note: Polish left) and the "dogmatism and sectarianism" of the left (ed. note: Polish right).

FEHER defined Hungarian agriculture as one of the most important branches of the Hungarian economy. In 1955, he said, 38.6 per cent of the national revenue and 38.4 per cent of Hungarian exports came from the agrarian sector. Also at that time, 44.2 per cent of the working population was engaged in agriculture, FEHER said.

Although FEHER admitted that the small and medium peasants had to be encouraged to produce more at the present time and that this group of peasants were amenable to measures encouraging and helping them, he claimed that one of the "gravest errors of Imre NAGY was "over-estimating these possibilities."

FEHER claimed the two great crises in the party's efforts to "socialize" the Hungarian peasantry occurred in 1953 and in 1956 after the October events. On both occasions, he declared, over 50 per cent of the existing collectives were dissolved.

According to the United Nations "Economic Survey of Europe in 1956". the number of collective farms existing in Hungary as of October 15, 1956, was 5,191, occupying 1,350,000 hectares of arable land. Thus, according to FEHER, the number of collectives in existence after the revolution was approximately 2,595.

The figure given by FEHER for the current number of collectives existing in Hungary was 3,400 occupying 805,000 hectares of arable land or approximately two-thirds (2/3) of the number existing before the revolution.

One of the problems which has to be faced by the Hungarian economy as a result of the revolution is the increase of the so-called "semi-proletariat". FEHER said that from 1949