

ITEM NO.11242/54

IH
Dec 17
XI - 1410

RUMANIA

AGRICULTURE (0200)
Collectivization (0202)

STANDARD OF LIVING (3200)
Food (3201)

PROPAGANDA (2600)

RESISTANCE (2900)
Agricultural (2909)
Underground (2907)

AGRICULTURE AND THE FOOD SHORTAGE

SOURCE ATHENS: A Greek schoolteacher and ex-employee of the Rumanian Foreign Ministry, formerly a resident of BUCHAREST, who was repatriated in October 1954.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Current period.

EVALUATION COMMENT: Please see in the "Directives to the Party Congress for the Development of Agriculture" ("Scanteia", August 27 1954,) the chapter dealing with the increase of the production of vegetables and potatoes.

The cultivation of vegetables in the area around large cities or industrial centers was stepped up by a Governmental Decision of December 17 1953.

In regard to the countless deductions made from the total production of a kolkhoz prior to the distribution of "incomes" to its members, see the new statute of kolkhozes published in "Scanteia" of April 11 1953.

Foreign planes flying over BUCHAREST at night, have been reported several times. It is also known from previous reports that the people living in the FAGARAS area believe that partisans in the mountains are to some extent equipped with Yugoslav arms. However, no information has reached this office to date on leaflets dropped over the Oltenia province by aircraft identified as Yugoslav.

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(over)

"Astazi este ziuna ta de castraveti" (today it's your turn for the cucumbers) has become a stock phrase among BUCHAREST industrial and office workers, who are obliged to contribute "voluntarily" a large chunk of their leisure time to the cultivation of vegetables in and around the city.

In an effort to avert a shortage of vegetables - one of the regular hardships of recent Rumanian winters - all available spaces and vacant lots in and around the capital have been converted into truck gardens, tended by the personnel of BUCHAREST's factories, institutes and other State agencies. The produce will be used in the kitchens and canteens of the "voluntary" gardeners' places of employment. In other words, if you want to eat, you've got to dig.

Originally the workers - organized into two shifts - labored in the gardens on alternate Sundays. Beginning last June, however, cultivation was stepped up and became a daily chore (each individual being required to work in the gardens every second day). The gardening is done after regular work hours, when the shift of the day is transported to the vegetable plots in trucks provided by the management. Although the work is supposed to be contributed voluntarily, the term is as meaningless as it is in all other sectors of activity under a Communist regime and no worker is excused from doing his allotted quota of the gardening.

In the rural areas, intimidation and excessive levying are still employed to force the peasants into the kolkhozes and sovkhoses. More often than not the tithe demanded by the State exceeds the farmer's entire crop; if he cannot deliver it, he must sell his cattle and implements (carts, agricultural machines etc.) and finally has no other choice than to join a kolkhoz.

In the kolkhozes (gospodaria agricola), workers get a very low percentage of the crop as payment for their labor. Each member is paid according to the number of days he worked in the kolkhoz. Here, however, as well as in the sovkhoses (gospodaria de Stat), a good deal of crop stealing goes on, either by individual workers or in collusion with the managers. This is their only alternative to going hungry. If they can steal enough without getting caught they may even be able to withdraw from the hated kolkhoz.

In spite of coercive taxation the peasants continue to resist collectivization. The visits of State officials charged with supervising the harvest or collecting the quotas - they are accompanied by a Militia escort - are (over)

often marked by violence, even bloodshed. Resistance is most pronounced in Transylvania and Oltenia.

Yugoslav planes have been reported on several occasions in the skies over Oltenia. They drop leaflets encouraging the peasants to resist the regime and fight oppression. In Yugoslavia, the leaflets say, the land has been given back to the peasants, a reform which has made it possible for both the farmers and the nation as a whole to regain their former prosperity.

End.