

1960

News Background

Corr- BIG COLLECTIVIZATION DRIVE IN BUCHAREST REGION

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(Munich, March 3) It seems evident that a big collectivization drive has been -- and still is -- going on in the Bucharest region of Rumania. Two recent articles in the Party daily "Scinteia", though highly contradictory on many points, bear out the impression that the regime is making an all-out effort in this area.

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"Scinteia" of February 19 reported that between 1 January 1959 and 1 February 1960 168 new kolkhozes had been set up in the region, the whole kolkhoz sector of which had been augmented by 74,856 peasant families which brought in about 210,000 hectares. During the same period the whole cooperative sector (i.e. kolkhozes, Rent Paying Agricultural Cooperatives and Agricultural Associations) of the region was augmented by 91,848 families with more than 234,000 hectares. The same issue of "Scinteia" added that 80.7 per cent of the arable land of the region was now covered by the "socialist" sector. The socialist sector in Rumanian agricultural terminology is used to cover state land, State Farms, Rent Paying Agricultural Cooperatives, and Agricultural Associations -- in fact everything except the private sector. The February 27 edition of "Scinteia" claimed that during a year (it gave no specific dates) 82,572 families with about 231,000 hectares joined the cooperative sector. It added that in the first two months of this year alone 21,000 families with over 61,700 hectares joined the kolkhozes; this, of course is relatively quick progress but it should be noted that better progress in the whole process of cooperativization is usually made in winter.

The two main contradictions in the articles are these: The February 19 issue of "Scinteia" states that from 1 January 1959 to 1 February 1960 168 new kolkhozes were set up in the region and that 50 agricultural Associations had been turned into kolkhozes (presumably this number is included in the 168 new kolkhozes). The February 27 edition states that 177 new kolkhozes had been created in the region since the beginning of 1959 of which over 150 had been Agricultural Associations. The same edition also states that 80 per cent of the total agricultural area of the region was now covered by the cooperative sector. As has been said, the February 19 edition claimed that 80.7 per cent of the arable land of the region was covered by the "socialist sector". It is probable that this latter is the correct version, but until some later clarification is given it is not possible to make any deductions from these figures.

On the subject of the transformation of the Agricultural Associations into kolkhozes, it seems clear that this has been a slow process, whether the correct number is 50 or 150. Last year the number of Agricultural Associations in the Bucharest region was about 1700, so, whether 50 or 150, the percentage going up to "the

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higher form" is still less than 10 per cent at most.

But, be this as it may, the only true yardstick for judging the process of collectivization or cooperativization is the growth in area, and here there obviously has been considerable progress from the regime point of view, progress which has not been made without a great effort. The February 27 "Scinteia" speaks of the need for relentless political work of "persuasion" to induce peasants either to join the kolkhozes or to transform the associations into kolkhozes. Such propaganda is applied to each peasant separately and, in addition, the regime organizes squads of intellectuals, lecturers, engineers, even doctors to lure the villagers into the collective way of life.

If only from a prestige point of view it is evident that the regime is setting great store on progress in the Bucharest region. But it still has some way to go before it can be another Constanta. Of the 19 districts in the region, nine are wholly cooperativized but as far as is known none is yet wholly collectivized.

End

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