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CPW Report No. 29 -- USSR

(Mar. 25 - Apr. 7, 1952)

SUMMARY

The Republican Supreme Soviet sessions are still heavily publicized on the regional transmitters as is the recent reduction of retail prices. Agricultural propaganda, though greater than normal in volume due to the sowing campaign, does not concentrate on any particular phase of field work. The main objective is to get the work started, and official prodding extends in all directions--labor organization, technical preparedness and intensified Socialist competition. In a collective letter to Stalin, the Ukrainian agricultural workers promise to improve the Republic's poor performance in the production of maize, groats and kok-saghyz (rubber bearing plant).

Political education and self-education of Communists and Komsomols continues to claim considerable official attention. The lukewarm attitude of some Communist organizations toward the acceptance of new members is castigated as unworthy of Bolshevik leadership.

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Azerbaijan Economy Criticized: The Azerbaijani Finance Minister's budget message (Apr. 2) to the current session of the Republic's Supreme Soviet as well as the speeches of some of the deputies reveal a variety of shortcomings ranging from inadequate medical service to embezzlement of State funds. The Ministry of Cinematography, according to the Finance Minister, has sustained losses instead of accumulating a surplus as envisaged by the plan. The State Publishing House "has not been fulfilling" the plan for publishing university and technical school text books. "Unlawful spending" is attributed to practically every financial and banking organization of the Republic but no further details are offered. The Minister intimates, however, that irregularities in the disposition of State funds are not confined to any particular organization or locality:

The Ministries, the banks, administrations and executive committees must improve the quality of financial supervision and intensify the struggle for the economical spending of State funds.

The building trusts of the Azerbaijan SSR and Baku City did not keep their pledge to reduce construction costs in 1951, and "incurred heavy losses." Organization of labor, mechanization of manual work and the production of local building materials are said to have been neglected altogether.

Budget Committee Chairman Kuliev discloses (Apr. 3) that the "serious shortcomings" in the collection of taxes, already noted during the previous session of the Supreme Soviet, have not been eliminated. In 1951, he says, a "considerable part" of the appropriations for the national economy and social services remained unused. Expressed in practical terms, it means that much of the work for which the funds had been appropriated has not been done. Involved in this are the Ministries of Agriculture, Cotton Production, Forestry, Water and Irrigation and Kolkhozes:

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(They failed to increase the area) under agricultural production and forest belt planting ... construction work in kolkhozes, irrigation works, strengthening of machine-tractor stations and improvement of stock breeding.

Kuliev also admits that the heads of certain Ministries and central organizations of the Republic have not bothered to improve their "internal administrative supervision" for many years. This is particularly true of the Communal Economy and Foodstuffs Ministries which have not looked into the financial activities of their respective subordinate organizations "since 1949."

Deputy Agenesian complains that his native Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast has been neglected by a number of Republican organizations, among them the Rural Electrification authorities. Some hydroelectric power plants scheduled to have been constructed years ago, he says, have not yet been completed. The Republican Ministries of Commerce and Local Industries "have not rendered the necessary assistance" to the Autonomous Oblast. The result is low labor productivity in a number of enterprises, rising production costs and no improvement in quality. Two other deputies declared that the Building Trust Administration has not completed its 1951 housing construction plan, and that the construction of public buildings is "even worse."

True to the Communist pattern, the sharply criticized Ministers of Health and Foodstuffs appeared to "present their views" and pleaded guilty on all counts (Apr. 4). Following are some of the admissions made by Health Minister Aliyev:

... we have failed to raise our health services to the level of the heroic labor of our workers. The villages of the Republic have not yet been provided with a sufficient number of medical workers .... A considerable part of the ... appropriations has not been spent due to the negligence of the Ministry of Health and its local organs.... No action was taken to improve the delivery of foodstuffs to hospitals.

Foodstuffs Minister Karkarian similarly admitted the "just criticism" of the various deputies:

There are serious shortcomings in the work of the foodstuffs industries of the Republic .... Generally, in the enterprises of the Ministry millions of rubles were spent unproductively in 1951 .... We have received many complaints from consumers about quality.

Discussing the reconstruction of Kirovabad city, Deputy Allahyarli says that progress has been slowed by the "infiltration of (unscrupulous) men" into various communal and economic trusts of the town: "cases of stealing State funds have occurred."

Considerably less publicity is given to the Georgian SSR Supreme Soviet session. According to a report carried by ZARYA VOSTOKA and broadcast by Tbilisi on Apr. 5, Barlamovitch Gogua was released from his duties as Chairman of the Presidium "in view of his moving to other work" (vvidu ego ukhoda na druguyu rabotu) and Chkhubianishvili, hitherto Chairman of the Council of Ministers, elected in his stead. Baramia, member of the Presidium, was expelled for "not justifying the trust placed in him by the electorate" (za neopravdanie doveria izbirateley). A similar reason is given for the expulsion of Shonia of the Permanent Legislative Commission and Chochibaya of the Permanent Budgetary Commission. Loladze was appointed Minister of Internal Affairs.

Retail Trade: The recent reduction of retail prices is extensively publicized in familiar terms for home and foreign audiences, and the favorable reaction to it in the foreign press is quoted at length. A report from Simferopol on Apr. 6 indicates that the Crimean oblast retail trade organizations are run so badly as to endanger the food situation there. Cases of "crudest violation of Soviet trade principles" (grubeisheye narushenie printsipov sovetsoy torgovli) are said to be common in such popular resort cities as Yevpatoria, Yalta, and Feodosia. In Simferopol, Sebastopol, and Kerch there are "not enough shops" selling vegetables and fruit. The oblast meat trust (myaso-trest), fish trust (ryb-sbyt), and milk trust (moloko-trest) are said to "have tolerated delays" in supplying the sanitariums and the public at large with meat, fish, ice cream, and other dairy products.

Agriculture: The secondary role assigned to agronomists in agriculture is bemoaned by the leading Smolensk and Stalingrad Oblast papers. RABOCHIY PUT (Mar. 29) reminds the Party and agricultural officials that the agronomist is not "simply an adviser," as many still seem to think, but "an organizer of kolkhoz and sovkhos production," an initiator of higher efficiency of land cultivation and greater yields. The editorial inveighs against the "harmful practice" of burdening the agronomists with office work since their place is in "the production sector" of the collective farms, machine-tractor stations and brigades.

STALINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA (Mar. 30) admits that the chief problem of spring sowing and stockbreeding "has not yet been solved" because the standard of agriculture in the oblast has not been raised to the required level. The only way to remedy the situation, the paper suggests, is to give the agronomist a free hand in agricultural production as he alone is capable of applying and popularizing the latest achievements of science. The most "elementary rules" of crop rotation, the paper concludes, are frequently violated because the agronomist's advice is left unheeded.

The shepherd, says a report from Alma-Ata quoting KAZAKHSTANSKAYA PRAVDA (Mar. 25), fills a definite need in agriculture and should not be ignored. The livestock industry, particularly sheepbreeding, the paper hints, must be improved from below, not from above. The "correct selection" of shepherd cadres, therefore, is of the utmost importance for the industry. These strictures are directed against the "formalistic approach" and "indifference" on the part of agricultural officials to the matter of selecting the right kind of shepherds who are called upon to "play a great role" in the implementation of the State plans. Farm labor organization is virtually nonexistent in some districts of Izmail Oblast, according to PRIDUNAIKSKAYA PRAVDA (Mar. 26):

The fact has been revealed that in some agricultural artels of Starokazatskiy Rayon the field brigades have not had any land assigned to them ... other artels of the same rayons have not had any draft animals, agricultural machinery, equipment, transport and so on since the organization (of the system) and up to the present time.

Formalism and underestimation of brigade work and production assignments must be eliminated once and for all, insists STALINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA (Mar. 29). The production assignment is a "fundamental document" (osnovnoy dokument); the paper asserts, and ignoring it may jeopardize the entire agricultural program. Just how far "formalism" and red tape can go is cited in the practice of last year when "many tractor and husbandry brigades received their production assignments after the completion of the spring sowing campaign."

Discussing the evils of bureaucracy in agriculture, MOLOT (Mar. 30) points to the collective farm chairman as one of the potential sources. Many of them, says the paper, "fail to observe the defined regulations and the democratic order" in directing the activities of their artels. Collective farm chairman are also said to

"frequently reduce the role of the other administration members" and arrogate too much power for themselves. The paper mentions no names or places, but urges all the Party organizations to intensify their vigilance over the activities of many collective farm chairmen since they "... strive to take everything upon themselves."

The enormous volume of broadcast material on the various aspects of agricultural organization connected with spring sowing probably accounts for the reduced output on livestock. Reports from Novosibirsk and Alma-Ata, however, indicate that this branch of agriculture is still under the watchful eye of the Party. SOVETSKAYA SIBIR (Mar. 27) points out that in at least two rayons--Dovolenskiy and Chulymskiy--the cattle and fodder situation is grave enough to demand immediate attention. Fodder is not "prepared in advance" and the cattle premises are "badly kept." This, says the paper, is due to the "regrettable attitude" of certain collective farm leaders and Executive Committees toward livestock breeding in general. The livestock situation, in the opinion of KAZAKHSTANSKAYA PRAVDA (Apr. 5), is so grim that it is "essential to direct the maximum number of Communists and Komsomols to stock farms and ... pasturelands." The paper is unusually frank in its admission that the unsatisfactory supervision over this leading branch of agriculture resulted in the fact that

the kolkhozes and sovkhoses failed to fulfill the 3-year plan for developing stockbreeding, the fodder base was not created and losses in heads of cattle were permitted.

Preparations for cotton planting have been subject to unnecessary delays because of the "insufficient assistance" (nedostatochno pomoshchi) given to the cotton workers by the Party, Soviet and agricultural organs, declares GROZNESKIY RABOCHIIY of Mar. 29. The paper does not specify the type of assistance that is withheld from the competing workers beyond the assertion that they are "not provided with the conditions needed" for the successful implementation of their undertaking. The latter, however, is more clearly defined in the reminder that the current competition is designed to make up for past failings and is held under the slogan "Let Us Repay Our Debt to the Motherland" (vozместit dolg rodine).

A thorough investigation of the "lagging activities" (otstavanie) of the Crimean cotton kolkhozes is demanded by KRIMSKAYA PRAVDA on Apr. 5. Here, too, past failures are said to be repeated on an oblast-wide scale: the oblast cotton administration "must recognize last year's mistakes" and take the necessary steps to prevent their recurrence. The manning of cotton brigades and squads is being carried out very slowly "in the majority of kolkhozes," while seed transportation and fertilizer deliveries have not yet been completed. The cotton farms of Chernomorskoye, Pervomaiskoye, and "several other" rayons are said to be the worst of the lot.

Continuing technical deficiencies and the shortage of skilled machine operators are discussed briefly in reports from Kursk and Stalingrad Oblasts. The timely completion of the tractor, agricultural machinery and equipment repairs, says KURSKAYA PRAVDA (Mar. 30), is "among the important matters" claiming immediate attention. Another is the training of qualified drivers, mechanics and brigade leaders which is essential for the fulfillment of the State plans. Ponyrovskiy, Belenikhinskiy, Konyshevskiy, Shchigrovskiy, and Pristenskiy Rayon Soviets are severely criticized for their "inadmissible unconscientious attitude" toward the whole question of preparations for spring cotton planting.

STALINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA (Apr. 2) states that in Frolovo, Frunze and "certain other" rayons the machine-tractor stations have not completed the repairs of the required number of tractor stations have not completed the repairs of the required number of tractors and other agricultural machinery. This, says the editorial, is further aggravated by the failure to distribute the necessary amount of fertilizer, to man the tractor and field brigades with qualified personnel, and to improve the welfare services for the kolkhozniks in the fields.

Party Activities: Communist and Komsomol political self-education is dealt with in a number of radio and press items, all of them urging still greater efforts and better results in the mastery of Marxism-Leninism. Seminars for political propagandists in charge of study groups and circles are usually organized at the beginning of the school year and maintained for the duration of the term. According to MOLOT (Mar. 25), however, this is not always the case. The seminar opened at Rostov Party Education Center "ceased operations" and was forgotten after the first two sessions. Similar cases have also been noted elsewhere. Lack of Party attention to the political education of group and independent Komsomol students is said to be responsible for the "unsatisfactory attendance" of classes, seminars, and study groups. In some (unnamed) rayons, it is pointed out, political studies by Komsomols and Communists alike "have not even begun yet," and the primary Party organizations whose duty it is to supervise political education are not doing anything about it. The result is the familiar "low political level" of the students as well as their propagandist-instructors.

The prevailing "formalism" in political education is criticized by RABOCHIY PUT (Mar. 30). Many rayon Party committees, it is claimed, "have lost sight of the necessity" to engage in political studies which resulted in a drop of the political and ideological level of the few remaining students. An "irresponsible approach" to Communist self-education is charged by MOLOT (Apr. 2). Listing the familiar epithets of "formalism," "dogmatism," and "wrong approach," the paper makes it clear that without the elimination of these shortcomings well-organized political studies are unthinkable. The following rayons are said to be particularly backward in this respect: Zheleznodorozhnyi, Leninsky, Ordzhonikidze, Nikolayev, Alexandrov and Azov.

STALINGRADSKAYA PRAVDA (Apr. 6) complains of the discrepancy between the registration of students and actual studies. It has been revealed, says the paper, that many of the students "are only registered" as studying whereas in actual fact they simply "refrain from political self-education" on various pretexts. This applies to the oblast as a whole but Budarinsky, Rudnya, and several other (unnamed) rayons are said to be more backward than the others.

Nepotism or what is euphemistically referred to as "mutual tolerance of mistakes," is charged to the Donlinsky Rayon Party Committee by RADIANSKA UKRAINIA on Mar. 25. Unfortunately, says the paper, this malpractice is not confined to the named rayon alone: "Similar situations are occurring in other rayons of the oblast." The enormous fluctuation of Communist cadres is said to be prompted by the reluctance of Communist officials to expose (razoblachit) the mistakes of their colleagues. "Woebegone leaders who have disgraced themselves" are shifted from post to post where they commit grave mistakes "over and over again." In many cases, it is asserted, executive Communist personnel is selected without regard to "political and business abilities."

The chief and only duty of the machine-tractor station Party organizations, says PRAVDA editorially on Mar. 28, is the political education of the farmers, not farming per se as is the case with many machine-tractor stations in Altai Krai. The 8,680 machine-tractor stations of the USSR, including the specialized stations, have already done much toward the complete mechanization of agriculture. Much more could be done, it is intimated, if the Party organizations kept their end of the job in step with the general developments:

The focal point of the Party organization's activity is ... the education of a Socialist attitude toward work and public property, the struggle for a strict observance of State interests.

Russian version:

Glavnoye v deyatel'nosti partiynoy organizatsii ... vospitanie sotsialisticheskogo otnosheniya k trudu i obshchestvennoy sobstvennosti, borba za strogoye soblyudeniye interesov gosudarstva.

This criticism is prompted primarily by the lack of attention displayed by the Altai Krai Party to the deputy directors of the machine-tractor stations in charge of the stations' Party affairs. The constant "reshuffling" (smyenyacmost) of the deputies, the paper says, has an adverse effect on the political education of the rural workers because "the success of any undertaking is, in the final analysis, determined by people, cadres and their political guidance" (uspekhi lubogo dela v konechnom schete reshayut lyudi, kadri, politicheskaya rabota s nimi).

Among the items published but not broadcast is an unsigned report from Lenin ray (Apr. 2) on the "thoughtless attitude" (legkomyeslemoye otnoshenie) toward the treatment and admission of candidates to full Party membership. It is disclosed that a number of Party Committees have all but forgotten about the candidates, and the question of their eligibility for Party membership has not even been discussed "for a long time." In Korov Rayon, for example, more than 100 candidates are kept out of the Party school network while nothing is being done about a large number of candidates in other rayons of the oblast whose probation terms have expired (prosrochenniy stazh).

A dispatch from Azerbaijan (Apr. 2, not broadcast) says that the Central Committee of the Republic's Communist Party is in accord with PRAVDA's criticism (of Feb. 7) of the "scholastic methods" (shkolniarskie metody) employed in educating Party propagandists. This is said to be particularly true of the Baku City Party whose propagandists are known for their "low political and ideological level." (Scholasticism in the Soviet meaning of the term means theoretical abstraction, detached from the actual problems of everyday life.) The Azerbaijan local press, according to the Central Committee, has failed in its duties of publicizing the Party school network and political education, and is publishing very few theoretical articles to aid the independent students of Marxism-Leninism.

Miscellaneous: A short review of the recently published book by Avdiev "The Ancient East" is carried in a TASS transmission to Europe on Mar. 15. Denying the "falsifications" of the Anglo-American historians, the scientist-author is said to have "established the irrefutable fact" that the history of the peoples of the ancient East developed "on the basis of rules established by Marxist-Leninist teachings ...."

A popular science book by Zakharchenko "A Trip Into Tomorrow" (Home Service, Mar. 30) discusses an artificial satellite of this planet placed by the Soviet people at a distance of 350 kilometers from the earth's surface. This book, says the report, is based on "actual achievements of our progressive science and technology."

The decipherment of the spectrum (rsshifrovka spektra) is credited to Stalin Prize-winning scientist Severny. That discovery is said to make it possible to understand the influence of flashes on the upper strata of the earth's atmosphere. Severny has also designed a new type of light filter which "surpasses in quality" all similar filters abroad. (in Russian, Apr. 4)

In a Home Service questions-and-answers broadcast (Apr. 4) it is pointed out that the first synthetic rubber in the world was produced by the noted Soviet scientist Lebedev. He also worked out the industrial process for the production of synthetic rubber. Soviet scientists are likewise assigned the "leading role" (vedushchaya rol) in the solution of the problems of catalytic chemistry.