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CROP PURCHASES AND 1950 AGRICULTURAL PLAN IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

ORGANIZATION OF CROP PURCHASING

Jan Ulip

This year, for the first time, crop purchasing has been organized according to the new system. Instead of the quotas used in past years, a system of voluntarily concluded contracts concerning purchase and delivery has been introduced, whereby a farmer, after fulfilling his contract, may sell his surpluses at free prices.

In this way, the state assures the purchase of a sufficient quantity of food for the nation as established by the Five-Year Plan. The farmer has a guarantee that the state will purchase from him the entire quantity of agricultural products stipulated in the contract, and at fixed prices established in advance. This is a great advantage for the farmer, because he does not have to worry about price fluctuations. It is the duty of the farmers to fulfill their obligations within the given time; the fulfillment of the tasks of the Five-Year Plan is their moral responsibility toward the other members of our society, especially the working class, and it is also in their own interest.

If we examine the results of this year's fulfillment of deliveries of grains and potatoes, we see that the crop purchasing program in the Czech Provinces is worse than last year. What are the reasons for this? At first, grain purchases proceeded smoothly in most of the kraj; therefore our organizations began to think that, in view of this year's good harvest, it would be a simple matter to fulfill delivery agreements, and they slackened in their efforts in purchasing. The lifting of rationing from flour, baked goods, bread, and potatoes did not serve as an incentive for our officials to increase their efforts toward assuring crop purchases; on the contrary, many wrongly thought that this meant a release from the strict maintenance of contract deliveries. This same thinking was evident when the new method of domestic slaughtering was announced. The officials did not realize that this would cause increased speculation by farmers. Instead of taking steps to assure the fulfillment of contract obligations, many officials succumbed to the

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excuses of farmers concerning a "poor harvest" of potatoes and fodder grains, and became spokesmen for the farmers.

Moreover, Party officials did not devote sufficient attention to the manner in which the kulaks were fulfilling their deliveries, and to the possibility that they were sabotaging them because of their class interests. Officials of the people's administration are often very lax in their conduct toward these opponents of our state; they do not make sufficient efforts to expose these persons and punish them in accordance with the law for the defense of the people's democratic republic.

At the same time, a number of economic cooperatives have failed in this year's purchasing program. Their old apparatus has not proved adaptable to the new requirements. Their leaders have not realized that the purchasing program cannot be carried out mechanically or perfunctorily. It is necessary to know the situation in each individual village, to know each supplier, to realize the reasons for insufficient purchase in each village, and on that basis to choose various methods for assuring success.

The village Party organizations have not been regularly evaluating the fulfillment of deliveries by individual farmers. Furthermore, the participation of the entire National Front and all mass organizations in assuring purchase has been insufficient up to now.

In his speech at a meeting of officials of Prague Kraj, on 7 December, Secretary-General Rudolf Slansky indicated the following tasks in connection with the purchase program:

We must continue the agricultural purchase projects with increased intensity, with deadlines established by the kraj committees of the Party. For this purpose, the presidiums of the kraj and okres committees of the Party shall evaluate the previous results of the purchasing program and shall coordinate all purchasing campaigns. Regularly they shall evaluate the progress of the purchasing program up to the time of fulfillment. They shall make sure that the village Party organizations discuss the delivery fulfillments of individual farmers, and that they persuade the small and medium farmers of the importance of contracts and of the necessity of fulfilling voluntarily accepted obligations.

The okres committees of the Party must also assure proper checking of the work of economic cooperatives; they must daily check and evaluate the fulfillment of purchase tasks, and must constantly improve their activity on the basis of experiences gained. Workers in economic cooperatives must daily persuade the farmers of the importance of contracts, the advantages which they derive therefrom, and the fact that the fulfillment of contracts is an honor and an obligation of each farmer as a citizen. In places where a large percentage of grain has not yet been threshed, the threshing should be organized and accelerated.

We must be conscious of the fact that proper purchasing will make it possible to remove additional products from the ration list, reduce their prices, and thus increase the living standard of all the working people.

#### ASSURING THE 1950 AGRICULTURAL PLAN

The allocation of production and delivery assignments to individual farmers in obeces began on 17 December 1949, so that the entire program, including the signing of contracts, might be completed by 17 January 1950. In assigning tasks, the production and delivery assignments established by the okres national committee must be observed.

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The assignment of the operational plan and the problem of concluding contracts shall be discussed first by the committee meeting and then by the membership meeting of the local organization of the Party. The committee of the organization shall submit a proposal to the Communist members of the local national committee, and shall prepare with them a meeting of the national committee to discuss the assignment and the conclusion of contracts. At this meeting, a commission shall be designated to prepare the obligatory figures of production and purchase assignments for individual farmers. This commission shall be composed of the chairmen of the following: the local national committee, the Party organization, the extraordinary food commission, the Unified Agricultural Cooperative, and the United Federation of Czech Farmers.

Before signing the contracts, it will be necessary that the principles of assignment and the production and delivery tasks be discussed with the individual farmers during personal visits; each Communist in a village must take charge of several non-Communist farmers and discuss the assignments with them personally. Finally, the committee and the membership meeting of the organization shall discuss the commission's final proposal. Only then is the proposal to be submitted to the farmers for discussion, at a meeting to be called by the local national committee together with the local affiliate of the United Federation of Czechoslovak Farmers. Then the farmers will be summoned to the local national committee to sign the contracts.

In establishing assignments for individual farmers, the following principle should be observed: "The large one should give more and the small ones should be relieved." In some okreses and obeces our organizations decided to classify agricultural holdings into six groups according to size, to be able to evaluate production possibilities objectively and to establish delivery assignments justly. The six groups are as follows: (1) under 2 hectares; (2) 2-5 hectares; (3) 5-10 hectares; (4) 10-15 hectares; (5) 15-20 hectares; and (6) above 20 hectares.

This method can be recommended, but consideration should be given to local conditions in individual obeces. The classification must not be carried out mechanically. In evaluating individual farmers, one must also take into consideration such factors as the quality of the soil, social conditions of the family, extent of exploitation, number of hired hands employed, etc.

In plant production, the average yields and purchase for individual groups shall be objectively determined on the basis of the average yield proposed for the obec by the okres national committee. This determination of average yields must correspond to the actual production possibilities of individual groups, that is, larger agricultural holdings must be expected to achieve relatively greater yields than small holdings.

In designating delivery assignments, the following should be kept in mind: "Let the small and middle farmer sell as much as possible on the free market, and the kulak as little as possible." This means that in assigning delivery tasks we start with the groups of largest holdings, where the amount to be delivered takes up almost all of the market quantity. For the other groups of smaller holdings, the delivery assignments represent a greater or smaller part of the market quantity, but in every case the over-all delivery assignment of the obec must be assured. Seeds, plantings, industrial potatoes, oil plants, and sugar beets form an exception; all farmers must deliver all quantities of these crops which they produce. In designating the assignments of farmers in these latter groups, their hectare yields will be adjusted in accordance with the quality of the soil and other circumstances.

In establishing production and purchase assignments for livestock production, production possibilities for individual groups and the actual number of farm animals per hectare must be designated. In regard to the number of beef cattle and pigs and deliveries of meat and milk, this will mean that the small

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and medium farmers, who usually have larger numbers of beef cattle, will have higher production and purchase assignments of beef per hectare. Therefore they will be allowed greater numbers of cattle, because this means an increase in income for them. For larger farmers, who usually do not have sufficient numbers of beef cattle, the assignments are to be increased so that their barn space may be filled.

In pig raising, we shall designate production for the small and medium farmers in accordance with their barn space, and we shall also make their deliveries easier.

In prescribing production assignments and delivery of milk, we must consider the number of milk cows, the area of agricultural land in regard to fodder, and the number of cows used for draft purposes. Otherwise, the same principles apply as in the establishment of delivery tasks for the various groups in plant production. Practically, this will mean that the quantity of milk per cow, just as in the case of delivery, will be higher for larger agricultural holdings.

We must also make sure that the barn space of kulaks is utilized; either the larger farmers will be compelled to raise suitable numbers of livestock, or their unused barn space will be used, in accordance with Law No 55/47 concerning aid to farmers, for raising and fattening of stock by small farmers, and especially by the Unified Agricultural Cooperatives.

For those Unified Agricultural Cooperatives which practice joint sowing and cultivation, a joint production and delivery assignment will be established. Within the limits of this assignment, tasks for individuals will be assigned in accordance with the above-mentioned principles.

Contracts with farmers concerning production and delivery will be concluded and signed simultaneously. It is necessary to make sure that members or "trusted persons" of the okres extraordinary food commission be present when contracts are signed with kulaks.

Along with the campaign of signing contracts, an inventory of land and livestock will be carried out. Each farmer shall sign a special declaration concerning the number of livestock and the area of land in his possession, as of 1 January 1950, with the understanding that any concealed land or livestock may be confiscated by the state.

Each "trusted person" of the okres extraordinary food commission must regularly participate in the discussions of the commission which prepares the assignments in the obec entrusted to him; he must advise and assist the commission, and he must be present when contracts are signed with individual farmers, especially with kulaks.

The assignment of target figures in the village is not merely an economic matter; it is primarily a political matter. Therefore, the members and trusted persons of the okres extraordinary food commissions must be chosen from among the best factory workers, who have experience in production planning in their enterprises and a good attitude toward the village. They will transmit their experiences to the small and medium farmers, and will help them to expose the kulaks, who will be prevented from further speculation and exploitation by the just assignment of tasks.

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