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SECURITY INFORMATION  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
INFORMATION FROM  
FOREIGN DOCUMENTS OR RADIO BROADCASTS

REPORT   
CD NO.

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COUNTRY Albania

DATE OF INFORMATION 1952

SUBJECT Economic - Consumer cooperatives

DATE DIST. 27 Jun, 1952

HOW PUBLISHED Daily newspaper

NO. OF PAGES 2

WHERE PUBLISHED Tirana

DATE PUBLISHED 3 Jan 1952

LANGUAGE Albanian

SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.

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STRENGTHEN BUYING AND SELLING CO-OPS  
AS LINK BETWEEN CITY AND VILLAGE

The first Five-Year Plan calls for the development of cooperatives for buying and selling, and of trade activities in the village.

The party and government, following closely the principles of Marx and Lenin, as well as Soviet experience in the operation of cooperatives, attach considerable importance to the strengthening of these cooperatives, which are considered the basic link connecting the village with the city. Enver Hoxha, in his report to the 11th Plenum of the Central Committee of the People's Party of Albania, speaking on the directives of the Five-Year Plan, asserted: "Special importance must be attached to the expansion of trade in the village. The supply of industrial goods to the village must be increased. The cooperatives for buying and selling must be strengthened to create a closer link between city and village."

By supplying the villages with goods manufactured by the workers and, in turn, by buying farm products from the villages, these cooperatives create a vital bond between farmer and worker. Industrial and agricultural development will be greatly strengthened by fulfilling the farmers' personal needs and their needs for tools of production, on the one hand, and by more efficiently supplying the city and working centers with farm and dairy products, on the other.

National economic development calls for better organizational methods in order to strengthen the relationship between city and village and to facilitate the exchange of goods. However, in the operation of the cooperatives as the supplier between city and village, there are still serious shortcomings which have weakened seriously their role in strengthening the economy. One of the chief weaknesses is that the cooperatives' function as an economic collective organization is not strongly enough felt. The organizational principles on which they are founded have often been violated or not followed. The assemblies and the elected agencies of the cooperatives, such as the administrative and control councils and store committees, have not met the obligations stipulated by their organization statutes. Nor have they presented reports of all the cooperatives' activities to the organs responsible for discussion and criticism. They have

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also failed to render regular accountings to members of the cooperatives. The result has been that not all members have shown interest or taken part in the affairs of their cooperatives, which they have come to look upon as mere business stores and not as a form of collective trade in the fight against speculators.

As a result of organizational weakness, the volume and development of trade conducted by the cooperatives have not met the needs and purchasing power of the rural workers. In the cooperative stores the farmer has not always been able to find the necessary agricultural implements and household goods. On the other hand, the cooperatives for buying and selling have not insured that industry and handicraft produce according to the needs and preferences of the farmers. At the same time, the cooperatives have not been able to buy from the producing farmers, especially from those in the remoter agricultural regions, all their surplus produce. This is because organizationally the cooperatives have been weak as purchasers and, furthermore, they did not carry out the system of contracting properly, nor did they organize properly to manage the processing of farm products for manufacturing purposes.

The functioning of the cooperatives also depends on the initiative of the personnel, as well as on the interest of members of the cooperatives. Consequently, without the genuine interest and active participation of members in the affairs of the cooperatives, these institutions cannot become strong. The administrative bodies of the cooperatives, by carrying out their own obligations, will teach the members to appreciate their membership and to value the advantages of collective economy. Strengthening of the cooperatives for buying and selling is important in that it awakens in the villages the sense of collectivism. Stalin teaches us: "Cooperation in the field of selling, cooperation in the field of supply, and, lastly, cooperation in the field of credit and production (agricultural cooperatives) is the only course that leads to the improvement of the economic welfare of the village."

The cooperatives must not limit their activity to selling products brought in from a distance, or goods supplied them by the state, but must seek to acquire goods produced by local industry and handicraft enterprises produced under the contract system. The cooperatives will of course be strengthened by the expansion and introduction of a variety of enterprises in the village, including small manufacturing plants, fruit-drying and milk-processing establishments, etc.

Finally, it is important to point out that greater efforts must be made to train personnel for the special tasks of managing cooperatives for buying and selling.

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