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KULAK ACTIVITIES, ANTI-KULAK MEASURES IN RUMANIA

[Comment: The Rumanian press available in FDD, CIA, does not ordinarily publish articles dealing directly with dissatisfaction, peasant resistance, or failures of the regime. However, the frequent articles on kulaks seem to serve as an indication of rural irregularities, failures in quota collection, and opposition. In the following selection of articles, kulaks are accused of sabotage of agricultural machinery, quota deliveries, and political meetings. They are characterized as a major obstacle to the attainment of socialism in agriculture.]

The kulaks' fierce resistance to the present regime is one of the main obstacles to the socialist transformation of Rumanian agriculture. They defy the restrictive measures taken by the state. They still influence some of the backward elements in their communities; and they infiltrate the ranks of the state political machinery in order to gain favor among party leaders. In short, the kulaks are the greatest threat to the working population and to the nation.

Although the number of kulak farms has been artificially reduced to one third of the previous number, the Central Committee of the Rumanian Workers' Party has estimated that 5.50 percent of the total number of peasant farms are kulak farms. Under the present regime, it appears that the number of middle class peasants has actually increased proportionately with the number of kulaks. All this amounts to a critical situation, when the numerous methods of deviation used by the kulaks are considered.(1)

Despite their numerous acts of sabotage, kulaks are often shown an easy-going attitude by the party officials. Because of their former influence, many rich peasants are listed as "middle class peasants," assuming this protective title in order to escape the heavy payments which are demanded of a kulak.(2) Thus, Grigore Reordorescu from Vutcani, landowner and well-known kulak, persuaded the people's council to list him as a middle class peasant. In so doing,

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they permitted him to keep goods belonging to the working population. As a consequence, he was denounced by small peasants Toma Ivaescu, Gheorghe Parvu and Panait Iordache. Such acts of arbitrary re-classification are punishable by heavy fine and imprisonment.(3)

#### Opposition to Delivery of Quotas

One of the most common misdeeds of the kulaks is their refusal to deliver their allotted quotas to the state. Many such instances can be found. For example kulaks Ion Profir, Gheorghe Vrabie, and Petre Briceag of Hanesti each withheld 3,000 kilograms of cereals and hid them underground. When the authorities discovered this, they sentenced the kulaks to 5 years' imprisonment and 100,000 old lei fine. Similarly, Mitu Naumica of Maicanesti was sentenced to 9 years' imprisonment, plus a heavy fine, and Gheorghe Leica of the same commune was sentenced to 11 years' imprisonment and 60,000 old lei fine.(4)

Only 82 percent of the wheat quota and 72 percent of the corn quota for the 1951 harvest had been collected as of December 1951 in a majority of the regiunes. The entire problem of quota nondelivery by kulaks stems from a lack of responsibility on the part of the regiune executive committees, which fail to create sufficient political agitation among the peasants. (5)

In Cluj Regiune, kulaks have often attempted to influence the peasants against selling their produce to state cooperatives, against delivery of the mandatory quotas, and against entering agricultural collectives. That such kulak activities are allowed to continue proves the inefficiency of the people's councils and executive committees of the respective regiune.(2)

#### Sabotage of Agricultural Machinery

Another subversive activity of the kulaks is the deliberate sabotage of agricultural machinery. For example, a number of kulaks from Corabia and Caracal sold their used threshing machines at a fraction of their actual cost, without reporting that parts were missing. The machines were purchased by poor peasants who were duped by these "generous offers." In reality, however, kulaks Vasile Zamfir, Simion Ruta, Ilie Gavrilescu, and many others were attempting to sabotage the harvesting campaign by the sale of these defective machines. Consequently, the kulaks received heavy punishment.(6)

The lax manner in which kulaks repaired farm machinery was demonstrated in various regions of the country. In Baius Raion, for example, all threshing machines were in good repair, with the exception of two machines belonging to kulaks Vasile Balint and Emilia Popa. The executive committee of the local people's council was guilty of gross negligence when it relied on the promises of these two kulaks to maintain the machines in good working order. It was only through the efforts of the raion primary party organization that the true conditions were uncovered and the intended sabotage averted.

Another example is that of kulaks Iondin Pienaru from Alba Iulia, Stefan Repede from Mihail, and Avram Granescu from Beriu, all of whom attempted to sabotage the threshing and harvesting campaign by removing vital pieces from their reapers and threshing machines. All were immediately tried and sentenced. Also punished were Visoiu Lazar from Strei-Sangeorgiu and Nichofor Petrascu from Ciugud, both of whom have failed to repair their agricultural machinery up to the present time. To alleviate these conditions, the executive committees of the people's councils will have to intensify their precautionary measures against similar acts of sabotage.(7)

Careful watch must be maintained over kulaks who try to gain unwarranted privileges. For example, the Trusesti People's Council authorized kulak Ion Radulescu

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from Movila Rupta to dismantle several threshing machines and tractors and to sell the pieces as scrap iron, for profit. The excuse offered was that the machines were no longer usable; the actual reason was lack of vigilance against the sabotaging acts of the kulaks.(8)

#### Bribery by Kulaks

To escape the restrictions inflicted upon them, many of the kulaks resort to the bribing of party and state officials. Nicolae Costesti, one example of many, owned several hectares of land, one thresher, and one flour mill. Because of his undermining activities, he was kept under close surveillance by the poor peasants and in particular by Ion Florea, secretary of the UTM (Union of Working Youth) and collector for the CSC. On the evening before his subversive activities were to be reported, kulak Costesti visited the home of the UTM secretary and offered him 30 kilograms of corn as a bribe for "going easy on him." The secretary immediately reported Costesti to the authorities, and the kulak was punished severely. Similar bribes have often been discovered by alert peasants and party officials who thwarted the appeasing policy of the kulaks.(9)

#### Sabotage of Political Meetings

Quite often kulaks penetrate the ranks of party politics with a view to disrupting the smooth organization of the party organs. At political meetings, they sit in the back rows and contrive means to persuade the working people to vote against proposed resolutions. On one such occasion, a meeting was called by the Hundorf People's Council, in Sighisoara Raion, to decide whether funds could be raised for the building of two bridges, by means of self-taxation. The working peasants agreed unanimously to this proposal. However, several kulaks began to whisper provocations to the more backward groups of peasants, inducing them to dissent in their vote. Especially prominent were the efforts of kulak Virgil Moldovan, son of a staunch kulak, who disrupted many meetings in similar fashion. However, all the kulaks were quickly apprehended and are now awaiting trial.(10)

Similarly, at the recent Timis Regiune meeting, the peasants discussed the new draft constitution and commended the new rights granted by the new constitution to all national minorities in Rumania. During the meeting, kulak elements attempted to split the peasant vote on the issue of the newly established Hungarian Autonomous Region. However, their efforts were quickly rebuked by the working people, who voted unanimously in favor of granting equal rights to national minorities in Rumania.(11)

#### Measures Against Kulaks

To bring about an end to all kulak activities, severe punishments must be imposed. Mosie Oprea of Lipova Regiune, for example, was convicted of burying his quota. For this act he was sentenced to a fine of 500 new lei, surrender of his quota of 3,375 kilograms of wheat and 663 kilograms of sunflower seed, and one year's imprisonment for fraud and misrepresentation. Likewise, Ion Vixan, steward of the Padureti cooperative in Costesti Raion, was found guilty of declaring himself a "middle class peasant" rather than a kulak, in order to escape high taxes. For this act, he was sentenced by the Pitesti tribunal to 3 years' imprisonment.(3)

Similar kulak trials take place almost daily throughout the entire country. Kulaks are sent to prison, their goods are confiscated, and they are ousted from the party ranks and from all political meetings. All working peasants are alerted to report any withholding of quotas or any subversive talk which is not in accord

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with party directives. However, despite all the preventive and punitive measures taken so far, kulaks still continue to defy state measures. All people's councils and working peasants must know that the liquidation of the kulak class is the prime requisite for the establishment of a socialist nation.(1)

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