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CRITICISM OF RUMANIAN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS
BY TWO OFFICIAL PARTY PAPERS

Comment: Scanteia, official organ of the Rumanian Communist Party, and Romania Libera, official organ of the people's councils, during 1 - 29 April 1953 devoted more space than usual to criticism of Rumanian local newspapers published by regiune and raion committees. This criticism was directed at the failure of the papers to (1) support party and government directives on collectivization and spring planting and (2) popularize Soviet and Rumanian work methods in industrial fields. According to Scanteia and Romania Libera, the local newspapers failed to criticize the errors of local party organs in their columns.

The following report presents summaries of these criticisms, taken from 1 - 29 April 1953 issues of Scanteia and Romania Libera.

Numbers in parentheses refer to appended sources. 7

General

According to Scanteia, regiune and raion newspapers must play an important role in agriculture by mobilizing workers to carry out spring planting schedule. They must popularize Soviet methods and the suggestions and experiences of Soviet and Rumanian leading workers, the paper stated. They must disseminate information on party organizations, particularly executive committees of people's councils. Scanteia also noted that press organs must always combat improper practices, delaying tactics, and the slothful attitude of many supervisory units, all of which help the tools of the hostile class. They must combat mistakes which still exist in socialist agriculture and which are committed by party and state organs which aid and supervise collectives. These

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newspapers must explain the provisions of the new collective statute. Scanteia further stated that regiune and press organs must attract workers to the fulfillment of the Five-Year Plan in 4 years and they must encourage the use of advanced methods in production. (1, 2, 3)

Arad Regiune

Scanteia, in criticizing the Arad Regiune newspaper Flacara Rosie, stated the following:

Flacara Rosie, official press organ of Arad, published a number of articles on spring preparations for early planting in 1953. However, the newspaper did not make a thorough analysis of the activities of primary party organizations and executive committees of commune people's councils nor make suggestions for the improvement of their mistakes. The material was not well organized. The paper failed to popularize innovations and experiences of party organizations and other groups, nor did it encourage competitions. Criticism of party and state organizations was soft. For example, in a basic article published on 22 March 1953, Flacara Rosie wrote: "It is necessary to bring forth proof in a special manner of the completely improper attitude shown by members of the executive committee of the Seceani people's council in regard to areas where sowing has not begun at all." This phraseology has nothing in common with Communist criticism. Such an attitude must not be "brought forth in a special manner," as the paper stated, but must be condemned bitterly, and those responsible must be brought to account. Such criticism as that expressed in Flacara Rosie contributes without a doubt to the continued presence of persons who do not devote sufficient attention to spring planting. (1)

Bacau Regiune

Scanteia carried the following article on Steagul Rosu, organ of the Bacau Regiune party committee and the people's council:

From 1 March to 8 April, Steagul Rosu printed a number of articles on competitions and the popularization of advanced work methods. The paper presented accounts of workers applying Soviet methods. It also published a number of articles in this period criticizing the manner in which enterprises of the regiune applied advanced methods. For example, an article entitled "The Nineteenth Congress Cement Factory Must Extend the Initiative of Communists of Boldesti" analyzed reasons for the very small scale introduction of advanced methods at the factory. The analysis showed that this error was due to the lack of concern shown by party organizations, the enterprise committee, and the management. On the other hand, Steagul Rosu published many articles on party organizations which helped to extend the use of advanced methods.

However, during the 1 March - 8 April period, the newspaper neglected to deal profoundly with competitions and advanced methods in petroleum, forestry, construction, and other basic activities of the regiune. Steagul Rosu should have devoted special attention to the extension and popularization of Soviet methods of rapid and intensive drilling in oil fields, and should have shown a more combative spirit toward irregularities evident among managements of some of the regiune's oil fields in supporting the application of new methods. The editors erred in failing to explain the use of the cyclic graph method in the Comanesti coal fields, the Orlov and Koroliyov methods of rapid brick making at construction enterprises, etc.

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The paper did devote some attention to wood exploitation and industrialization, however. A basic article and a special page covered the subject. Nevertheless, the editors did not try to emphasize the achievements and errors which occurred in the application of advanced methods in the wood industry. The paper's articles should have been of more value in the development of competitions, in the spread of advanced work methods in forestry exploitation and in describing achievements of Stakhanovites.

In general, the paper published very few items by Stakhanovites and leading workers, in which they describe their methods in order to aid other workers to apply them. The paper did not devote enough attention to attracting more enterprise directors, engineers, and technicians to contribute articles or to aid in describing advanced methods.

The editorial collective of Steagul Rosu must devote more attention and more space to competitions and must discuss the various problems connected with the fulfillment of the Five-Year Plan in 4 years.(3)

Barlad Regiune

The following criticism of Steagul Rosu, official organ of the Barlad Regiune party committee and people's council, appeared in Scanteia:

Steagul Rosu published many articles on the spring agricultural campaign, particularly in support of party organizations. The newspaper published a model plan to be followed by primary party organizations for the preparation and supervision of the spring agricultural campaign. Errors of a number of party and state organizations were pointed out. A number of managements of MTS and state farms were criticized. However, the daily newspaper did not carry out its full duties under a decree of 6 February 1953 setting up duties for press and other units in the spring campaign. Calls for competition were published in a formal and bureaucratic manner. Thus, for example, issue No 204 of Steagul Rosu criticized state and party units in Panciu Raion because only 80 fields had been sown in the raion. The paper did not point out that chairmen of executive committees of people's councils and chiefs of agricultural sections were satisfied with organizing competitions in villages without leaving their offices. Nor did it discuss chairmen of executive committees of people's councils in Caluti commune who challenged those of Cotofenesti to competitions without initiating competitions in their own areas.(1)

The editors of Steagul Rosu and the Barlad Regiune party committee organized a conference to aid editorial collectives of wall newspapers to improve their work. More than 40 men attended the conference and heard speeches on model organization of wall newspapers. The talks demonstrated the effectiveness of calls to competition by wall newspapers in the Boleslaw Bierut, FRB (Filatura Romana de Bumbac, Rumanian Spinning Mill), and 30 Decembrie plants, Bucharest Regiune.

At the conference, the editor of Uzina, wall newspaper of the Focsani communal enterprise, spoke on the planning and organization of the editorial collectives of wall newspapers, the most pressing problems of enterprises, and the contribution of his paper to intensified competition and Communist education of workers. The speaker discussed in an autocritical manner the errors of the Focsani newspaper collective in not using cartoons as weapons against bad habits and in not sufficiently emphasizing Soviet and Rumanian Stakhanovite methods.

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Another speaker, representing the wall newspaper of the Tecuci MTS, stated that the editorial collective of the paper, under the direction of the primary party organization, had distributed leaflets showing the achievements of tractor drivers in competition and criticizing drivers who fell behind in plan fulfillment.

The editor of the wall newspaper of the Murgeni state farm presented a talk on the manner in which his paper supported the spring sowing campaign. Subsequent discussion revealed, however, that there are many wall newspapers which present articles of a general character, which have no connection with specific problems of their respective enterprises. It was also pointed out that numerous primary party organizations failed to appreciate the importance of wall newspapers and did not analyze the work of the administrative collectives of these papers.

In conclusion the chief editor of Steagul Rosu explained the proper organization of the editorial collective, the best manner of writing articles, the way in which to check the efficiency of published material, etc.(4)

Cluj Regiune

Faclia, organ of the Cluj Regiune party committee and people's council, was praised as follows by Scanteia:

Faclia published a number of articles in support of the party and government program for holding general meetings to inform peasants of their duties in the spring agricultural campaign and for supporting the new model collective statute. These articles, written by the staff of the newspaper and by contributors, demonstrated the enthusiastic support of collectivists for the spring sowing campaign. The articles included portraits of leading workers, chairmen of collectives, brigade leaders, animal raisers, etc. This material summarized very well the experience of leading workers and demonstrated their love and care for common property and their desire to increase and strengthen collectives. One article, entitled "Primary Party Organizations. Leaders of Competition in Agricultural Collectives," popularized the experience of the primary party organization of the Salatiu collective. The portrait entitled "A Faithful Defender of Common Property" describes how collectivist Gedeon Pop succeeded in raising more hogs than planned.(2)

Constanta Regiune

Scanteia had the following to say about Dobrogea Noua, daily newspaper of Constanta Regiune.

Dobrogea Noua published numerous articles on spring preparations, showing how party organizations and people's councils were supporting competitions in sowing and soil preparation. However, the newspaper did not discuss progress of spring planting among independent peasants. Nor did it analyze thoroughly the work of the primary party organizations and executive committees of commune people's councils in order to point out and aid in the improvement of their errors. The editors of Dobrogea Noua do not appear to be working according to a definite plan in the presentation of material.(1)

Craiova Regiune

The following criticism of Inainte, official organ of the Craiova Regiune party committee and people's council appeared in Scanteia:

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Inainte did not discuss sufficiently problems raised at meetings of leading collectivists, and devoted too little space to the new collective statute. Not enough articles appeared on the statute and some of the discussions published were on a very low level. Articles on leading workers in collectives did not give concrete information on successful new methods which were adaptable to Craiova. Issue No 2551 of Inainte contained the portrait of brigade leader Gheorghe Udrea, but did not mention his qualities as a brigade leader, organizer, and leading worker, or the fact that he was a man of initiative and perspicacity, a lover of common property.

Articles tended to be superficial. They did not criticize state and party organizations which should have supervised primary party organizations and administrative councils in preparing agendas for people's meetings. In addition the paper did not publish answers to questions submitted by collectivists and leading workers on provisions of the new model collective statute.(2)

Galati Regiune

Romania Libera and Scanteia called attention to the following achievements and shortcomings of Viata Noua, official organ of the Galati Regiune party committee and people's council:

Viata Noua fulfilled its duties in the spring agricultural campaign in regard to popularizing good work methods. The paper repeatedly criticized serious errors of people's councils, but not to a sufficient degree. Viata Noua called the executive committees of raion and commune people's councils in Galati, Bujor, and Calmatiu to task for lateness in mobilizing peasants for plowing and sowing, for failure to assure a supply of seeds, and for failure to apply advanced agricultural techniques. The paper also published a special page on good organization of work in Vizlaru Commune, Calmatiu Raion.

However, Viata Noua did not concern itself sufficiently with the failure of permanent agricultural commissions and actives to mobilize executive committees and the peasantry in general. The work of permanent agricultural committees was not well analyzed.(5) Too little space was devoted to the explanation of Soviet methods and to the popularization of the model statute for collectives.(2)

Hungarian Autonomous Regiune

Scanteia published the following item scoring Voros Zaszlo, press organ of the Hungarian Autonomous Regiune party committee and people's council:

Voros Zaszlo committed a very serious error in failing to popularize the new model statute among peasants and in failing to unmask lies and hostile activity of the classes opposing collectivization. It did not publish answers to questions of collectivists and leading workers on the new model statute nor try to convince independent peasants of the advantages of joining a collective. The paper distorted information in a vile manner. These mistakes show that the editorial collective of the paper did not concern itself with the examination of problems connected with the socialization of agriculture.(2)

Iasi Regiune

Lupta Moldovei, official press organ of the Iasi Regiune people's council and party committee, was criticized by Scanteia as follows:

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Lupta Moldovei published a number of articles on successes obtained in spring preparation. It criticized party and state organizations and individual managements for failures and mistakes. Thus, for example, articles were entitled "What Is the Management of the MTS in Lugoj Doing?" or "Formalism and Superficiality in Basic Organizational Work in Ruginosa Commune Must be Liquidated." However, the paper failed to appreciate the necessity for popularizing successful experiences in villages. Thus in the 25 March 1953 issue, the paper contained an article entitled "Enough of Waiting for favorable weather" which did not discuss the fact that working peasants of Iugani and Mircesti had challenged each other to a competition, nor the fact that more than 600 peasants went to the cultural center in Mircesti to discuss the competition and to call all communes of the raion to fight for a richer harvest. Such a fact should be popularized and the idea of competitions brought before all peasants of the raion.

Criticism of party and state organizations was soft instead of combative and was presented in a phraseology which had nothing in common with Communist criticism. No special material was reported on the unmasking of hostile acts by class enemies in connection with the sowing campaign. Lupta Moldovei published a 2-page account of a surprise inspection of the progress of the sowing campaign without mentioning or unmasking kulak saboteurs.(1)

Stalin Regiune

Scanteia criticized Drum Nou, organ of the Stalin Regiune party committee and people's council, as follows:

Drum Nou published little material on the extension of new methods between 1 March - 8 April 1953. Among the few articles published were "For a Thorough Understanding and Application of the Most Advanced Work Methods" and "For a Greater Dissemination of Soviet Methods." In addition, the paper published several articles by Stakhanovites and leading workers. However, only short and infrequent items discussed achievements obtained as a result of competitions, or information on new methods.

During this period, Sovromtractor, Steagul Rosu, Strungul, and other important enterprises introduced the use of the Kolesov metal-cutting method on a large scale. However, Drum Nou fruitlessly continued to seek out problems facing party organizations, unions, and enterprise managements in the application of the method. The paper did not report successes obtained by lathe operators nor systematically publish solutions to the problems raised. The editorial collective of the newspaper did not try to attract leaders in competition, Stakhanovites, technicians, and engineers to write articles and give practical information on how to apply the Kolesov and other Soviet and Rumanian methods.

In the future, the editorial collective of Drum Nou must fight tirelessly to find the best journalistic means for popularizing the use of advanced methods in industry. The newspaper must lend permanent aid to party and union organizations and enterprise managements so that they may create the proper conditions for the application of new methods. At the same time, the Stalin Regiune party committee should supervise and support the editorial collective of Drum Nou and assign it specific tasks in connection with spreading competitions and applying advanced methods among workers.(3)

Timisoara Regiune

Romania Libera and Scanteia carried the following remarks on Luptatorul Banstean, official organ of the Timisoara Regiune party committee and people's council:

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Luptatorul Banatean obtained better results than other regiune newspapers in the spring campaign. It covered activities of executive committees of people's councils closely. For example, titles of individual articles were as follows: "Lack of Interest in the Application of the Agrominimum in the Preparation for Planting in Gavojdia," "For the Intensification of Agricultural Work in Deta Raion," "All Equipment for Ploughing and Sowing," etc. Luptatorul Banatean analyzed the causes of errors committed by the executive committees in Lugoj, Deta, Remetea-Mare, and other areas and showed these executive committees how to overcome the errors. The paper published special issues on surprise investigations. Such material was of special value in giving a raion breakdown on spring preparation and planting as supervised by executive committees of people's councils. The paper also published special pages devoted to fighting bureaucracy, lack of vigilance, and failures to maintain proper records and checks.(5)

Luptatorul Banatean analyzed the causes of errors manifest in the activities of executive committees in Lugoj, Deta, Remetea-Mare, etc., and showed how these committees could overcome their errors. Special pages on surprise investigations, entitled, "Let Us Strengthen the Political-Organizational Work for the Success of the Spring Campaign in Lugoj Raion," "Let Us Lend Impetus to the Socialist and Patriotic Competition in the Sowing Campaign," "All Equipment for Ploughing and Sowing," etc., represent valuable support of raion and commune executive committees.

Cartoons have been used by the newspaper in an effective manner to criticize errors, to fight bureaucracy, to overcome the lack of revolutionary vigilance, etc.

However, the paper has not presented enough analyses of the activities of permanent agricultural committees nor stimulated the creation of agricultural actives.(3)

SOURCES

1. Bucharest, Scanteia, 1 Apr 53
2. Ibid., 28 Apr 53
3. Ibid., 16 Apr 53
4. Ibid., 29 Apr 53
5. Bucharest, Romania Libera, 28 Apr 53

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