

Free Europe Committee, Inc.

MEMORANDUM

Date: April 17, 1962

To: The Executive Committee

Reference:

From: The President *JP*

Subject: Latvian Reports

Enclosed herewith is a copy of two working papers produced by the Latvian Committee which we thought might be of interest to you.

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Planning and Failures.

Speaking at the meeting of the party's most active members in Riga, on November 17th, 1961, after his return from the Soviet Union's Communist Party Congress in Moscow, Arvids Pelše, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party, thanks to Moscow's good graces, produced by witchcraft a dazzling picture representing the future achievements : /see: Cipa of November 18th, 1961/

" Also our republic should contribute its share to the fulfilment of the grandiose tasks set by the party to the agriculture. The Soviet Latvian agriculture which also in the future shall specialize in breeding of pedigree cattle and dairyfarming, also fattening of meat and bacon pigs, shall deliver in 1965 2,120,000 to. of milk. 2,900,000 to. of milk shall be delivered in 1970 and 3,900,000 tons in 1980. In 1965 shall be produced 221,000 tons of meat / net weight. In 1970 - 255,000 tons but in 1980 - 350,000 tons of meat. Thus, during the next ten years the yield of milk on a republican scale will increase by 97%, or 2.6 times during 20 years. Production of meat will correspondingly increase by 68% or 2.3 times..."

Some months earlier, before this speech on the "future's abundance", i.e. on June 7th, 1961, at the meeting of the 6th Plenum of the Central Committee, as this is evident from the party newspaper "Cipa" of June 14th, 1961, Pelše by no means was so optimistic. On the contrary, in his speech we can detect a quite contrary tone.

"... Also we cannot conceal another fact. Last year we had a big difference between the areas under crops and those harvested. According to the data available, 47,000 hectares of grain and fodder cultures ~~were~~ less were harvested in the republic's kolkhozes and sovkhoses than sown. Why did this happen? Because a part of the area under corn was used as pastures..."

When the forcible collectivization was introduced in Latvia, the open ditches were ploughed over. In the result of this considerable areas of agricultural land turned into swamps. According to data published by the Soviet statistics in "Narodnoye Khoziaistvo of USSR", it is evident that 1 million and 964 thous. ha. were under crops in Latvia in 1940 / ~~the soviet statistics in 1940 showed 2,165 million ha. in the republic~~ but only 1 million 515 thous. ha. were under crops in 1959. Year in year out the party's leadership is struggling for drainage and cultivation of the neglected land but the results are rather insignificant. At the same 6th Plenum of June 7th, 1961, Pelše complained:

"... Speaking about the economic progress we cannot omit to speak about such important reserve as cultivation of the neglected land. The agricultural workers of our republic have pledged themselves to cultivate this year no less than 110,000 hectares of such land. However, these pledges are not being fulfilled satisfactorily, many of the kolkhozes and sovkhoses have them forgotten altogether. Only 5.5. thous. hectares have been cultivated as per June 1st..."

After depicting the magnificent plans of the future by even giving figures how the things will look after ten or twenty years, and admitting the unappetizing success in the past, Pelše, as we

can presume it, was not particularly enthusiastic to proceed to Moscow to settle his accounts with his lord and master in the Kremlin.

We read in "Ciqa" of March 6th, 1962, that Khrushchev was not satisfied with the milk and butter production in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. Blaming for extravagancies those responsible he said: "... Speaking about the Baltic republics I deem it necessary to express the following remark. The party organizations in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia are still badly using their possibilities to develop the communal cattle-breeding. In its time we gave a certain remission to the kolkhozes and sovkhoses of these republics due to the fact that they still had been young and were lacking the necessary experience. Yet, since that time, when the kolkhoz system became victorious in the Baltic, more than ten years have already elapsed... If we take the figures pertaining to meat and milk production by farms of all categories, it is evident that in 1961 the kolkhozes and sovkhoses gave the following percentage :

	Meat	Milk
Lithuania	42%	38%
Latvia	50%	51%
Estonia	54%	57%

Such conditions cannot be considered to be normal. The Party organizations have to take measures in order to develop quicker the cattle-breeding..."

These few figures mentioned by Khrushchev reveal a particular and rather unflattering fact in the system of the collective farming in the once free Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The figures given by Khrushchev make it clear that the

so-called "communal sector", i.e. the kolkhozes and sovkhoses, has produced only about half of the meat and milk. The other half, thus, has been produced by the so-called "private sector", if we use the communist terminology. What is this private sector? This is the small plot of land, not larger than 0.6 ha. per one kolkhoznik's family, on which the farmers are permitted to grow vegetables and other victuals. The family is also entitled to keep one cow, a pig and some hens. Instead of a cow they can keep two goats or sheep.

According to the data published in 1959 by the Soviet statistical bureau in the "Narodnoye Khoziaistvo SSR" the agricultural land has been distributed as follows:

	<u>Area of the agricultural land, altogether:</u>	<u>For the Kolkhozes</u>	<u>For the Sovkhoz.</u>	<u>Plots</u>
in Lithuania	3.8 mill.ha.	2.8 mill. hect.	0.8 mill. hect.	0.16 mill. ha.
in Latvia	2.8 do	2.8 "	0.61 "	0.09 mill. ha.
in Estonia	1.9 do	1.4 "		0.05 mill.ha.

These figures illustrate the entire kolkhoz system. For instance, it is evident that in Latvia the 90.000 ha. given to kolkhoz farmers for private use do produce the same quantities as the kolkhozes and sovkhoses combined with their 3.41 million hectares of land, in 1961. And, this absurdity has been confirmed by nobody else than Khrushchev himself.

In "Cipa" of March 8th, 1962, there is an excuse by A. Pelše with regard to reproaches made by Khrushchev. In his speech, he, among other things, said: "Criticism expressed, in this plenum with regard to the fact that the volume of pig cattle-breeding products achieved by our republic's communal sector is low is, indeed, justified. The kolkhozes and sovkhoses intend to increase in 1962

the yield of milk by 19% but that of meat by 25%....During the next two to three years the specific weight of the communal sector will increase by 86% concerning the milk deliveries to the state or those for meat - by 90%..."

With regard to the agricultural machines in kolkhozes and sovkhoses A. Pelše admitted that the Soviet regime has not been able to supply the latter with the necessary agricultural technique. Speaking about sugar-beets which culture Khrushchev, together with the corn, is propagating for use as cattle fodder, Pelše said :
 "... Due to the fact that we are still lacking technique, cultivation of sugar-beets still requires a large amount of physical labor . To have the fields weeded in time, we have planned to send approximately 100,000 peoples from the cities to help out the kolkhozes and sovkhoses this year..."

Yet, the helpers from the cities have proved to be a bad patch to cover the lack of hands and suitable machines in the country side. The city peoples, first of all, do not know the agricultural work, then they do not have suitable clothing, and living facilities. But the most important thing is that they are not interested to use more efforts in this cooperation in farm labor as absolutely necessary. It is not too seldom that the farmers complain about these helpers who transform such cooperation into debauchery with lot of drinking and invite the kolkhozniks to participate thus achieving quite contrary results.

The Soviet official statistics / Narodnoye Khoziaistvo SSSR, 1959/ has the following figures with regard to agricultural machines:

	Tractors	Combines
in Lithuania	27.9 thous.	1.6 thous.
in Latvia	18.6 "	1.7 "
in Estonia	10.6 "	1.5 "

But there is much more trouble with this agricultural technique than its insufficient numbers and bad quality. Delivered from the factories to the kolkhozes, the age of the machines is shortened by bad upkeep and care. Often good machines are left in the fields where the work has been finished. Sometimes they are taken back to the kolkhoz center or a mechanical shop but are left uncovered, splashed with mud, for rusting under open skies. It is quite naturally that when the time approaches for the next season's work the machines cannot be used without a capital repair. The machines are "collective property" for caring of which nobody is personally interested. It seems that this is a common thing since the Supreme Soviet was forced to issue a decree stipulating strict punishment for damages inflicted to the "technique" and those not caring for it.

How is being kept this "technique" in kolkhozes we see from Giga of February 2, 1962. "... A square fenced up by boards reminds us of a real cemetery for the agricultural technique. There are many many things. There are rusted and worn-out rippers for organic fertilizers, there are also old sowing machines and cultivators. But there is also a new technique, as for instance, a corn reaping combine covered with dried up last year's soil, a sugar-beet combine that fell from its rollers. One of its wheels is broken. The order is not better in the middle of the shop's yard. Tractors still waiting for their turn for repairs are covered with frozen mud. Even there was no place in the barn for a harvesting ^{combine} machine."

And this description about the ~~neglected~~ neglected "technique" does not refer to a common kolkhoz but to the experimental farm at Skriveri!

The correspondents of "Cipa" visited also some kolkhozes with the purpose to learn about them. In the same issue of February 2, 1962, the correspondents reported on the kolkhoz "Lobe": "Both of the grain-sowing machines that are kept under open skies, have not been cleaned. Mouldy grain is still in the sowing devices. Metal parts are covered with rust. Since the harvesting time the new combine SK-3 is left to the mercy of the rain and snow. Its conveyer belts are as tight as they were when it was used in the field... It is quite possible that the chairmen of these kolkhozes have not acquainted themselves with the decree of the presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet inflicting severe punishments to those spoiling the technique and not taking care of it..." resignedly concludes their feature the correspondent of "Cipa"

In
 Planning is one thing but the production-another one. ~~With~~ this respect the Soviet system has seldom found a balance. And least of all this refers to the agricultural production, and this particularly applies to the Baltic countries which prior to the last war, i.e. occupation, were countries exporting considerable quantities of agricultural products, especially butter and bacon. About the "results" achieved in milk production "Cipa" of December 14th, 1961, writes: "... At the present time the yield of milk is not satisfactory in general in our republic. During the period from the beginning of this year we are in red since the yield of milk is a little smaller than during the same period of the last year..." About the results achieved during the first month of the current year "Cipa" of March 1st writes: "... The crux of the matter is that the kolkhozes and sovkhoses of our republic did not fulfil their deliveries of meat and milk for the last year. During this month of January we have

produced only 2 % over the last year's first month's milk output. Thus we are just marking time. But particularly deplorable is the fact that we have made a step backwards in our meat production , for we have produced 7% less than during January, 1961..."

Yet the planning is going on. This is the only branch in which the Soviet empire surpasses all scheduled norms. Plans are made by Khrushchev in Moscow, and the same are doing, smaller brains, in all quarters of the red empire. Also in the occupied Baltic countries. They plan how to fulfil the norms, how to organize a happier life, and how to surpass the production achieved by the United States. Plans are also made how to harness the school youths into the back-breaking agricultural work in order, to put it mildly, to produce quantities of food sufficing only for nourishing the famished before they go to sleep every night. And this happens in the most progressive and just state, as the commugists like to call their empire. On March 7th, 1962, "Ciga" reported that the Central Committee of the Communist Party in a joint meeting with the Council of Ministers of Latvian SSR decided that "... The Ministry of Education of the Republic has the task to organize a special training for the students of the schools for general education with the purpose to ~~acquire~~ ^{instill} knowledge necessary for cultivation of the sugar beets... so that at the end of the school year they /the students/ would be able to help kolkhozes and sovkhoses to cultivate the areas under sugar-beets"

The failures of the kolkhoz system are evident from many examples, from the fact that Khrushchev was forced to call ^{together} a special meeting of the party's central committee dedicated to problems how to increase the output of agricultural products though even not surpassing a level permitting to a very modest degree ^{to} feed the working

peoples in cities and in the rural districts. Only the nearest future will give us the answer to the questions arising from Khrushchev's plans about replacing of sown grass by corn, sugar beets and leguminous plants that ask for more cultivation, more labor, and require better soil and more complicated machines. At the present time we do not know what will give better results. We will see it the next autumn when the harvest comes.

August 24, 1962