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Opmerkingen:

Verzonden aan: de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken.

Aan Zijne Excellentie de Minister-President Prof. Dr L.J.M. BEEL

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!s-GRAVENHAGE.

GEHEIM

Hungary

NEW COLLECTIVIZATION DRIVE

The Hungarian regime, having decided last December to step up the pace of collectivization, is resorting to coercive measures against independent farmers, in violation of repeated assurances of respect for the "voluntary principle". At its central committee plenum last December, the Hungarian party called for the dispatch of 500 agitators and propagandists from Budapest to towns and villages to join regional and local teams in organizing the "voluntary" formation of cooperatives. What was then advertised as a propaganda campaign to induce peasants to join the cooperative movement is now emerging as a highly organized and coercive drive.

In mid-February Budapest reported that 59,000 new members and 525,000 acres were added to advanced-type collectives during the first six weeks of 1959. These figures, indicating an expansion in a six-week period of at least 11 percent, not only suggest coercive but also reflect a major switch from the previous policy, which emphasized the formation of less-advanced types of collectives. Moreover, measures for making the collectives more "attractive" through direct financial subsidization, preferential marketing, and tax benefits were supplemented last week by a decision of the Council of Ministers, which raised income and property taxes on all except small-scale private farmers retroactive to 1 January.

Isolated instances have been reported of police tactics by party officials to force recalcitrant peasants to join the collectives. There have been reports that farmers holding out have been summoned to militia stations, interrogated at length, and detained overnight for further

questioning. The legation has also learned that excess security personnel from the cities have been sent to the countryside to bolster local militia units.

To date, the regime seems to be exerting its major effort in the western counties of Hungary - particularly the Gyor-Sopron region, where peasant resistance to collectivization has been strongest in the past. Concentration of pressure on the western counties suggests that the regime may have selected this area for a pilot drive aimed at gauging the extent and seriousness of peasant resistance.

The present level of food reserves is sufficient for the time being to cope with any disruption resulting from the campaign. If the campaign stretches into the spring planting season, 1959 production may be disrupted.

KADAR has long held out against pressure from Stalinists in the Hungarian party to step up the pace of collectivization and to employ coercive measures against the peasants. His recent statements, however, indicate a change in his position, possibly as a result of pressure from Moscow and from Stalinists within his own party. KADAR's claims that "conditions" now warrant this change in tempo, however, may now be an accurate reflection of his views.

Eind februari 1959.