

Implicarea Frontului Plugarilor în procesul de colectivizare a agriculturii - acțiuni pregătitoare

Abstract:

This article aims to outline the preparatory steps the Ploughmen's Front took before the start of collectivisation of agriculture in Romania. To this end, the article relies on older and recent sources alike. The organisation under consideration, led by Petru Groza, was the strongest and longest-lived "fellow-traveller" of the Communist Party, serving as a means whereby part of the Communist ideas got through to rank and file ploughmen. While the discourses of the time were trying to drive home the notion of differences existing between the two organisations, the Ploughmen's Front was, in effect, a mere conduit for communist conceptions throughout the years from 23 August 1944 to February 1953 when the Front went into union with the Romanian Workers' Party. A sizeable membership, coupled with a large capital of sympathy among the rural population – larger than what the Communist Party could muster –, turned the Ploughmen's Front into a fulcrum most suitable for the intentions of the new authorities. As such, the Front was nothing but a spokesperson for the Communists, a mere go-between whose main role was to get Communist tenets across to the peasants, particularly those tenets that concerned the peasants themselves as an important social category and the "socialist transformation of agriculture". In all this the Ploughmen's Front played a decisive role and the steps its activists took during the years before the Central Committee Plenary of the Romanian Workers' Party on 3-5 March 1949 were crucial for what was to follow. In practical terms, preliminaries consisted of propaganda actions. These were well-organised, concerted actions based on tried and tested means and methods with the five major sections – political propaganda, cultural propaganda, news and the media, professional groups and the Party schools – each playing its specific role. Despite all this – the large number of Front members and avowed sympathisers included – propaganda results with respect to the peasants' getting convinced of the benefits of associative agricultural practices were not spectacular. The evolution of the Front after March 1949 was closely linked to the transformation of agriculture. The Ploughmen's Front got totally subordinated to the Communists and propaganda control in the rural areas had become absolute. Nevertheless, those changes did not yield spectacular results, with the relatively low number of collective farms established during those years on the farmers' free initiative serving as best evidence to that effect.

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