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## **Scholars in Dialogue Multidisciplinary Approaches in Dealing with the Past in Transylvania**

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CORINA MOLDOVAN • IONUȚ COSTEA • LAVINIA S. STAN

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# Between Persuasion and Coercion The Collectivization of Agriculture in Romania (1949–1962)\*

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SANDA BORȘA

**I**MPOSED AND carried out in compliance with the model offered by Moscow, the collectivization of agriculture became an essential component of the process of Sovietization in Romania, which would be carried out by the new people's democracy regime regardless of the methods used and actions taken. If we consider that at the end of the Second World War Romania was a country with a predominantly rural population, the success of Sovietization depended, to a large extent, on the subjugation of peasants through collectivization. Therefore, using discourse analysis, comparative analysis and case-study, this article provides an extensive analysis of the collectivization of agriculture, focusing on coercive (pressure, repression) and persuasive (manipulation/propaganda) mechanisms enforced by the communist authorities in view of accomplishing the socialist transformation of agriculture. These mechanisms were enforced on two levels: first, the oppression of the peasants through inclusion in different cooperative units, created by the regime (collective agricultural farms—GACs, agricultural production cooperatives—CAPs, agricultural associations of peasants—TOZs), and their submission to an absurd system of quotas and taxes; the second level focused on the idea of class struggle, inflamed by an excessive reference to the symbol of *chiabur* [kulak] as equivalent to the exploiter and a symbol of capitalism.<sup>1</sup>

Officially, the process of collectivization<sup>2</sup> was launched during the plenary meeting of March 3–5, 1949, which decided the socialist transformation of Romania's agriculture. At this plenary session, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej stated: "the party will systematically inoculate the poor and mid-level peasants with the need to deliberately join collective farms."<sup>3</sup> The model-statute of the collective agricultural farm (GAC) stipulated that its members should include diligent peasants aged at least 18, and handymen, but not "the *chiaburi* and the extortionists who live at other's ex-

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pense.”<sup>4</sup> Hence, in the beginning, some collective agricultural farms were designed based on “freewill” to serve as models.<sup>5</sup> For instance, on July 24<sup>th</sup>, the first five collective agricultural farms were inaugurated across the country at: Turnișor, Sibiu County; Luna de Jos, Cluj County; Zăbrani, Arad County; Rășcani, Vaslui County and Lesnea, Târnava Mare County.<sup>6</sup>

The idea of class struggle as an imperative of communist ideology was introduced when the model-statute of the collective agricultural farm was first developed in 1949 by the Romanian communists. The goal of creating such a farm was, above all, to ensure “by means of organized collective work and collective production means,” “the victory over the *chiaburi*, extortionists and enemies of the workers”; Secondly, it aimed at obtaining larger amounts of agricultural products, improving the labor conditions and preventing the backwardness of small traditional households (Art. 2).<sup>7</sup>

In fact, by adhering to collective farms the peasants were forced to give up their land as well as their entire farm inventory. The 1949 model-statute envisaged that a member of the collective agricultural farm would be able to use only a small parcel of land around his house, with the possibility, in regions with more arable land, to extend it up to one hectare (Art. 5)<sup>8</sup>. On the other hand, the model-statute adopted by Council of Ministers Decision No.1650/1953 stated that a peasant was allowed to work 20 to 30 *ari* (approx. 2000-3000 m<sup>2</sup>) which excluded the area covered by buildings (Art. 5).<sup>9</sup> Aside from land, in order to join a collective farm, peasants were compelled to bring in their farming tools (plough, drill, reaper, transport equipment etc.) and the livestock owned. What could remain in personal property (according to Art. 8) was a cow or a buffalo, “two young bovines no older than 2 years, a sow with piglets, a maximum of 3 pigs, 10 sheep and goats altogether,” poultry, unlimited number of rabbits and no more than 20 beehives.<sup>10</sup>

It is important to note that the “freewill” principle mentioned by Gheorghiu-Dej and the communist propaganda was breached in many cases, since the organization of a collective agricultural farm “concealed” pressures and violent actions by those in charge of the collectivization. The typology of these actions reveals a few examples: when the GAC was set up in Geaca, Cluj district, the inhabitants were threatened with losing jobs and being sent to hard labor at the Black Sea—Danube Canal labor camp. Only six members joined the first day when a GAC was organized in Cara, but when two *chiaburi* were “picked up” by the authorities, another 54 families joined the next day.<sup>11</sup> In Odverem (Aiud district) the process of collectivization began with three people being arrested and other peasants threatened unless they agreed to join the GAC.<sup>12</sup> Also, in Gherla district, before the official inauguration of the GAC in Sântioana, a few *chiaburi* were arrested, which prompted some of the peasants to submit applications to join the GAC; in Șoimeni, the peasants were invited to the *Militia* (local police) under false pretense and forced to sign their “adhesion” to the GAC.<sup>13</sup>

In order to prepare the peasants for full collectivization, an underdeveloped form of organization was created, i.e. the TOZ. In the case of TOZs, the land and the



farm inventory owned by a peasant when he joined the structure remained in his property. All the land brought in was merged (ridges were abolished) and the members conducted joint farming activities. Yet, the income was split according to the area of land brought in by each member.<sup>14</sup> After 1953, the collectivization of agriculture in Romania was slowed down, and in 1956 a new collectivist structure was created—the agricultural production cooperative on profit (CAP). This was “inferior to the GAC, but superior to the TOZ.”<sup>15</sup> This decision reflected the willingness of the communist authorities to push forward the socialist transformation of agriculture. The members of the new collectivist structure would submit their land into the “use” of CAP.<sup>16</sup> When joining the CAP the peasants were forced to bring in their entire farm inventory. The remittance for each member was calculated after counting the working days (like in the case of GACs) and proportionally to the area of land consigned (like in the case of TOZs).<sup>17</sup>

Simultaneous to the “enrolment” of the peasants in cooperative units, the process of collectivization required an arsenal of economic coercive means, which were fundamental to the functioning of the system imagined by the Romanian communists.

The system of quotas was improved along the way and became one of the most powerful mechanisms of coercion and subordination of peasants, leading to abuses of rural households: the peasants were forced to provide significant quotas of almost all agricultural products. For instance, if the Council of Ministers Decision (CMD) No. 774 of July 21, 1949 stipulated quotas on the 1949 crops of wheat, rye, barley and rice (Art. 1)<sup>18</sup>, in time, quotas were extended to most crops produced in the Romanian traditional household. Hence, in 1950 (CMD No.571/1950) quotas were applied to the following categories of crops: cereals (wheat, rye, barley, oat, and corn), oleaginous crops (sunflower), leguminous crops (peas, beans and lentil), vegetables (potatoes, onion), fodder (hay) and fodder plant seeds (alfalfa, trefoil, vetch, Sudan grass).<sup>19</sup> Also, quotas were set on meat, milk and wool. It should be noted that the quota system put in place by the communist authorities was sometimes illogical as the peasants were forced to deliver milk quotas even if they did not own a cow.<sup>20</sup> Similarly, peasants had to provide pork as part of the meat quota, even if they did not own swine.<sup>21</sup>

In most cases, by delivering the imposed quotas the peasants risked to put in danger the survival of their families, but reversely, if the peasants did not obey they were either jailed, forced to pay fines or their goods were seized.<sup>22</sup> The statistical data released by the General Attorney of the People’s Republic of Romania (on November 15, 1951), concerning peasants who did not supply the quotas imposed on the 1951 crops, revealed the following situation at national level: 2821 peasants were under investigation and judged; 117 were arrested, being under investigation or in course of investigation (among them, 36 middle peasants and 81 *chiaburi*). In the category of “convicts,” 145 were “convicted to pay fines” (8 poor, 85 middle peasants and 52 *chiaburi*) and 203 were convicted to jail (27 poor, 67 middle peasants and 109 *chiaburi*).<sup>23</sup>

The agricultural tax was another instrument used by the communist regime in order to subjugate the rural population. During the collectivization process, this tax was subject to several legislative transformations which were often based on the text of Decree no. 124/1952. The tax was paid per individual household, in particular by those assessed as “rich.” According to Decree no. 124/1952, the agricultural tax paid per household by TOZ members was reduced by 20% (Art. 13), while GAC’s members were exempted for two years (Art. 15). Nonetheless, the agricultural tax enforced on the households of the rich (*chiaburi*) (calculated in line with the parameters set by the Decree) was increased by 50% (Art. 14).<sup>24</sup>

Among all individual farms, those owned by *chiaburi* were most often exposed to coercive actions of the communist regime in the course of collectivization, because they were “obsessively” associated with what was frequently referred to as class struggle.<sup>25</sup> During the March 3-5, 1949 plenary meeting on collectivization, referring to the social class of the so-called *chiaburi*, Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej stated that, first of all, it was necessary to “contain the rich and limit their economic power,” but “this policy of containment did not mean abolishing the *chiaburi* as a social class.”<sup>26</sup> Why did the communist leader refrain from abolishing the *chiaburi* and preferred to limit their economic power? Because these *chiaburi* were in fact good housekeepers and well off people who played—as the communist leader acknowledged—“important economic roles.”<sup>27</sup> Therefore, their economic power was needed in order to guarantee the agricultural output and to offer food supplies to the population, especially in urban areas.

The actions in view of “containing” the influence of the *chiaburi* revealed several strategies pursued by the regime: 1) banning the *chiaburi* from joining collective farms was mainly ideological and illogical, knowing that they owned large areas of land, many animals and farming tools, thus being able to help consolidate the GACs (this is the reason why the model-statute referring to the inclusion of the *chiaburi* was often breached); 2) the confiscation of the land owned by peasants in view of “supplementing” the land fund of the GAC; 3) the use of excessive economic pressures (quotas and taxes) lead to the bankruptcy of the *chiaburi*.<sup>28</sup>

Although in the beginning the policy of the communist regime was not aimed at abolishing the *chiaburi*—for a very clear reason (“we need the *chiabur*’s goods and thus we cannot chop his land”)<sup>29</sup>—their extinction as a social class occurred in the final phase of the collectivization of agriculture (1959–1962). Decree no. 115/1959 stated that “all traces of exploitation of man by man in agriculture must disappear in order to allow the permanent increase in the material and cultural welfare of the working peasantry and the development of socialism.” Also, the Decree banned land leasing as well as any form of “exploitation” by farmers (Art.1).<sup>30</sup>

Propaganda, as an instrument of persuasion and manipulation, was aimed at achieving the political and economic goals of the communist regime by censorship and full control over the sources of information.<sup>31</sup>

Hereinafter, we will focus on three types of propaganda—oral, written and visual (audio-visual), and on dissemination methods from center to periphery and inside rural communities.

The act of persuasion and discussions in groups of regular people were the main instruments of the oral propaganda aiming at persuading the peasants to join collective agricultural farms. For instance, a delegate of the Organization Section of the Romanian Workers' Party's (RWP) Central Committee described in a report issued on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1950 the unfolding of a propagandistic action in the village of Legii, Geaca (Cluj district): 26 families of poor and middle peasants were visited and "5 meetings in households groups" consisting of 10-15 peasants were organized, each meeting analyzing the model-statute of the GAC. Obviously, the attempt to convince the peasants was challenged by their mistrust in the welfare promised by the propagandists once the GAC was organized. One of the middle peasants said that he "would not join because he would lose his freedom," which prompted the RWP Central Committee to say that "some of them (the peasants) have reactionary behavior and attitudes, such as: T.F. . . . after being told how the *kolkhoz* developed and prospered in the Soviet Union, answered that everything was a lie used for propagandistic purposes."<sup>32</sup>

Another set of persuasive actions were conferences, organized either by GAC "comrades with a higher political level" trained to preach in local community centers about activities pertaining to collective farms, or by specialists of the communist propaganda apparatus.<sup>33</sup> Acknowledging the positive effect of direct contact and of the illustration by the GAC members of the importance of collective farms, the propaganda and agitation apparatus invited the peasants to visit these cooperative structures (as well as the machine and tractors stations, the state agricultural farms and the stations for agricultural experiments).<sup>34</sup> A special emphasis was placed on mutual visits by Romanian collectivists to the Soviet *kolkhoz* and by the Soviets to the Romanian GACs and TOZs, in order to share the USSR experience.<sup>35</sup> At stake was the understanding by the peasants of the collectivist structure as solution to all their economic problems. By accepting to sign a simple adhesion act the peasants would be, according to the communist discourse, "overwhelmed by wealth."<sup>36</sup>

The dissemination of information by the communist authorities in view of easing the implementation of the collectivization across the country, was mostly due to the written propaganda, particularly in the press. The press was in fact a tool in the hands of the regime. In order to fulfill its role as "propagandist, agitator and organizer of the masses," the press was placed under the permanent control of the Party.<sup>37</sup> Stalin himself had decided that the press was "the most powerful arm by which the party speaks to the working class every day, every hour and in all languages."<sup>38</sup> The popularization of the socialist transformation of agriculture was made in central newspapers (such as *Scântea*, *Săteanca* etc.) and in regional newspapers (*Flacăra Iașului*, *Lupta Rodnei*, *Făclia Ardealului* etc).

As part of the written propaganda, books and brochures were printed to serve as instruments of persuasion and manipulation. Here is a selection of a few relevant titles: Ion Bianu, *Drumul glorios al agriculturii sovietice (The Glorious Journey of the Soviet Agriculture)*, Editura Cartea Rusă, 1951; *Agitatorii în lupta pentru prima recoltă a cincinalului (The Agitators Struggling for the First Harvest of the Five-year Plan)*, Editura Partidului Muncitoresc Român, 1951; *Am văzut belșugul colhozurilor sovietice. Din notele de drum ale țăranilor muncitori care au vizitat Uniunea Sovietică în vara anului 1950 (I saw the Opulence of the Soviet Kolkhoz. Notes from the Journeys of the Working Peasants who visited the Soviet Union in the Summer of 1950)*, Editura Partidului Muncitoresc Român, 1951. Three recurring topics of written propaganda were present in the press and in books and brochures, illustrating methods used in the collectivization of agriculture in Romania: the “obligations” and “duties” of each peasant toward the State were to deliver quotas, pay taxes, seed/harvest the land; the representation of the *kolkhoz* and of the Soviet experience in agriculture as sources of wealth; and the “demonization” of the *chiaburi*.

The propagandistic pressure, intended to serve the collectivization of agriculture, was also fostered by visual and audio-visual means. According to the communist regime, the visual propaganda and agitation were aimed at “disseminating the best results in terms of agricultural output by leading farmers, and the mobilization of the working people to execute various agro-zoo-veterinarian activities on time.”<sup>39</sup>

Following the Soviet experience, the visual propaganda<sup>40</sup> was largely diffused in various Romanian villages and expressed under various forms: posters, exhibitions, slogans, honor boards, cartoons or graphics.<sup>41</sup>

A poster was a drawing, a notification, a convocation notice or an incentive to action. In order to fulfill its mission, a poster had to catch the eye and, most important, to be understood by each and every peasant.<sup>42</sup> If the poster contained a drawing, it had to express ideas in a clear manner, to avoid extra details in order not to distract, and to have a concise and simple text.<sup>43</sup> In order to be visible from the distance the poster was painted in blue, yellow, red and green.<sup>44</sup>

It is worth noting what the regime recommended. In order to consolidate the alliance between the working class and the peasantry the posters and the wall gazettes<sup>45</sup> would emphasize the urban workers’ craving need for more and more agricultural products as food supplies and as raw materials for industry. Thus, the support offered to the industry would enrich peasants because the villages would receive more tools and various other industrial products. Therefore, it was crucial that in order to produce more agricultural products all the necessary labors be executed on time.<sup>46</sup> The posters depicted, following the *kolkhoz* example, the “commitments” taken by farms<sup>47</sup> or the unfolding of the collection of crop quotas. For instance, in 1951, a poster entitled “The unfolding of collections in Huedin district” informed about the status of the collections by means of four images (from left to right: a plane, a tractor, a bullock cart and a snail). Under each drawing were written the names of villages according to their performances.<sup>48</sup>

In order to stimulate labor and, in some cases, to attract the peasants into joining the collective structures, the names and even the photos of the best performers in different agricultural activities were written down on honor boards.<sup>49</sup> Also, exhibitions had an important role in disseminating the achievements of the collective structures. According to a note sent by the Regional Committee of the RWP Cluj, dating back to 1957, the zoo-technical and agricultural exhibitions organized at regional and district levels displayed the results obtained by the cooperative units and informed about the methods used to produce large quantities of crops and livestock.<sup>50</sup>

The slogan was another element of the visual agitation used as a collectivization strategy. It often consisted of a short phrase which “appealed to struggle or work,” easy to read and written in big and brightly colored letters.<sup>51</sup> Several slogans were used when different collective farms were inaugurated, and most often they included a morphological construction which began with the verb “to live” in the subjunctive mode, present tense, third person: “Long live . . .”<sup>52</sup>

Slogans, posters, cartoons or honor boards were used simultaneously in the fight against the *chiaburi*. Thus, “the prevention of sabotage” or “the public unveiling of their wicked acts” were common representations of visual propaganda, aimed at informing the poor and middle peasants about the “methods used by *chiaburi* in order to hinder the socialist transformation of the agriculture.”<sup>53</sup>

Similarly, the Romanian radio broadcasting network was used as a propagandistic tool by the regime. Broadcasts such as *Radiojournal* and *Ora satului* (“The village hour”) discussed the agricultural achievements of the Soviet Union and the most “innovative” methods used in the “rich” *kolkhoz* of this country. Above all, they emphasized the “benefits” of collectivization and the need to eliminate the “exploitation” of the Romanian villages by the *chiaburi*.<sup>54</sup> The inauguration in 1949 of several GACs in different Romanian districts was a good opportunity for “worshipping” the collectivization system. For instance, the 2.30 p.m. *Radiojournal* broadcast on August 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1949, while referring to the creation of the “6<sup>th</sup> of March” GAC in Șelimbăr, Sibiu County, also broadcast a declaration of a member of the newly created farm: “It is the hard-workers who are privileged now because the GACs are made only for those who work.”<sup>55</sup>

Other attempts to convince the peasants to join the socialist transformation of the agriculture were by means of theater plays and films. Such theater plays were: “Stafia dintre hambare” (“The ghost in the barns”), by A. Gheorghiu-Poganeti; “Sufletu’ arendașoaiei” (“The soul of the tenant-woman”), by Aurel Baranga; “Lampa din munți” (“The lamp in the mountains”), by Petru Vintilă. All these were published in the “Îndrumătorul cultural” (“Cultural Guide”) magazine distributed to the directors of local culture centers in rural areas.<sup>56</sup> According to a review made in February 1953 at the collective farm in Dorolea, Bistrița district, it seems that the characters of the plays were “brought to life” at times by members of the GACs: “After toiling the fields, most of the members gather at the GAC center in order to listen to radio broadcasts and read newspapers in group. Right now, the play called

“Dulapul cu oglindă” (“The mirrored wardrobe”) is being rehearsed and played by 22 people, young and elder.”<sup>57</sup>

By challenging the eyesight and the hearing, images mixed with sounds lead to a simultaneous and deeper reception of the propagandistic message.<sup>58</sup> This prompted the propaganda regime to run movies during film caravans and in district theaters. Some of these movies were: “O pildă măreață” (“A Great Example”),<sup>59</sup> “Mai mult ulei” (“More Oil”), “Mai mult zahăr” (“More Sugar”).<sup>60</sup>

Designed and enforced as an instrument of subjugating the rural population by the people’s democracy regime, the process of agricultural collectivization enforced through persuasion and, above all, coercion not only determined the transformation of agriculture, but triggered a “new man” metamorphosis of the Romanian peasant in line with the ideological precepts of the communist regime.



### Notes

1. Dan Cătănuș, Octavian Roske, eds., *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România. Dimensiunea politică*, vol. I, 1949–1953 (București: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2000), 15.
2. Another study case on collectivization in other parts of Eastern Europe is Tatjana Thelen, “Violence and social (dis)continuity: comparing collectivization in two East European village,” *Social History*, 30, 1 (February 2005): 25–44.
3. Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, *Sarcinile Partidului Muncitoresc Român în lupta pentru întărirea alianței clasei muncitoare cu țărâșnimea muncitoare și pentru transformarea socialistă a agriculturii. Raport la ședința plenară a C.C. al P.M.R. din 3–5 martie 1949* (București: Editura pentru Literatură Politică, 1953), 51.
4. Central National Historical Archives (hereinafter CNHA), Fond CC al PCR – Secția Agrară, file 16/1949, 5.
5. Gheorghiu-Dej, 51.
6. “Au luat ființă primele cinci Gospodării Agricole Colective,” *Scântea*, XVIII, 1488, July 27, 1949, 1.
7. CNHA, Fond CC al PCR – Secția Agrară, file 16/1949, 1; Octavian Roske, “Radiografia unui eșec. Colectivizarea agriculturii în România,” in Ruxandra Ivan, coord., *Transformarea socialistă: politici ale regimului comunist între ideologie și administrație* (Iassy: Polirom, 2009), 81.
8. CNHA, Fond CC al PCR – Secția Agrară, file 16/1949, 2.
9. *Colecția de Hotărâri și Dispoziții ale Consiliului de Miniștri al Republicii Populare Române* (hereinafter CHD), no. 39, June 18, 1953, 751.
10. In villages where the area of arable land was smaller and the peasants were mainly animal breeders, the law allowed them to own slightly higher numbers of livestock. *Ibid.*, 752.
11. County National Archives (hereinafter CNA) Cluj, Fond Comitetul Regional PMR Cluj – Secția Agrară, file 300/1951, 140–141.
12. CNHA, Fond CC al PCR – Secția Agrară, file 4/1951, 3–4.

13. CNA Cluj, Fond Comitetul Regional PMR Cluj – Secția Agrară, file 296/1951, 55.
14. For a more extended perspective, see: *Buletinul Oficial al Republicii Populare Române* (hereinafter BO), no. 6, 25 January 1952, 10-12; Ernest Lupan, *Drept colectivizat agricol* (Bucharest: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1964), 50–51.
15. Linda Miller, “Drept și propagandă: posesia asupra terenurilor agricole, colectivizarea și proprietatea socialistă,” in Dorin Dobrinu, Constantin Iordachi, ed., *Înămînea și puterea. Procesul de colectivizare a agriculturii în România (1949-1962)* (Iassy: Polirom, 2005), 145.
16. Ibid.
17. “1956 septembrie 18. Proiect al Statutului model al Cooperativei agricole de producție supus aprobării plenarei C.C. al P.M.R.” (document nr. 136), in Octavian Roske, Florin Abraham, Dan Cătănuș, *Colectivizarea agriculturii în România: cadrul legislativ: 1949–1962* (Bucharest: Institutul Național pentru Studiul Totalitarismului, 2007), 458–463.
18. BO, no. 47, July 21, 1949, 4.
19. BO, no. 46, May 26, 1950, 4.
20. Decision no. 5/January 1949 stipulated that: “The agricultural farms exceeding 20 hectares, consisting of arable land, lacking cows or buffalos, were still compelled to deliver 875 litres of milk quotas per year if they owned up to 50 hectares of arable land and 1200 litres per year if they owned more than 50 hectares of arable land.” See: *Monitorul Oficial* (hereinafter MO), no. 11, January 14, 1949, 7.
21. For instance, the Council of Ministers Decision no. 4172/1953 provided that: “The collective and individual agricultural farms and the households exceeding 2 hectares of arable land, as well as the cattle and poultry breeders shall deliver pork as a part of the compulsory meat quotas.” See: CHD, no. 79, December 17, 1953, 1335.
22. According to Decree no. 131/June 18, 1952, the non-delivery of the compulsory quotas to the State shall enforce on peasants “a material liability consisting in the payment, by judicial sentence, of a fine which could reach twice the value of the products not delivered on time, calculated proportionally to the value of the unorganized market,” and the “forced seize of the non- delivered quotas” (Art. 1). The district agents of the State Committee for the Collection of the Agricultural Products (SCCAP) were also trained (according to Art. 2, heading 2) to seize the amounts of cereals owed to the State although this measure did not exonerate the peasants of criminal liability, in cases of “perjury” (Art. 3). Decree no. 241/August 1952, which amended Art. 2 of the Decree no. 131/1952 provided that, after the call for the collection of quotas was issued, the district agents of the SCCAP “will levy a distress on the agricultural products and other goods of the debtor” (Art. 2). According to the rules of enforcement of Decree no. 131/1952 the agents would send the peasants a written appeal asking them to deliver the agricultural quotas owed and, at the same time, they levied a distress on vegetable crops and other products (Art. 5). For a more detailed perspective, see: “1952 iunie 18. Decret cu privire la executarea silită a obligațiilor ce decurg din nepredarea la timp a cotelor” (document nr. 82), in Octavian Roske, Florin Abraham, Dan Cătănuș, eds., 296-297; BO, no. 44, August 26, 1952, 2–6.
23. CNHA, Fond CC al PCR – Secția Agrară, file 13/1951, 32.
24. BO, no. 26, May 31, 1952, 2-4.
25. See: Claudiu Degeratu, Octavian Roske, “Colectivizarea agriculturii. Modelul sovietic: Drumul belșugului,” *Arhivele Totalitarismului*, II, no. 3 (1994): 54.

26. Gheorghiu-Dej, 49–50.
27. *Rezoluția Ședinței plenare a Comitetului Central al P.M.R. din 3-5 martie 1949 asupra sarcinilor partidului în lupta pentru întărirea alianței clasei muncitoare cu țărănimea muncitoare și pentru transformarea socialistă a agriculturii* (Bucharest: Editura Partidului Muncitoresc Român, 1949), 14; Nicoleta Ionescu-Gură, “Categorica socială a chiaburului în concepția P.M.R. din anii ‘50,” *Analele Sighet*, no. 8 (2000): 284–298.
28. Roske, 80–81.
29. CNHA, Fond CC al PCR-Cancelarie, file 32/1950, 216.
30. Art. 2 of this decree stipulated: “In view of ensuring the cultivation of the land which will be neither leased nor toiled by exploitation of foreign work force, this land will be used by the collective agricultural farms and other socialist agricultural organizations.” See: BO, no. 10, March 30, 1959, 1-4.
31. See: Eugen Denize, Cezar Măță, *România comunistă: statul și propaganda: 1948-1953* (Târgoviște: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2005), 101-104.
32. CNA Cluj, Fond Comitetul Regional PMR Cluj - Secția Propagandă și Agitație, file 37/1949, 29–30.
33. CNH, Fond CC al PCR - Secția Agrară, file 48/1950, 13–17; Eugen Denize, Cezar Măță, 127.
34. CNHA, Fond CC al PCR - Secția Agrară, file 48/1950, 15.
35. For further details concerning these visits, see: CNHA, Fond CC al PCR – Secția Cancelarie, file 70/1950, 1–23; CNA Cluj, Fond Comitetul Regional PMR Cluj – Secția Propagandă și Agitație, file 101/1954, 46–49; Octavian Roske, 83.
36. Claudiu Degeratu, Octavian Roske, 80.
37. CNA Cluj, Fond Comitetul Regional PMR Cluj - Secția Propagandă și Agitație, file 180/ 1951, 67.
38. Ibid.
39. CNA Cluj, Fond Comitetul Regional PMR Cluj - Secția Propagandă și Agitație, file 47/1961, 158.
40. For further details on the enforcement of the visual propaganda in the collectivization process, see also: Gheorghe Mândrescu, “Grafica e propaganda nei primi anni del regime comunista in Romania; esempi dalla collezione del Museo Nazionale d’Arte di Cluj-Napoca,” in Gheorghe Mândrescu, Giordano Altarozzi, coord., *Comunismo e comunismi. Il modello rumeno* (Cluj-Napoca: Accent, 2005), 119–137.
41. See: *Despre Agitația vizuală* (Editura Partidului Muncitoresc Român, 1950), 16-34; Eugen Denize, Cezar Măță, 128–129.
42. *Despre Agitația vizuală*, 20–22.
43. Ibid.
44. Eugen Denize, *Propaganda comunistă în România (1948–1953)* (Târgoviște: Editura Cetatea de Scaun, 2009), 50.
45. Wall gazettes (and street gazettes) would fulfil the role of “propagandist, agitator and collective organizer,” laying down the “concrete local tasks of the working collectivities,” disseminating information on labour contests and production performers, as well as “a critical appraisal of harmful things.” See: Eugen Denize, Cezar Măță, 139.
46. *Despre Agitația vizuală*, 50–52.
47. Ibid.
48. CNA Cluj, Fond Sfatul Popular al Regiunii Cluj - Secția Secretariat, file 5/1951, 15.



49. For further details, see: *Despre Agitația vizuală*, 28–30.
50. CNA Cluj, Fond Comitetul Regional PMR Cluj – Secția Agrară, file 18/1957, 178.
51. *Despre Agitația vizuală*, 17.
52. For instance: “Long Live the First Collective Farm in Cluj County.” See the photomontage made at the inauguration of the “Tractorul Roșu” (“Red Tractor”) GAC of Luna de Jos, Cluj County, in *Lupta Ardealului*, V, no. 900, July 29, 1949, 4–5.
53. *Despre Agitația vizuală*, 54.
54. For further details, see: Eugen Denize, 211–217.
55. Apud Eugen Denize, Cezar Măță, 164–165.
56. Eugen Denize, 136.
57. CNA Cluj, Fond Comitetul Regional PMR Cluj – Secția Agrară, file 225/1953, 59.
58. Dumitru Curuz, “Criterii și reguli metodice de utilizare a tehnicilor vizuale și audiovizuale în propaganda politică,” in Gheorghe Arădăvoaice, coord., *Metodica propagandei politice* (București: Editura Militară, 1987), 290.
59. See: Claudiu Degeratu, Octavian Roske, 57–58.
60. CNA Cluj, Fond Comitetul Regional PMR Cluj – Secția Propagandă și Agitație, file 56/1960, 144.

### **Abstract**

#### Between Persuasion and Coercion

#### The Collectivization of Agriculture in Romania (1949–1962)

Officially launched during the March 3-5, 1949 plenary meeting, the collectivization of agriculture caused deep transformations of the Romanian villages. Given the vast rural population at the end of the Second World War, the Romanian communist regime decided to pursue the socialist transformation of agriculture at all costs as long as it accomplished the subjugation of the rural population. For this purpose, the communist authorities used manipulation and persuasion, on the one hand, and, on the other, an entire arsenal of coercive means: economic pressures, imprisonments and convictions of the peasants.

### **Keywords**

collectivization, persuasion, propaganda, repression, rural community

