

LL -  
16 Feb  
VII - 659

BULGARIA

STANDARD OF LIVING (3200)  
Food (3201)  
Prices (3204)

The Scarcity Of Foodstuff Continues

SOURCE TRIESTE: Confidential source.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: End of December 1952.

EVAL. COMMENT: An interesting report, but it contains only a repetition of what the same source has already reported several times, with slight variations.

\* \* \* \*

From a letter which was sent to our source through irregular channels we had once more a confirmation of the scarcity of milk and dairy products such as butter, kashkaval and sirene cheese.

A milk ration is issued only to children under five i.e. 0.5 liter per day and on medical prescriptions at 3.60 Lei per liter.

Butter and cheese instead are available from time in limited quantities, though - reason for which the buyers have to line up for hours at a stretch waiting for their turn and get 0.5 kg per person.

But the thing which is really silly and ridiculous to the citizens is the fact that in the shop windows of the "Serdica" cooperative there are displayed packages of butter and "lacta" cheese on view consisting of cardboard or wood and only wrapped up in the original paper generally used for these items as well as milk and youghourt bottles filled with plaster.

The SFFIA people say that this scarcity of foodstuff is caused by the considerable volume of exports without counting the considerable quantities of milk which are withheld by the producers who sell them on the black market.

Sugar is also scarce. This item is only occasionally distributed, 0.5 kg per person, and can be bought only after having been for hours in a line outside the State shops.

(Over)

(cont'd)

exposed to the cold and snowy weather, quite often lines of more than 200 people can be seen outside these shops. The distribution of sugar lasts one hour only, and at the same time for all shops (for instance from 1600 to 1700 hours.) This system has been adapted so as to avoid abuses and to prevent people from getting sugar at more than one shop.

The "agit-prop" is spreading rumors, for the Party, that the scarcity of sugar is due to the bad quality of the fruit harvest 1952 which owing to its bad quality was not suited for export and had to be utilized for marmalades and jams. However, even if this were the case, it is difficult to understand why, then, only two or three different types of marmalade which were already on sale in 1951, can be found on the market. According to certain rumors also the marmalades prepared with sugar are sent to the USSR.

EVAL. COMMENT II: The scarcity of milk, dairy products and sugar was reported many times by the same source (see Item No. 14859/52, 15213/52, 15358/52 and 15377/52) and by other sources (see Item Nos. 14858/52 and 14981/52.)

The drought of 1952 was also a reason for the scarcity of sugar (see Item No. 36/53,) as it damaged not only the fruit crops, but also that of sugar beets.

End.