

LL  
8 October 1951  
NL/617

RUMANIA

STANDARD OF LIVING  
Prices

Bread is now being sold without ration cards at the price of 76 Lei for a loaf of 700 grams. Since August 1951, black bread has also been sold freely at 40 Lei a kilogram. Of course, there are always long queues in front of state centers of sale and supply. The people in the queues usually are very impatient, as they have to hurry to their places of work lest they be fined or even fired for being late.

Fish, which is now the only food available for the poor, was not seen at all during the summer. It reappeared around 15 August 1951 in very small quantities, and only at the Rompescarie (state trade organization.) Enormous queues form in front of Rompescarie agencies as early as 0500 hours; but even so, many have to turn back empty-handed.

Vegetables can only be obtained through Apronar (another state agency,) which sells them at very high prices. The peasant producers have been promised the free sale of vegetables. If they try to do so, however, their products usually are bought by militiamen at a very cheap price, to be then delivered to Apronar. Potatoes have now reached the price of 22 to 24 Lei per kilogram.

Sunflower seed oil, so popular now because of the shortage of olive oil, is distributed in quantities of 400 grams a month, only to those in the "field of work." Those who cannot claim this privileged position, have to buy it on the free market at the price of 400 to 500 Lei a kilogram.

Lard is now sold at 540 to 560 Lei a kilogram.

Since February 1951, there has not been any meat in the shops, neither beef nor pork. It appeared again about 15 August: pork at 320 Lei a kilogram, and beef of three qualities: 1st class at 260 Lei a kilogram, 2nd class at 200 Lei, 3rd class at 160 Lei. It is distributed only by Comcar (state agency.)

Rice can now be found on the free market only. State grocery stores and cooperatives have had none since June 1951, and even before only a half kilo of rice a month and per head, was sold.

ITEM No 8677

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(cont'd)

Although Rumania has five important paper factories, it is hardly possible to buy half-sheets of paper and envelopes anywhere else than in state stationery shops, and only at special hours. Otherwise it is impossible to find any white paper at all.

It is also almost impossible to get any building timber. Even when wood is needed for a coffin, a special permit has to be obtained on the grounds of a certificate, and the price of timber is then 5,500 Lei per cubic meter.

Generally speaking under such conditions even highly paid skilled factory workers calculate that by their monthly wages they can provide only for about ten days of comparatively decent living.

DATE OF OBSERVATION:

Current period

EVAL. COMMENT:

Source : fairly reliable  
Information: partly confirmed by  
other sources.