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June 22  
XI-1512 /G/

BULGARIA

EDUCATION /1000/  
Kindergarten /1005/

WOMEN /3400/  
Motherhood /3405/

MATERNITY AID AND CHILD CARE.

SOURCE ATHENS: A 30-year-old Greek woman, repatriated  
hostage.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: 1944 to January 1955.

EVALUATION COMMENT: The present regime encourages by all  
means the increase of birth-rate and takes equal care of  
legitimate and illegitimate children.

The main task of kindergartens and  
boarding schools is to take away the children from the in-  
fluence of the family and to educate them in a Communist  
spirit.

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In Audience Analysis source had stated that one of  
the things she liked best about the regime in Bulgaria was  
its hospital attention, in particular care of mothers. Stating  
that the state gave preferential treatment to mothers of il-  
legitimate children, source said that so far as pre-natal  
care was concerned, a woman went once every month to the  
doctor for examination. When time for delivery came, she  
went into the hospital and was allowed to stay there for  
eight days free. If "the mother was married she would then  
return to her home and visit the hospital every two weeks  
to receive rations both for the child and for herself. This  
ration," said source, "consisted of two cans of evaporated  
milk /one half kilo each,/ two kilos of white flour, one  
kilo of sugar, vitamins and medicaments if either the child  
or the mother had need of them.

If however the child was illegitimate, then the  
mother could stay six months free in the hospital, that is  
to say until the child was weaned. When she left the hos-  
pital, she would be given 600 leva /old money/ and would then

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go directly into a job which the government would have found her in the meantime. If during the ensuing eight months she did not return to see her baby then, under the law, the child became the ward of the government and the mother had no further rights over it. The government would bring up the child and put it free through school.

Source stated that there were many stories circulating in Bulgaria as to the reason for this preferential treatment of illegitimate children. "I have heard one which seems most in favor at the moment. It says that during his childhood Gheorghi DIMITROV had many friends who were illegitimate children, but who were intelligent and capable but could not go ahead in life, because the law did not give them the same rights as were given legitimate children. That is why" said source, "when he came to power he promulgated a law for the protection of illegitimate children." Another story according to source is: "Apparently a young unmarried girl had a child and being ashamed of this she drowned herself and the child in the river. Several days later the militia /this was at the beginning of the Communist regime/ found the body. The story was told to Gheorghi DIMITROV and he immediately ordered a law passed for the protection of illegitimate children."

According to source all children can be put in a nursery where a doctor and nurses look after them up to the age of three while their mothers are working. The child could either be a partial boarder and be taken out once every week to spend the weekend at home, or be left for the day only and go home in the evening. "Up to the age of three children are in the Detski gradini, /Kindergarten/ where they can stay until seven, when they begin their education. Source added that in the Detski gradini of KNIAJEVO a special type of anti-religious education was given. All children were taken in to a dining room where they took their places and then prayed to God to give them something to eat. It was in vain; the food did not come. Then the children were taken to another dining room and there they prayed to Premier Vulko CHERVENKOV, this time the food came - bread and cheese, butter and milk," said source.

"At the age of seven the children go into a boarding school where in the morning they follow school studies and in the afternoon prepare their lessons for the following day. During the summer they are sent either to the sea or to the mountains depending upon the health of the child. All possible medical attention is provided and the proletarian classes are the best fed. After finishing school the child can continue to study in the University of the country or even in those of other Communist countries. Children are taught classical dancing, popular dancing, music and to play all kinds of musical instruments."

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The source who related this said that she still had her little girl, aged ten, in one of these State boarding schools. Although the mother had repatriated to Greece, she was very happy that she has left her child behind, even though the child was without family. She said "I am very happy that my daughter is there. Even when I was working I kept her in a boarding school and I took her out once a week. I was happy and not anxious because I knew she was in good hands. Nearly all the working women I was with left their children in similar schools because it is difficult to look after a child when one is working; it is difficult to see them and to feed them and see that they study their lessons properly, whereas in Bulgaria the school is responsible for all that. Every Sunday they go out for a walk, or on excursions or to visit theaters, operas and concerts with their teachers and all that does not cost us a penny." She said that for a child to be admitted into such a boarding school the parents have to fill out a simple paper and then the government took care of the rest.

End.