

LL
28 Feb
VII-667BULGARIASTANDARD OF LIVING (3200)Food (3201)Prices (3204)SOFIA's Population Feeds On BonesSOURCE TRIESTE: Confidential source.DATE OF OBSERVATION: End of December 1952.

EVAL. COMMENT: Bones being sold without ration cards before the monetary reform (May 1952) has been reported (see Item No. 6488/51.) A reappearance of this item on the Bulgarian food market is unknown to this office.

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Immediately after the 9 September 1944 and Bulgaria's occupation by the Soviet troops there was an extraordinary shortage of fresh meat. The butcher shops of the towns only sold bare bones. Not everybody could buy meat on the black market and many Bulgarians had to be content with the bones which were no good for anything but a kind of poorly tasting and unsubstantial broth. Everybody knew that all fresh meat was supplied to the "liberating" Soviet troops, but the Communists never wanted to admit that this was the truth. At that time the slogan "the Germans have robbed us of everything" was an vogue and with this slogan the Communists tried to justify the shortage or the rather total lack of several foodstuffs and other items.

Years passed by and the situation grew a bit better especially when the occupational troops left the country. But then the monetary reform radically changed the living conditions of the Bulgarian citizens. The state shops were filled with goods, a certain well-being seemed to be due, but soon an all too cruel reality disappointed all hopes since the new prices were far too high to be afforded by the majority of the population.

Now, after eight years of "building up socialism," bare bones are re-appearing on the Bulgarian market and are sold at all the butcheries of SOFIA. After these bones are deprived of all meat (which is used for sausages) and are

(Over)

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sold at 7.50 Leva the kilo without any limitations as to the sales. It should be noted that people compete in trying to get a kilo of these bones and that lines of more than one hundred people wait in front of the butcher shops, although the price of 7.50 Leva corresponds to half a day's pay of a laborer. People therefore prefer to buy the bones, instead of meat because the price of the latter is altogether inaccessible for most Bulgarians.

End.