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April 17
V-768/A

BULGARIA

AGRICULTURE (0200)
Collectivization (0202)

LIFE ON THE COLLECTIVE FARM.

SOURCE ISTANBUL: A 36-year-old Bulgarian escapee farmer from RAZDEL who escaped together with his third wife in October 1955.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: October 1955.

EVALUATION COMMENT: This report well illustrates the results achieved so far in the field of collectivization and the Communists' right to boast of them. Although the earnings of cooperative farm members were slightly raised in 1955, the Bulgarian farmer's lot is still far worse than that of the average industrial worker.

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"The RAZDEL collective farm was set up in 1948 and at that time only 40 of the village's 360 families joined the T.K.Z.S. In 1950, 15 families were deported from RAZDEL to northern Bulgaria because members of these families had escaped to Turkey and Greece. Village authorities also announced that farmers refusing to join the collective farm would likewise be deported. This scared the entire population into joining the collective farm, and by 1951 no independent farmers were left at RAZDEL.

"Those who had voluntarily joined the T.K.Z.S. in 1948 had a couple of good years at the beginning. When, however, the entire village joined the collective farm, the situation changed and for the past five years RAZDEL collective farm members were not properly rewarded for the heavy work they must perform.

"In 1955 my wife and I had accumulated 509 workdays until the 1st of October. I figured we could have had another 60 to 70 workdays till the end of the year. The collective farm was giving one workday per dekare of land contributed to the farm, which meant that I was to get an extra 100 workdays. Thus, our total at the end of the year would have reached an estimated 680 workdays.

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"In 1955 production at the RAZDEL collective farm was as follows: 480,000 kilos of wheat, 180,000 kilos of rye, 200,000 kilos of barley, 160,000 kilos of vetch, 140,000 kilos of oats and 160,000 kilos of maize.

"The area of the RAZDEL T.K.Z.S. covers 140,000 dekares. Most of the land is used to produce the cereals listed above, while 200 dekares produce beets, 800 dekares are used in the cultivation of cotton, 600 dekares are set aside for tobacco growing, 1,000 dekares grow sunflower. In 1955, 90 tons of sunflower seed were produced.

"In 1954 the crop was very poor and the collective farm had to borrow 100 tons of cereals from the State. In 1955 the State was repaid in wheat. Out of the 480 tons of wheat grown on the farm in 1955, only 80 tons were left to the farm members. The 400 tons of wheat were accounted for as follows: 100 tons given to the State to cover the 1954 loan, 125 tons set aside as seed, governmental delivery quota (nariad) 75 tons, 80 tons as payment for services rendered by the ELHOVO M.T.S. (Machine tractor station,) 20 tons set aside for the fund of the aged and orphans.

"The 180 tons of rye were distributed according to the following table: 8 tons to the M.T.S., 16 tons set aside for seed, 10 tons for the fund of the aged and orphans and 146 tons distributed to farm members. Only wheat and rye is distributed to the farmers as grain. Vetch, oats, barley, maize are used as fodder.

"According to my estimates, the population of RAZDEL will have accumulated a total of 190-200,000 workdays by the end of 1955. This figure corresponds to the 1953 and 1954 results. On the presumption that my estimates are correct, farm members will receive 0.4 kilos of wheat and 0.68 kilos of rye per workday. In my case, my wife and I, having a total of 680 workdays, would have received roughly 735 kilos of mixed grain. This quantity would have to serve as basic foodstuffs for my wife, my two sons and myself for an entire year. A rough calculation shows that each member of my family would have 500 grams of grain per day. One has to calculate a loss of 20 per cent in the process of grinding and baking so that each member of my family would be left with 420 grams of pure flour.

"On the farm, however, the members received bread prepared by the T.K.Z.S. bakery. During the summer months adults received one kilo per day and children 800 grams. Thus, my family actually received 3.6 kilos per day. During the winter months adults received 800 grams and children 600 grams per day bringing my family's total to 2.8 kilos. An annual average will show that my family received 3.2 kilos of bread per day. According to the calculation given above, it will be seen that we were given only 1,680 kilos of grain per day. In short, this

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means that our earnings in grain do not cover by far our consumption in bread. Actually, with every passing year my debt to the farm administration increased. In 1954, I had borrowed over 200 kilos of wheat and in 1955, as shown above, my family consumed more wheat in the form of bread than we earned. My guess is that by the end of 1955 I owed more than 400 kilos in grain. Almost all members of the RAZDEL collective farm are in debt to the administration.

"I figured that members of the farm would receive 100 grams of sunflower oil per workday in 1955. During the first ten months of the year I had drawn in advance much more 'olio' than I was to get at the end of the year.

"I do not know how much cheese was produced annually at the collective farm but in 1954 RAZDEL's T.K.Z.S. delivered 120 tons to the State as 'nariad.' In the same year my family received 60 kg of cheese.

"The farm had an estimated 8,000 sheep in 1955. The fleece wool left over after complying with the state delivery demands was divided among the members of the farm. In 1954 my family received 14.9 kilos. After washing, combing and spinning the wool into yarn, we were left with only six kilos of coarse handspun yarn. Needless to say, this yarn by far did not cover my family's needs in clothing.

"Members of the RAZDEL collective farm were paid 1.8 leva per workday in 1954. It was rumored that in 1955 this amount would be upped to 2 leva. Figuring on 680 workdays during 1955 I could have expected 1,360 leva in cash. I had a debt of 750 leva dating back to 1954 so that the farm administration would have paid us 610 leva. Out of this sum they would have deducted 160 leva as contributions of my wife and myself toward the latest State loan. Finally, not more than 450 leva would have been paid out to us. I do not think that I have to explain that this money would not have sufficed to cover any one of our many needs. During the summer months both my wife and I had to eat in the fields and bought food from the farm's traveling canteen. By October 1955 we had a debt of 110 leva to the canteen. During the year we had taken vegetables against later payment. I calculated that for the cabbage, potatoes, fruit and milk we had bought during the first ten months of 1955, I owed 190 leva to the farm administration.

"Although I had 100 dekares of land in the collective farm, I still had to pay an annual tax of 150 leva for the two dekares of vineyard and five sheep which I was allowed to keep. My income from the vineyard and my earnings at the collective farm were still not sufficient to cover even our debts not to speak of any further needs. In 1954 I had to deliver 170 kilos of grapes from my vineyard. I was left with roughly

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200 liters of wine and some 40 liters of 'raki.' In 1955 the vine crop was very poor and I had to deliver only eight kilos as 'nariad' but I was left with less than 50 liters of wine. I also owned 12 chickens and I was able to sell their eggs at 50 stotinki the egg. With the income from my vineyard and poultry I barely managed to cover my needs in salt, kerosene, soap and cigarettes. We never had any money to buy clothing articles. In 1948 I owned three good suits and two suits for everyday wear plus a number of pants and shirts I used to wear in the fields. At the time of my escape I had only one good suit and the suit I was wearing. My wife had only one cotton dress and the one good dress in which she was married. My two sons had one pair of shoes between themselves and as the elder one had outgrown these shoes he had to go about barefoot because we could not buy him a new pair. I want to stress that our case was by far not the worst. Two of us were bread-earners and we had only two children to look after. In many families there was only one bread-earner and more children to look after."

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