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INFORMATION REPORT

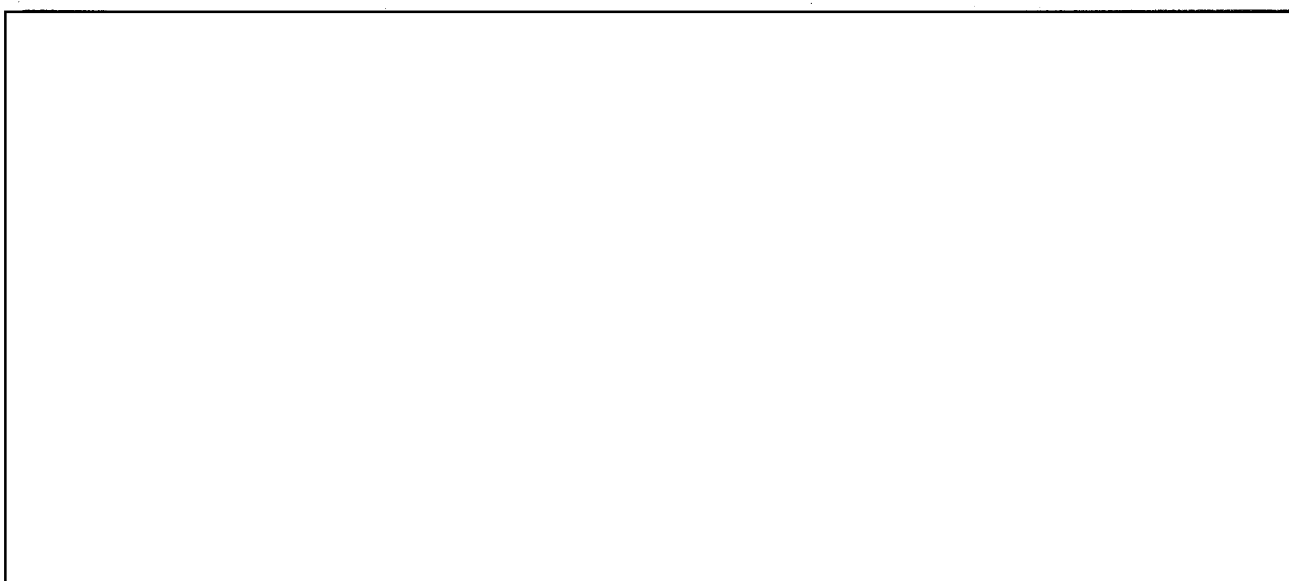
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1. The system of United Farm Cooperatives (Jednotne zemedelske druzstva -JZD) was created shortly after the Communists came to power in 1948. The main purpose was the eventual collectivization of all farmland in the country, establishing agriculture on a large scale with farm machinery appropriate for farming large plots of ground. The JZD was to be modeled after the Soviet system of collectives.
2. Four types of farm cooperatives were instituted:
 - a. Under the "communal cultivation" (spolecny osev) cooperative, each farmer owned and worked his own plot of land, but helped the other farmers on their farms, and the farmers decided together what would be planted and how much. At harvest time, the farmers in the cooperative helped each other with the harvest, but the yields on each man's ground belonged to him. From the yield, each farmer was required to turn in an amount fixed by the District National Committee. This amount was usually less than that required from the completely independent

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farmer, who was forced to farm a poor plot of ground on the outskirts of the town or village. In 1951, approximately 70% of the farmers near the town of Staropce, District of Mnichovo Hradiste, belonged to this type of farm cooperative.

- b. Under the second type of cooperative, called "farm cooperative - second type" (zemedelske druzstvo - druheho typu), the land belonged collectively to all the members of the cooperative and no longer remained the property of individuals. However, the plots of land were still divided by old fences and small roads as before. Work in the fields was done collectively. Production yields were turned in by the cooperative as a whole. The proportion of the yields which had to be turned in were smaller than those required from the first type of cooperative. Whatever was left over from crop yields after quotas were turned in was divided among the cooperative members, the division being based on previous average yields from each farm, so that a larger landholder got more from this distribution than the others. Horses and equipment were pooled, were placed in cooperative stalls and barns, and were used by everyone in the cooperative. No one received any reimbursement for his tools or horses.
 - c. Under the third type of cooperative, "farm cooperative - third type", (zemedelske druzstvo - tretioho typu), all the fields in the cooperative were plowed to form one large field, leaving no lines or fences of division. The land was owned by the cooperative. Production yields were filled according to quotas assigned by the District National Committee; what was left was divided among all the cooperative members. Animals and equipment became cooperative property.
 - d. The last type of cooperative, "farm cooperative - fourth type", (zemedelske druzstvo - ctvrteho typu) was the type most favored by the Communist regime and most disliked by the farmers. Members of this type of cooperative were paid by the hour. In practice, each farmer was paid a flat rate of 1,000 crowns per month with the understanding that at harvest time there would be a balancing of the books and he would receive the rest of his salary, based on the total number of hours he had worked during the year. In most cases the farmer received 3,000 to 4,000 crowns at the end of the year, but in a few cases farmers had to repay some of the money they had been advanced. This never occurred because an inadequate number of hours had been worked, but because of poor yields. Under this type of cooperative everything depended on good yields, and in areas where the land was poor, farmers had a very difficult time in producing sufficient to pay for costs. This type of cooperative maintained laundries and nurseries so that the women could work in the fields.
3. All these types of cooperatives were known as JZDs. Each JZD maintained an office in the village where its members lived. Each JZD had its own committee, a committee chairman (predseda), and at least one administrative officer (spravni urednik). The chairman of the committee had no authority, simply presiding over meetings. The administrative officer handled the JZD accounts. The committee held regular meetings at which it decided how to carry out the farm program in accordance with the plans of the agricultural referent of the District National Committee and with decisions of the local Party officials. The committee decided, for instance, what land would be used for each crop in order to fulfill production quotas at harvest time.

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4. There was a county secretary (ujezdni tajemnik) for each few JZDs; he was the most important man in the JZD organization. He maintained contact between the JZDs and the district agricultural referent, receiving orders from the referent about what and how much the JZDs were to produce and reporting regularly to the referent about the conditions of crops in his cooperatives. He maintained contact between the JZDs, the local Communist organization, and the district Communist committee. (All members of the local Party organization governing committee were members of the local farm cooperative.) The county secretary also arranged for obtaining fertilizer, arranged for work brigades to help with harvesting, and submitted complaints to the police in cases of suspected agricultural sabotage. During the harvest season, it was his job to see to it that all available farm machinery was fully utilized.
5. In theory, the JZDs were not told exactly how much of each crop they were to plant, but in reality the amount planted was directly dependent on the amount of seed allotted to each JZD, and this was decided by the district agricultural referent. On the basis of the seed issued, the agricultural referent decided how much of the harvest must be turned in to the State. The actual operation of the cooperatives depended very largely on the district agricultural referent and on the JZD county secretary.
6. [redacted] there were from 15 to 20 farm cooperatives in the Mnichovo Hradiste District, the majority of which were of the third type described above. Since the Mnichovo Hradiste District is predominantly agricultural, and there are about 200 villages in the entire district, this meant that only about 10% of all the farmers in the district belonged to farm cooperatives. The idea of farm cooperatives was generally unpopular, and the program met with considerable resistance. In a village in Slovakia called Mokrat, near Dolny Kubin [redacted] there were many meetings of the farmers at which they were urged to join a farm cooperative. Each time, the farmers walked out of the meeting en masse. Near the town of Zazriva [redacted], 20 km. north of Dolny Kubin, in early 1951, the agricultural referent of the District National Committee was killed by farmers when he started a vigorous campaign to set up farm cooperatives in the area. Slovak farmers offered the strongest resistance to the formation of farm cooperatives, and there was a much smaller number of cooperatives in Slovakia than in Moravia and Bohemia. [redacted]
- [redacted] collectivization of all lands in Czechoslovakia was to be completed by the end of 1952. [redacted]
7. A farmer who refused to join one of the four types of farm cooperatives was given land on the outskirts of the town or village, where, in many cases, the land was much poorer and less accessible to the farmer's house. Such farmers were allowed to remain "independent", but all their farm equipment was confiscated, except for scythes, and they were forced to wait their turn in using equipment from one of the state-operated machinery and tractor stations. They were serviced only after the needs of all the cooperatives were satisfied. (First priority was given the fourth-type cooperative, then the third, second, and first.) Cooperatives of the second, third, and fourth types were allowed to keep their farm equipment and machinery, provided they had formed their cooperative prior to 1949; those formed after a certain date in 1949 had their machinery confiscated and were required to request the necessary machinery from the appropriate district State Tractor Station. The independent farmer was required to pay the same exorbitant prices for the use of machinery as the cooperatives. The main concern of the independent farmer was to get his grain into bundles, because it could then wait

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some time for the thrasher from the State Tractor Station. During the period of waiting, StB members harassed the independent farmer for not threshing his grain, accusing him of letting his land lie fallow and of agricultural sabotage. The StB members were well aware that the farmer was waiting his turn for the use of the thrasher, but this sort of pressure was intended to convince the farmers they must join cooperatives. Independent farmers also had difficulty in getting seed for planting and proper amounts of fertilizer, since they were last on the lists for the distribution of these items. Production yield quotas to be handed in by the independent farmer were much higher than those of the cooperatives. In some cases, it was judged that the farmer was not able "properly to take care of his land", and his land was automatically handed over to the cooperative. None the less, independent farmers always had larger yields per hectare than the cooperatives. There were many reasons for this. Because the private farmer knew the land was still his, he tilled his land more conscientiously and carefully. He went to the fields at perhaps five o'clock in the morning. The farmer in the cooperative felt that he was working on someone else's land and was not enthusiastic about it. The farmers on cooperatives often sauntered out to the fields late in the morning and went about the work carelessly. The prevailing opinion was, "Why should I slave for a State that is represented by someone who does nothing but ride around the fields on a motorcycle giving orders?" When Sunday work brigades were organized, most of the farmers gave excuses about sick wives, ailing children, etc. Cooperative members often argued bitterly among themselves. The Czech farmer could not accept the idea of working for someone else or of someone else tilling the soil that had been handed down to him from many generations.

beets, for example, were always larger and nicer from the private farmer. Cooperative farms were almost always grown up in weeds, making harvesting with machinery very difficult. The private farmer always kept his fields clean. The cooperative in the village of Jestřebí /5036N-1436E/ was an example of a very inefficient, poorly-managed, unproductive cooperative. The farmers were very bitter, machinery seemed to be in very poor condition, and yields were below normal. This was the cooperative with which I was most familiar.

there were cooperatives which were in even worse shape, especially those cultivating poor soil. On the other hand, there were some that were better off. The cooperative at Bohatice, for example, was held up as an example of efficiency, where the farmers made a substantial profit each year. The reasons given were that the soil was rich in that locality, the farmers planted a lot of fruit, and the men managing the cooperative were well-schooled in their tasks. Such cooperatives were rare, however, and the average cooperative in Bohemia and Moravia was only slightly better off than the one in Jestřebí. Generally speaking, morale of farmers throughout the republic was very low.

8. The farm cooperatives had various difficulties. In September 1951, the cooperative in the village of Jestřebí in the Ceska Lipa District borrowed one Soviet-type Stalinec-6 grain combine from each of the State Tractor Stations at Mimon /5039N-1444E/, Doksy /5034N-1440E/, and Mnichovo Hradiste. The wheat to be harvested had grown very tall, resulting in an unusual amount of straw, and caused frequent stoppage of the combines. There was little grain in the head, but the stalk was tall. Upon becoming ripe, much of the grain had fallen to the ground. The sickles on the combines could not be lowered enough to pick up the fallen grain, resulting in great losses to the farmers.

The canvases on the combine were slit during the night, and these had to be replaced. Other stoppages had been caused by the breaking of weak bolts and screws in places of high tension and where stronger material was needed. During

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operation, bolts, nuts, pulleys, springs, axles, and other parts would break and fly off into the field. Other working parts became loose and damaged the insides of the combine. Power-drive chains snapped at the slightest strain because of poor metal, and we spent much time looking for the missing links because spare parts were hard to get. To get a new part, the old part always had to be turned in. Critical points of heavy wear and friction were made of cast iron or other weak metals instead of hard steel. Extra long bolts protruded all over the combine, frequently causing minor body injury and tearing clothing and made working around the combine very unsafe. The exhaust mechanism, which was to separate the chaff from the grain, frequently clogged up the whole combine. When the farmers saw how unsatisfactory our work was, they became angered and insisted that we stop immediately. We stopped and the agricultural referent from the District National Committee was summoned. He was followed by members of the StB and local Communist Party leaders, who tried to charge us with sabotage. No one dared say that the Soviet combine had any faults. Finally, the agricultural referent and all those present decided that the task could not be finished with the Soviet combine. We were then instructed to cut the grain with a broadcast binder and throw the bundles into the Soviet combine, which followed closely behind. Older women, presumably the farmers' wives, were assigned to tossing the bundles of wheat into the combine. This brought about the danger of running over the women, especially at night, because the machinery had no lights.

the wheat had to be cut and harvested at all costs. This way of handling the dry grain caused great losses; the combine continued to choke up and break down. During all these operations, the StB members kept riding about the field on their motorcycles urging [] to keep working, and shouting that "the republic demanded it of us".

The farmers themselves wanted to quit for the night, but were told to continue working. When work did stop for the night, one of the farmers was assigned to guard the combine and was held responsible for anything that happened to it.

Shortly after, a thresher was brought in, and the job was completed at even greater losses in grain than before, because of the handling procedure necessary for threshing.

the long stalks of grain were caused by too rapid a growth caused by too much fertilizer. This resulted in long stems, much straw, and less grain. [] because of this and the poor job the combine was doing, they would be lucky if they harvested 1,500 kg. of grain per hectare.

The State Tractor Station demanded full payment for the use of the machinery. In protest, after assembling armed with pitchforks, hammers, and other tools, the cooperative members demanded redistribution of the farm lands in the cooperative. They made their demands to the agricultural referent, who promised that their demands would be given full consideration after the harvest.

one farmer was arrested during these demonstrations and other farmers were arrested later.

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