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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY	Bulgaria	REPORT	[Redacted]
SUBJECT	Conditions at the TKZS in Kromidovo, Petrich Okoliya	DATE DISTR.	24 September 1954
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This is UNEVALUATED Information

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(FOR KEY SEE REVERSE)

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[Large Redacted Area]

1. When the cooperative farm, made up of several Party members and landless migrants, was formed in Kromidovo (N 41-27, E 23-22), Petrich Okoliya, by order of the Party, none of the farmers regarded it seriously and considered it as a Party test. During the fall of 1950, after a year of existence, as all expected, the cooperative farm was on the verge of dissolution because of poor material results.
2. However, instead of dissolving the cooperative farm, the Okoliya Committee of the Party decided that it be supported and expanded. Since none of the peasants wanted to join voluntarily, a strong and forceful campaign of agitation was begun stressing the advantages of the cooperative methods of land cultivation and promising aid from the state.
3. In the summer of 1950, persistent efforts were exerted for the collection of state quotas, back taxes, taxes, fines, etc. which the people were unable to pay. The livestock of several farmers was sold at auction since they were unable to fulfill their obligations to the state. In the fall of 1950, agitators hinted and later openly said, that all farmers who joined the cooperative farm would be excused from paying back taxes and fines.

25 YEAR RE-REVIEW

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STATE	x	ARMY	x	NAVY	x	AIR	x	FBI		AEC					
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(Note: Washington Distribution Indicated By "X"; Field Distribution By "#")

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4. The Bulgarian Agrarian Bank (Bulgarska Zemedelska Banka) also assisted in the collections effort. Previously, bank loan payments could be very easily deferred by maintaining interest payments, but during the collections effort, the bank sent warning letters that it would proceed with compulsory collection of their receipts. At the same time, the agitators informed the farmers concerned that the debts of those who joined the cooperative would be transferred to it. This was confirmed by bank personnel.
5. Farmers who were half inclined to submit applications provided they were allowed to sell freely some of their more expensive equipment or livestock, were promised that property invested in the cooperative would be paid for at its real value. Farmers who showed reluctance in submitting applications were threatened with resettlement and concentration camps by the Militia and Party functionaries. As a result of this systematically conducted pressure, all of the farmers submitted membership applications.
6. Immediately after this, special commissions consisting of cooperative farmers of long standing took the livestock, equipment, and fodder of the private farmers and appraised everything far below the real value. The promises given previously to some private farmers that they would be permitted to sell their livestock and equipment were broken and everything was taken into the cooperative farm. As of August 1953 nothing had been paid to any private farmer despite the low prices. A hand written description of the land, its number of decares and location, signed by the chairman of the cooperative, was given to the farmer. It did not contain an official seal. Farmers were permitted to retain the deeds.
7. The cooperative farm is administered by the chairman assisted by the Farm Soviet (Stopanski Sŭvet) which consists of four members. This group meets every evening to determine the next day's work. The Farm Soviet gives orders to the brigade leaders who select the necessary laborers by personally visiting the cooperative farmers at their homes and delegating the work. Often the brigade leaders are as late as 7:00-8:00 a.m. before gathering and distributing their workers. Every evening the brigade leader toured the fields of his subordinates and measured the amount of work done during the day after which the brigade leader took this information to the chairman of the cooperative farm who totalled it and reported to the deputy chairman of the People's Council (knetskiya namestnik). He, in turn, informed someone in Petrich by telephone as to the number of decares worked during the day. This work accountability system was carried on not only for seasonal activity such as planting and harvesting, but also existed in the normal life of the cooperative farm.
8. The same information is supplied to the bookkeeping department which computed the work days. Brigade leaders could credit work days for their relatives and friends and reduce the work days of the other workers. This was particularly easy because many of the farmers were uneducated and had difficulty in figuring their work days. Also, the manner of classification of work done was unknown to the workers.
9. Every month the work days were computed, but often the cashier lacked the money and failed to make the payments until several days had passed. Advances were made only during the winter and in fixed amounts.  when cooperative farmers sought money to buy flour or other foods, they received instead food for sustaining their families. A few old people in the village who were without family or friends received a minimum amount of food from the cooperative. This was done because there was an order from the Party that no one was to be hungry in Bulgaria.
10. Members of a household were responsible for their own livelihood. Each farmer produced his own vegetables from a garden plot of about one decare which was left for private use. Other necessary products were bought from the cooperative store which sold only for cash. Food expenses were high because family members were separated during the work day and had to carry their own food. There was a rumor to the effect

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that a general bakery and mess hall were to be established, but this had not been done as of August 1953.

11. The farmer's food was much worse than before the formation of cooperatives. Villages were without chickens because of the lack of feed. Eggs, which had previously been a regular food item became a rarity.

12. [Redacted]

13. 25X1

14. [Redacted]

15. Before, an animal was slaughtered every week which provided the villagers with meat. Since 1950, meat has been scarce and was distributed at the rate of about 200-250 grams per person and only on important holidays. But, even on Easter of 1952, meat was not issued. On rare occasions one could find meat if an animal were sick or injured.

16. No one [Redacted] has seen or eaten rice for at least three years because it is exported. The same is true in all villages [Redacted] 25X1

[Redacted]

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17. The poor food of the workers has changed their outlook on things. All the children look undernourished and thin. There are no fat people.

18. The clothing situation was particularly difficult. Before, from one's own wool and cotton, each [Redacted] family had 4-6 pairs of under clothes, 3-4 sets of outer clothes, and always enough material for domestic needs such as bed covers and sheets. [Redacted] 25X1

[Redacted]

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19. This situation existed for many [Redacted] workers, a fact which [Redacted] will result in the next year or two in a great need for clothing. Most clothing is patched, and few have good clothes left for holidays. Families were financially unable to set aside dowries for their daughters.

20. [Redacted]

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21. All the houses of the village, [redacted] were in urgent need of repair. Broken window glass was replaced by gluing paper to the frames. This was something which had never been done before. 25X1
22. The daily farm activity was directed and controlled by organs of the Okoliya Committee [redacted]. A man sent from Petrich was in the village offices of the cooperative every day. An agronomist, who spent most of his time in the office and very rarely visited the crop fields also came often. Specialists from the Sandanski (formerly Sveti Vrach) MTS toured the area on motorcycles (motoretki) in order to determine the time when ploughing had to be done. Because of a lack of work animals, two old, small, and extremely inadequate tractors were assigned to the villages of Khursovo (N 41-28, E 23-23), Marikostinovo (N 41-26, E 23-21), and Kromidovo (N 41-27, E 23-22). The ploughing was always late. It was also always shallower than was necessary and, as a result, many times inferior to that previously done by private farmers. 25X1
23. The tractor driver (traktorist) had to plough 60 decares daily. This was impossible in the small-sized and uneven areas. There was constant friction between the TKZS and the MTS because of the poor, delayed, and expensive cultivation. [redacted] inadequate tractor tillage of the soil as the first and most important reason for the low yields. Sowing was always late. The work done by hand was always behind schedule because the ploughing was done very poorly. 25X1
24. If a member of a cooperative is sent off alone to plow a small area or to irrigate, he can rest whenever he wants, but when he works in a group, the rest signal is given by the group leader (zvenovod, grupovod). Neither the adults nor the youth of the cooperative liked the group work because they were directed by Party members, had to work under orders, and could not talk for fear of being overheard. The chief reason for hating group work was, in particular, working under the orders of simple, lazy, unrespected peasant Party members. Generally, the stringing of tobacco was performed by the women.
25. There is no evidence of sabotage in the TKZS. The age-old sentiment that "there will be goods, if there is no destruction" has not disappeared.
26. Because of the low yields obtained from the farm, the labor there is all the more looked upon as compulsory. For that reason, all the work assigned is carelessly performed. The system of payment by norms also urged the cooperative farmers to work more rapidly and less efficiently which harms or damages cultivation. The bad quality of cultivation is apparent particularly in the hoeing of crops such as cotton, sesame seeds, tobacco, and vegetables, as reflected by the poor yields. A reason for the poor results was also the organization of labor. Previously, most of the work was done early in the morning between sunrise and noon. Now, normally, work starts about 8 a.m. Working in the hot sun decreases the workers' efficiency and the quality of the work performed.
27. As a possible way of committing sabotage, informant proposes the burning of fodder storehouses. This could readily be done because they are outside the village, easily ignited, and difficult to extinguish. The damage, however, is comparatively small and the crops are easily replaced. As a convenient form of carrying out sabotage, informant refers to the flooding of sown areas at a time when they are not in need of water. The opening of irrigation canals could be done easily and unobtrusively in the evening on the way back to the village. This would be unnoticed until the next morning. The flooding of cotton, tobacco, and other seedlings, if done at a time unfavorable to their cultivation would destroy them completely and inflict a huge loss on the economy.

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28. Burning the offices of the cooperative is relatively difficult because they are located in the middle of the village near the town hall (obshtina) where there is a guard. The buildings are flimsy and could be easily burned. no fire-fighting equipment. Destruction of the account ledgers would disorganize the cooperative to some extent. But, as the work days are brought up to date and computed on a monthly basis, and can also be renoted from the books carried by the brigade leaders (brigadirite), the records kept on cooperative farmers by the administration would not be perceptibly affected. No matter what kind of sabotage was carried out in the cooperative, it would be favorable to the morale of its members although, indirectly, all would be affected materially. 25X1  
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29. the TKZS leaders are alarmed by the lack of personal interest on the part of the cooperative farmers in the farm work. He explains that the lack of interest results from the failure to receive an income from the TKZS which would stimulate labor. On the other hand, because farmers are unable to support their families, they became apathetic toward the farm. 25X1
30. The relations between the managers and members of the farm are governed by a silent and constantly growing hatred. The basis for this feeling is found in the irregular and unjust payment for labor. The chairman of the TKZS is a man without ability, experience, or knowledge. He was appointed only because he was a partisan for three days and a member of the Bulgarian Communist Party. He received pay for 450 work days plus bonuses, travel expenses, and had possibilities for embezzlement. A cooperative farmer with three working members in his family can receive a maximum pay for 300 work days per year. The fact that TKZS members see in the person of the manager the protagonist of the policy which turned them from private ownership to half-starved slaves, has increased their antipathy. According to informant, the cooperative administration was extraordinarily attentive and kind to the cooperative farmers.
31. the cooperative way of land cultivation has destroyed the basis for training Bulgarian youth in the patriarchal spirit and belief. Before, in harmonious family life, the father distributed the work among members of the family and controlled its fulfillment. He imbued his sons with Christianity, humaneness, and virtues. With the sons and wife sent to work in various places and receiving salaries of their own, the father, a former owner and family head, is now only a member of the family. As such, he lacks sufficient authority as a result of which family relations have become very poor. 25X1
32. Before, under the old custom, no one could eat alone nor before the father had eaten. Now, dispersed to different places, spending the evenings at meetings, each eats when he returns. Before, it was the custom for young girls to go home "when the lamps were lighted." Now, the possibility for friendship with young men has increased as the girls spend each evening at meetings and amusement places and come home late. This has had a continuing bad effect on morals.
33. Previously, religion and the church occupied a very substantial place in village life. The day began and ended with a prayer. Attendance at Sunday church services was an unbreakable rule. The priest was a person of authority and a man of influence in the village. Numerous church holidays and customs were strictly observed. Now, only old men and women go to church. According to informant, it is characteristic that the wives of all Party members regularly attend church services. The Communists publicly ridiculed the men and youths who attended church, and fearing future retaliatory measures, they have avoided church attendance. The priest and the church were the targets of incessant Communist attacks, for which reason they lost, to a great degree, the advantage of their influence. 25X1
34. In spite of fear, working on holidays, and fatigue, religion still has not lost its place in the Bulgarian village. in village only the homes of one or two Party members do not have an image-lamp (kandilo), and up to the present only one married couple did not have the church's blessing. Also, only one child--the son of a Party member--was buried without the church's burial service. 25X1  
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35. Fast days were observed, but the men seldom went to confession. Some went to other villages for confession.

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36. In case a cooperative farmer becomes ill, he can go to Petrich without seeking permission from anyone. If very ill, an ambulance can be called to take him to the hospital. Both the ambulance and medical service were absolutely free. It was rumored among the peasants that the doctors were very careless now in their work. Therefore, they preferred to be treated by private doctors rather than to avail themselves of the State's services.
37. Going to the market during the winter and at a time when there was no heavy work at the cooperative farm was permitted because the cooperative farmers would not work a full day anyhow. One could go to the market during the summer and work season if one had permission from the manager, brigade leader, or chairman of the TKZS. Normally, verbal permission was granted. If a member went without permission or in spite of a refusal of permission, he could be fined up to five work days, and from 10-15 work days for repetition of the offense. Fines of this type were often imposed.
38. Visits to the market were very rare since there was nothing to be sold and the villagers had no money with which to buy. Visiting relatives outside the village was done under the above mentioned conditions. Because of the lack of means, going on visits even for holidays and weddings noticeably declined. Everyone knew that in his friend's home there was the same poverty as in his own home. The fact that they could be accused of conspiring during their gatherings also held the people in check. [redacted] weddings as a characteristic case. Previously, a wedding normally lasted at least three days beginning at noon Saturday until Monday. Now they last a half day, from Sunday noon to evening. 25X1
39. Whereas before, men went to the funeral of a close friend even in the busiest season and even to other villages at a distance of 30-40 kilometers, now they avoid going to funerals even in their own village. [redacted] 25X1
40. Forced distribution of Communist newspapers compels the people to read them, but [redacted] there is no interest in them, and if the people were free to choose, no one would buy them. [redacted] Communist influence on adults is insignificant because they remember the past and see the present. Newspapers and Communist propaganda have exerted influence on the youth. The daily reading of newspapers and listening to the radio (loudspeakers were installed in every house in the village) distracted everyone's attention from the hard life and introduced new concepts and words into the peasants' speech. The high Soviet yields, which were regularly described in the papers, were the reason for constant jokes. In this connection, the peasants said that everything about the USSR must be true since there they neither had a meter (metur) with which to measure the decares nor a weighing machine (kantar) to weigh the yields and everything was done by eye. Sometimes there was forced distribution of various books by Party agitators. [redacted] 25X1
41. [redacted]
42. As incidents characteristic of village life [redacted] those such as the livestock--oxen or horses--who, on being released, run off and do not return to the cooperative farm stables in which they have lived for one or two years, but instead go to the homes of their former private owners. These incidents were common and always had a profound effect, not only among the members of a family, but also on the entire village.


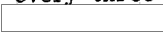

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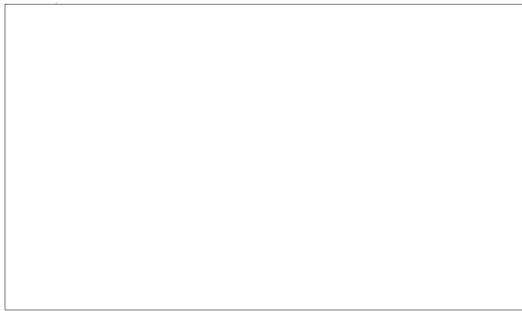
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43. Because of the peculiar character of the locality, the peasants know their own fields, and they are awaiting the return of their lands in the event the cooperative is dissolved. As for future cooperatives  If only honey and butter flowed from them, a peasant would not have to ponder, but we see that the old proverb 'For every three who are eating well, there are three hundred who are gaping' is true.  25X1
44. The coming war was the single and continual theme of conversations between relatives and friends in the cooperative farm. In all of the regime's activities, such as the compulsory planting of much cotton, the hasty gathering of the harvest and the summons to military training, the people saw signs of an approaching war. No one expressed the least doubt as to the outcome of the war. The destruction of Communism was pointed out as the only possible outcome. 25X1
45.  the village's misery was introduced by the formation of the cooperative farms. New and clean houses were not seen; singing and laughter were not heard. The men did not shave and the women did not attend to their personal appearance. Whereas previously there was a folk dance every Sunday, now only the children dance. 25X1
46. In the taverns, which before were always full of gay and mirthful people and the echoing of songs, now the patrons appear silent under the observant eye of the peasant store keeper (an agent of the Militia). The horn of plenty was exchanged for semi-starvation. Free peasant labor was replaced with compulsory work. The songs and laughter of the young ones was succeeded by the noise of the loudspeakers.



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