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COUNTRY USSR REPORT _____

TOPIC Agriculture and Food-supply of the Population in the Lutsk Area, 25X1
Wolhynia 25X1

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1. Some of the villages on the Lutsk area ($50^{\circ}45'N/24^{\circ}19'E$) are old German or Czech colonist settlements. Until 1941 the private farms located in Polish territory prior to 1939 remained unaltered under the Soviet regime. In connection with the enforced resettlements after the war, the Polish population was replaced by Ukrainians from the former Polish State territory (continued until 1948/1949) who subsequently operated the Polish farms. Collectivism started in 1948 and in early 1954 only a very few privately-owned farms were left over. Although, on the whole the kolkhose system as an enforced organization was tolerated by the rural population, the ardent wish for the individual handling of the farms still existed. The rumor after the war, according to which Marshal Zhukov had advocated, although in vain the reintroduction of private farming, was characteristic of the situation. Since only a very few new buildings were erected in connection with the collective measures, the old farm buildings were still in use.
2. In the spring of 1954, the merger of two or three kolkhoses to form one super-kolkhose, and, which after Stalin's death, had set in also in the Lutsk area, was not yet completed. These measures resulted in a considerable confusion of labor employment and, as a result of the resettling operations, caused great anger among the population. Even the promise of better conditions of life in the super-kolkhoses by establishing ambulance stations, kindergartens and similar institutions, could not remove this ill humor. Nor were the promises of the New Course successful of could the appeal for greater initiative on the privately-owned farms achieve any success, as the farmers were afraid of the imposition of increased quotas.
3. Part of the region on the Styr River in Wolhynia is swampy and clayey. Being very rich, the soil there is particularly suited for the cultivation of wheat. In the past few years the cultivation of sugar beets has considerably expanded in the Lutsk region. Live stock was rather poor. The kolkhoses themselves had only very small herds of cattle and it was strictly forbidden to slaughter young cattle. During the winter the fodder conditions were extremely bad in certain areas.

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4. All agricultural labor on the kolkhoses was carried out by the mechanical tractor stations (MTS), which, however, did not do well because they chiefly were bent on fulfilling the prescribed quota. Frictions were unavoidable as in such cases the kolkhoses refused to pay the laborers the prearranged wages. As a result of continuous day-and-night work, the machines and tractors of the MTS were overstressed and, as replacement parts frequently were unavailable, general overhaul of the machines was possible only in winters. As a result, the machines frequently failed.
5. The labor efficiency of kolkhosniki were laid down as daily output (trudodyen) which, however, exceeded an actual daily output, and the result was that the average kolkhosnik reached a yearly average of 80 to 100 dayworks, while a specialist, e.g. a blacksmith was credited 150 day works. The cash wages per day work were 2.80 rubles, while the additional grain allowance, differed between 400 and 800 grams for the various kolkhoses. The amount of the grain allowance which depended on the fulfillment of the quota fixed by the state and the payment in kind to the MTS, by no means met the demand of bread so that the kolkhosniki frequently bought their bread in town after early February, provided that they had enough ready money. Many Kolkhoses could only avoid starvation by stealing grain. In addition, they collected herbs to make soups during the period they were short of bread. The crop from the small plot belonging to the privately-owned farm was left to the kolkhosnik even if he did not fulfill the quota and was his only means of subsistence.
6. There was a most serious shortage of laborers at the kolkhoses, and foolish operation, low working morale and discipline worsened the situation. Many a farmer migrated to the town because of low wages at the kolkhoses. Promises to encourage and spur the kolkhosniki, made by the agents of the central committees in Lutsk, remained unsuccessful. Poor results also were realized by tentatively employing town workers from affiliated plants or affiliated administration during the peak periods mostly on Sundays, as the drafted men only reluctantly performed this additional and unpaid Sunday work. The kolkhoses were completely unable to organize this sudden affluence of laborers.
7. The privately-owned plot surface allotted to one laborer was 0.25 hektar for two laborers 0.40 hektar and keeping one cow and two hogs also was granted (one hektar - 2.47 acres). Potatoes were almost exclusively cultivated year in, year out and, as no change of fruit was provided and no fertilizers or appropriate seed corn were supplied, the annual crops dropped considerably in the course of time. Since no pastures, but only way barks were available and, in addition, goat milk was not deliverable, the kolkhosniki preferred keeping a goat in lieu of a cow, and since food for the hogs generally was insufficient in quantity, they preferred keeping rabbits instead of the the second pig. The official annual tax for 0.40 hektar was 600 rubles cash down and 16 kilograms of meat to be paid for, 400 eggs at the price of 180 rubles, and 120 liters of milk per cow. For the products in excess of the deliverable state quota the prices the kolkhosnik obtained in the free market averaged 45 rubles per center of potatoes sold in fall, 150 rubles for the same weight of potatoes sold in spring; 4.80 rubles for 10 summer eggs, up to 18 rubles for 10 winter eggs, 16 rubles for one kilogram of butter in summer, and 40 rubles in winter, up to 40 rubles for summer bacon and up to 20 to 22 rubles for 1 kilogram of bacon in winter, 22 rubles for 1 kilogram of meat in summer and 18 rubles in winter; between 14 and 16 rubles for one kilogram of mutton, 9 or 15 rubles for a rabbit fur plus 3 pounds of flour.

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8. The increasing migration from the country to the town observed throughout the entire period of reference was caused by better living conditions and higher wages in town, quite apart from the enticing offers of wages on the part of the industry. The agricultural worker could give notice and had to be discharged if he provided a substitute. The kolkhose was entitled to refuse a discharge applied for; on the other hand, it was possible to give notice twice or three times when a labor court decided on the case. On being discharged from the armed forces, veterans could freely choose their place of work, that is, change from previous farming work to another occupation. Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev were subject to special immigration rules. In future, farmers, tractor operators, combine drivers, blacksmiths, and similar state-licensed specialists had to remain with the farming occupation. In future medical doctors and technicians hailing from farming districts will have to exercise their profession in the country for a certain number of years after finishing their professional training.
9. Since the appeal for volunteering for the new-land action met with only little favor compulsory drafts were effected in the kolkhoses and trading enterprises after definite quotas had been imposed. Volunteers had to be released by the kolkhoses. More than half of the trainees of the tractor drivers courses finished in Lutsk in early 1954, were assigned to the new land districts.
10. Bread supply in the town of Lutsk has been sufficient since the spring of 1953; prior to that time there were always queues waiting at the shops. In 1952, the bread supply was worse than in 1951. In 1954, the price for 1 kilogram of gray bread was 1,4 to 2 rubles. Fine white flour was issued only before the big holidays in lots of 3 kilograms. As to potatoes the principle of self-containment of the population was adopted in early 1954 in the Lutsk district, the farms and administrations allocating lots of 0.03 to 0.04 hektars to their workers and employees. In summer, the supply of meat was poor as cattle were slaughtered only in winter. Better supply of butter was then a compensation.
11. The supply situation in the USSR is not uniform. Industrial centers and large towns are better supplied than small places and the country. As the supply of commodities was rather good in Lutsk, the inhabitants of villages and the rural towns used to go shopping there. Formerly several preferential shops were available for party bosses, members of the district administration and the families of officers. With the exception of one large shop, these shops have meanwhile been liquidated. Although on the whole, the supply situation had improved in the past few years, it still left much to be desired in the country.
12. The following is a list of the monthly earnings of the working population in the spring of 1954;
- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Charwoman | 240 rubels |
| Watchman | 280 to 320 rubels |
| Woman hospital ward | 310 rubles |
| Sick nurse | 355 rubles |
| Sick nurse of three years training | 375 rubles |
| Medical assistant, midwife | 450 to 470 rubles |

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Medical doctor (immediately after graduation)	450	rubles
" (after 3 years)	600	"
" (after 6 years)	700	"
" (after 10 years)	1200	"
Construction technician	800	"
Construction engineer	1200 - 1800	"
Construction worker	350 - 500	"
Storekeeper	580	"
Locksmith	400 - 450	"
Bus conductor	350 - 400	"
Railroad conductor	600	"
Chief guard	700	"
Station attendant	450	"
Line worker	350 - 400	"
Station master	700	"
Cashier	500	"
Bookkeeper (on leaving school)	450	"
" (after some years)	700	"
Chief bookkeeper	900 - 1000	"

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Comment. / The present report describes the situation within a relatively restricted area which has been fully adapted to the development of the Soviet agriculture only a few years ago. The following facts, which up to now were believed to be true of the whole of the USSR, have been confirmed:

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1. The merger of large kolkhoses entailed considerable drawbacks, in particular as to the organization of work.
2. Shortage of forage hampered the development of live stock.
3. During the peak seasons there was a shortage of labor, agricultural specialists lacking in the first place.
4. Bad food situation of the rural population during the last months of the harvest year.
5. Excessive strain of the mechanical equipment.
6. Migration from the country to the towns because of the better living conditions there; however, new energetic measures to keep the specialists in the country were made by the "New Course".
7. Compulsory drafting of labor force for the New Country in the east.
8. Tolerable food conditions in town.

The report further contains some other facts which, however, cannot be generalized:

1. General shortage of agricultural labor.
2. Rather poor results of the promises made in connection with the "New Course".

Omitted

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