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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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SUBJECT	Daily Life and Living Conditions	DATE DISTR.	7 October 1955 50X1
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COUNTRY Bulgaria

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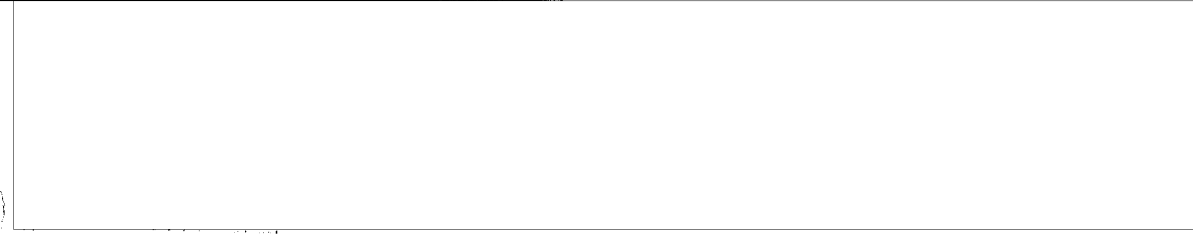
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The daily life of the city dweller in Bulgaria was a continuous fight against misery. Women's lives were especially difficult because of their struggle to maintain a household, care for their children, work, and attend political and union meetings. Most married women were obliged to work because the monthly salary of their husbands was so low. The State did all it could to increase the number of working women because workers were needed so badly in industry. As a result, there were frequent conflicts within the family and few opportunities for a wholesome family life.

In spite of the construction of new dwellings, sponsored by the State, all cities and towns suffered from a lack of housing. [redacted] lived with his wife and small child in one room of a four-room apartment; three other families occupied the remaining three rooms and four families shared the same kitchen. For [redacted] paid about 60 leva per month rent from [redacted] monthly salary of 800 leva; for electricity, [redacted] paid 20 stotinki per month for each kilowatt hour. New unfurnished apartments which consisted of two rooms, kitchen, and a bathroom were available in Sofia to CP members only for 40 to 50 leva per month.

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There was very little entertainment in Sofia. The best entertainment was the concerts and the theater, but tickets for all performances were difficult to obtain because blocks of seats were bought up by various Government enterprises leaving only the more expensive seats for the average citizen. Movies, excursions, dances, and visits to the beaches were popular with most Sofia residents. Most films shown in Bulgarian movie houses were Soviet films which dealt with life on the kolkhozy, Soviet industry, etc. These films had very poor attendance because the population had become so bored with Soviet propaganda. However, when Western films were shown, tickets were bought up immediately and the movie houses were always filled. The most popular sports were volleyball, basketball, swimming, and running. Outstanding sportsmen had nominal positions in factories or enterprises but were subsidized by the Government to train only in their sports.

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- 2 -

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[redacted] in Bulgaria [redacted] there was only a slight amount of drunkenness. Although bribing existed, it was not on a large scale. There was a campaign in progress at the time [redacted] to improve the morals of Bulgarians. Jews and other minorities had the same rights and privileges as other Bulgarians; anti-Semitism was non-existent.

5.

Health standards were not very high and, in general, the population did not eat very well. Although medical care constantly improved, tuberculosis remained one of the most wide-spread diseases. Special psychiatric wards were set up in many hospitals for the treatment of mental diseases while maternity homes were established throughout the country, even in the smallest villages. Physicians who performed abortions were severely punished if caught, but it was always possible to find a physician who would perform such an operation. Medical care was available to all citizens and the majority of the workers were given a 14-day vacation each year. Because incompetent Communist scientists had job preference over more competent non-Communist scientists, science and research continued to maintain a low standard.

6.

Social origin played a very important role regarding privileges. The specially-privileged were Party members, their children, and persons of proletarian origin. The two main social classes were Party members and non-Party members. Party members were considered to be the elite while the favored group was made up of artists, writers, actors, and musicians.

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The Church was not officially persecuted but measures were carried out to hinder its work. For example, couples married in the Church were looked upon with disfavor at their place of employment; propaganda against the Church was carried on by mass organizations and the press. [redacted]

[redacted] imed it was a well-known fact that there were some priests tinged with Communist ideology. On holidays, churches were crowded with both young and old.

8.

In many cases, the Party prohibited marriage between an important Party member and a non-Party member, claiming that such a marriage was undesirable; however, such marriages did occur. When a non-Party member who was known to be anti-Communist married a Party member, the latter lost his job and the complete confidence of the Party.

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