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ESTABLISHMENT AND OPERATION
OF A CZECHOSLOVAK UNIFIED AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE

[Comment: This report, on the establishment and operation of a JZD (Jednotne zemedelske druzstvo, Unified Agricultural Cooperative) in Lovesice, is an exploitation of Radio Free Europe Item No 7557/54, dated 9 September 1954. The source of the information is a 59-year-old farmer who defected to Austria on 27 May 1954. The defector reports his own experiences and observations as a member of the JZD and a permanent resident of Lovesice.]

The Type I JZD in Lovesice was established in the spring of 1951, following preliminary meetings between local Communists and the agricultural referent attached to the ONV (Okresni narodni vybor, Okres National Committee) in Prerov. A commission appointed by and led by Kroupa (fnu), ONV agricultural referent, included Engineer Palacek, the okres agronomist; Granych (fnu); and Gross (fnu). They were welcomed in Lovesice by Adolf Zich Sr, chairman of the MW (Mistni narodni vybor, Local National Committee), and various Communist functionaries led by Josef Karasek Sr. This was the founding group of the JZD, together with 50 charter members who were not farmers and did not own land. Adolf Zich Sr was a landowner but he did not turn his land over to JZD management. Instead he permitted his son, Adolf Zich Jr, who is not a Communist, to farm the land independently.

Kroupa promptly designated the largest landowner, Josef Brazda, as a kulak and confiscated his 20 hectares of land with its newly built and carefully kept buildings, 8 dairy cows, 4 heifers, 3 sows, 16 young pigs, 2 teams of horses, a threshing machine, a tractor, and all other equipment and machinery. The JZD then confiscated the 10 hectares of land and the buildings owned by Doctor (of laws) Kubik (fnu) and also appropriated 6 hectares of public land (obecní pole). This was the nucleus of the JZD, since its 50 members were landless Communists, mostly railroad workers and pensioners.

For the first year, the JZD was operated under the direction of Adolf Zich Sr and was supported by the ONV in various ways. The ONV gave the JZD extraordinary amounts of animal feeds and fertilizers, compared with the allotments made to small and medium independent farmers. The JZD members, who farmed and operated the property of others and divided up the crop among themselves, were having a fine time and were happy with the JZD.

The work became tiresome in the fall and none of the JZD members wanted to be tied down to regular care of the stock, the usual excuse being that each member had enough to do on his own job. The cows stopped giving milk. The horses were unfit for heavy work; they were uncared-for and were left uncurried, since each day a different member cleaned the barn and used the teams. Unquestionably, the JZD needed people who would take responsibility, were stable, and had the proper technical knowledge.

The second phase of the JZD came when an attempt was made to persuade the remainder of the village, mostly small and middle farmers, to join the JZD. Various meetings and lectures were organized and the ONV agricultural referent from Prerov was there constantly. All efforts were useless as none of the farmers joined.

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In the spring of 1952, the Communists changed their tactics and raised the delivery quotas of the independent farmers so high that they were impossible to meet. During the spring work and harvest time of 1952, the individual farmers were sabotaged constantly. The MTS worked only on JZD fields, and despite considerable effort, the independents could not fulfill their impossible quotas. The ONV then levied fines as high as 40,000 crowns for nonfulfillment of the quotas. Milos Janda was fined 25,000 crowns; Frantisek Janda, 35,000; Albin Zavadil, 40,000; Frantisek Bartocha, 40,000; Josef Vaculik, 15,000; and Frantisek Vaculik, 10,000. These men refused to pay the fines and the Communists retaliated by withholding money due them for their sugar-beet crops. In addition, they were refused permits to butcher their own stock at home, so that they were forced to buy meat on the free market at exorbitant prices. Rationing was still in effect at this time.

After the sugar-beet harvest was in, Communists Ludvik Kubik, Cyril Mucha, and Karel Sklenar went from door to door propagandizing the JZD. The farmers were told that if they joined the JZD, their delivery quotas would be much lower, allotments of animal feeds and fertilizers would be much greater, their fines would be remitted, and permission to butcher would be granted immediately. The farmers yielded and joined the JZD; their fines were abolished and they were granted permits to butcher one hog each [per year].

The JZD was changed from Type I to Type II by Christmas [1952].

In the spring of 1953, when plans and allotments were being set up, the JZD was changed to Type III, as that type offered more advantageous quotas [for the members?]. Adolf Zich Sr objected to the change and left the JZD. Josef Karasek became chairman.

The JZD officials at that time consisted of the following: Josef Karasek, chairman; Ludvik Obadalek, treasurer; Marie Matherova, bookkeeper; Miroslav Hradil, agronomist; and Josef Vaculik, manager and zootechnician. Members included Frantisek Janda, Albin Zavadil, and Milos Janda, farmers; Vilem Valek and Frantisek Vaculik, small farmers; Florian Frgal, Karel Charek, Marie Knotkova, Svojanovsky (fnu), Karel Sklenar, Eduard Bartocha, Josef Zacha, Josef Kubik, Bohuslav Skacel, Kvetoslav Frgal, Josef Vilimek, Josef Svoboda, Marie Salkova, Stanislav Vejlim, Frantisek Zvonek, Frantiska Pavlikova, Martin Pytlicke, Frantisek Slovacek, Drabek (fnu), Rudolf Kubik, Jan Pospisil, Demis (fnu), Cyril Mucha, Tomecek (fnu), and Anna Kourikova, all landless Communists. There were approximately 60 members.

Ludvik Obadalek, the Lovesice JZD treasurer, is 57 years old, is married, and has a round face and bald head. He is a fanatical Communist and an even greater profiteer. His attitude toward the [JZD?] farmers is hostile and he sabotages them whenever and wherever he can. One of his sons is a railroad employee and another son is a member of the SNB (Sbor narodni bespecnosti, National Security Corps).

Marie Matherova, bookkeeper for the Lovesice JZD, is 45 years old, married, and about 155 centimeters tall; she is a fanatical Communist. The entire village lives in dread of her. Prior to the establishment of the JZD, she was a saleswoman in the local branch of "Pramen." She is an avowed enemy of the farmers; she records the wrong work units for them and tries to sabotage them as much as she can. She is having an affair with Miroslav Hradil, the agronomist. Daily quarrels with her husband, sometimes in public, as a result of this affair keep the entire village amused.

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Miroslav Hradil, the JZD agronomist, is 24 years old, single, a dangerous Communist, and an oppressor of the farmers. He is paid by the MFS in Prerov, which is the patron of the Lovesice JZD. Hradil is an extremely arrogant, conceited youth who understands nothing but carries on everything politically. He is having an affair with the bookkeeper, Matherova, who is 20 years his senior.

Josef Vaculik, zootechnician and manager of the JZD, is 34 years old, single, a farmer, and has become a slave of the regime and subservient to the Communists. The farmers ignore him and the Communists themselves call him a "stinker" behind his back.

Frantiska Kourilova, the milkmaid, is 58 years old, a widow, and a Communist figurehead in the village. She calls the farmers names and acts as a stool pigeon by reporting them to the police.

The JZD in Lovesice contains a total of 104 hectares, obtained principally through confiscation, although some land was brought in by various members. The JZD has 41 milk cows, 18 heifers, 12 bulls, and 7 teams of horses. It also owns 9 sows, 17 young pigs, 20 young hogs (under 40 kilograms in weight), 8 hogs for fattening, and one boar.

The JZD built a new poultry house in the fall of 1953 at a cost of 35,000 crowns. It purchased 150 white Leghorns (hens), 42 of which were later found dead from poisoning. The JZD bought 300 baby chicks in the spring of 1954 from the Prerov poultry plant and also keeps eight geese and eight goslings in the poultry house.

The JZD holds meetings monthly. Usually present at the meetings are Engineer Palacek (okres agronomist); Hrava, ONV agricultural referent; and Frantisek Kindl, JZD referent at the agricultural office of the ONV. The non-Communist members of the JZD usually ignore the meetings and send one or perhaps two people to act as observers.

The JZD meetings are becoming more stormy and violent. The farmers in Lovesice and throughout Prerov Okres are beginning to oppose the Communists, and so many are leaving the JZDs that some JZDs have been disbanded completely. This opposition succeeds in places where the farmers have agreed among themselves beforehand and leave in a body. In such cases, the Communists are forced to return their land, livestock, and machinery. But where an individual farmer leaves the JZD, he is left to the mercy of the Communists and receives the worst and most distant fields, the poorest stock, and the worst machinery. In addition, he has to sign for various obligations, such as tax on the land, sickness insurance, grain already seeded, manure and fertilizers, care and feeding of the stock he receives, and personal debts, in such amounts that he is completely ruined and unable to make a start.

In the May meeting of the Lovesice JZD, there was a sharp exchange between Engineer Palacek, the agronomist, and JZD members who demanded one cow each (for personal use), to which they are entitled according to the laws establishing the JZDs. Palacek at first would not listen but finally agreed that each one would receive a weanling heifer. The JZD members objected, stating they would have to feed the animal 2 years and then someone would confiscate it. A bitter quarrel ensued. Josef Vaculik, former farmer and now manager and zootechnician for the JZD, who sided with the Communists, was accused of stealing. It was finally agreed that after the harvest, each JZD member would receive a cow; the members threatened to quit the JZD in a body if this did not happen.

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Since last fall, the following JZDs in Prerov Okres have been disbanded: Type II in Horni Mostenice, Type II in Ujezd, Type III in Rokytnice, Type III in Troubky, and Type II in Vlkos.

The Type III JZD in Bochor is in debt 4 million crowns and is in complete discord; its members think it will disband this year after the harvest. The Type III JZD in Kyselovice has been highly praised, but was in debt 7 million crowns and has been taken over by the state farms. The Type II JZDs in Brest and Hulin, Kromeriz Okres, have disbanded.

According to the JZD statutes, each member-farmer of the JZD is entitled to one cow and a 50-ares homestead. For each work unit, all members of the Lovesice JZD were entitled to the following in 1953: 3 kilograms of hard grain (wheat or rye), 1 kilogram of feed grain (oats or barley), 3 kilograms of potatoes, 5 kilograms of dry fodder, 5 kilograms of straw, 2 kilograms of stock-feed beets or carrots, 0.10 kilogram of legumes, and .50 liter of milk (for those without cows).

The members received only some of the above items. No dry fodder, straw, or legumes, and only 1 kilogram of stock-feed beets or straw were allotted to them. The homestead of 50 ares was also a source of trouble because every member who had previously been a farmer had an orchard around his house; because of the shade, it was impossible to grow vegetables or enough grass for the cow. Thus, the JZD member had to depend on the allotment of one-half liter of milk for each work unit. At the very best, he was able to keep a goat. Those JZD members without property were happy, since they were allotted a piece of clear ground for their gardens.

The Lovesice JZD members were divided politically into the following three groups:

1. The so-called Communist elite, which includes the chairman, the agronomist, the zootechnician and manager, the bookkeeper, and the treasurer. Without doing much work, they have an income of one work unit each day, 7 days a week. They also receive credit for manual labor, the same as working members, in addition to their regular pay.

Furthermore, they receive 500 crowns monthly from the ONV reserve fund. While drinking, the zootechnician admitted they also receive regular bonuses.

2. Other Communist members and their friends. They do the easier and better-paid work, and the kind of work of which it is impossible to verify the amount done. They record whatever number of work units they wish, and the "management" not only condones but openly supports such acts.

3. JZD farmers who do most of the work and are enslaved by the Communists.

The following is the amount of work needed to earn one work unit by members of the third group:

Deep plowing 50 ares with a team of horses (an impossible quota, as the horses are poorly fed and not capable of plowing more than 30 ares under favorable conditions); or

cutting one hectare of hay with a horse-drawn mower; or

hauling and turning under 8 loads of barn manure; or

harrowing 6 hectares of land; or

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seeding 3 hectares of land, using a 19-row machine; or
 weeding 3 hectares of beets; or
 hauling 10 loads of bundles of grain; or
 loading and unloading 4 loads of hay; or
 hauling 100 quintals of sacked grain to the JZD warehouse; or
 hauling and spreading commercial fertilizer on 5 hectares; or
 loading hay on driers (sticks) in the field all day; or
 milking 8 cows for one day; or
 feeding and barn care of 20 young hogs for one day. (Feeding and
 currying one team of horses will earn 1/4 work unit.)

For so-called supervisory work, the wage was set at 2 crowns (in new
 currency) per hour. This work was almost always assigned to the select
 group of Communists. It was impossible to verify the amount of work done;
 consequently each person listed 10 hours of work performed although only
 2 hours were actually worked.

The wage per work unit was set at 16 crowns after the currency reform.
 One half of this was paid each month; the balance was to be paid on 12 Feb-
 ruary 1954. [Balance since the currency reform, or for January 1954?]
 This was later increased to 17.20 crowns, as the JZD had a large beet prop.
 The JZD members' average pay per month was from 300 to 400 crowns.

Before the currency reform, JZD members in Lovesice were paid twice
 a year. Since no one had money after the reform, they were paid every
 month, although payment was irregular, occurring between the 5th and 15th
 of the month. Each JZD member keeps a record of the amount of work he
 does. This "work invoice" (pracovni vykaz) is certified weekly by the
 manager and given to the bookkeeper, who enters the kind of work and work
 units in a so-called work book (Kniha prace). The names of the members
 are in alphabetical order and at time of payment each member signs oppo-
 site his name. The day and hour of payment is announced over the local
 loudspeaker system. Matherova, the bookkeeper, and Obadalek, the treas-
 urer, are present.

JZD members in a majority of the JZDs in Prerov Okres never received
 the second payment, as the JZDs are heavily in debt. The JZD in Lovesice
 has no capital advances (investice) to pay back because the farm it con-
 fiscated was modern and fully equipped; hence it is financially better
 off than most cooperatives. The Lovesice JZD took over management of the
 (at one time, exemplary) Kyselovice JZD and the Bochor JZD. Later, the
 Kyselovice JZD had a 7-million-crown debt, and had to be absorbed by the
 state farms. The Bochor JZD is in poor condition, but the fear of indi-
 vidual debts holds the members together.

The Bochor JZD bought some building material, in 1952, which the
 Communists promptly appropriated for their own use or sold to their
 friends. In September 1952, the setting afire of a large field which
 had been sown to "mixtures" was finally attributed to the local Commu-
 nists, who had wanted to ease their work. Originally, "Western agents"
 were charged with sabotaging the field. In connection with bad management

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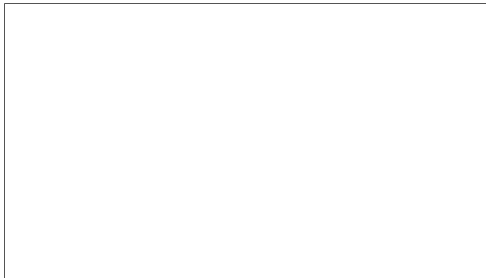


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and embezzlement in the Bochor JZD, Kroupa, okres agricultural referent, and Frantisek Kundl, deputy chairman of the JZD, were arrested and are now in Jachymov. The chairman escaped punishment because he had been injured by a tractor and died of internal hemorrhage.

Since the embezzlement in Bochor, no JZD is permitted to keep money. Money from the proceeds of every sale must be deposited in the bank, and the bank pays all claims.

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