STAT

THE THRACIAN LOWLANDS

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T. Yordanov
and
V. Velev

The most extensive plain not only of Bulgaria but also of the Balkans lies in the warm, fertile Thracian lowlands /see note/. From the pass of the Stryama River in the Sredna Gora Mountains to Asenovgrad in the Rhodope Mountains its width is approximately 50 km. However, from the end of the Momina Klisura Pass at Belovo railroad station to the Manastirski heights its length is 3 1/2 times its width (180 km), and its length up to Svilengrad is 4 times its width (200 km). The Thracian lowlands are almost entirely surrounded by mountains. In the west the lowlands are bordered by the Eledzhik range of the Sredna Gora Mountains, whose highest peak is Benkovski, 1,186 m. This peak is located between the old Trayanov Pass and the Mutivir River. In the north the lowlands are also bordered by the chains of the Sredna Gora Mountains (the Sushtinska Sredna Gora and the Surnena Gora ranges), which stretch between the pass of the Topolnitsa River to the turn of the Tundzha River at Zaychi Peak. In the south the lowlands are bordered by the Rhodope Mountains. These huge, complicated mountains border the lowland with steep, grandiose slopes which look like gigantic stage settings for the flat plain. In the east, however, the Rhodope Mountains become gradually lower and turn to the north, passing into the vast and hilly east Rhodope foothills. In the east the Thracian lowlands are connected with the Yambol-Elkhovo plain. Here the lowlands are bordered by individual heights and low mountains, the Sveti Iliya and Manastirski heights and Mount Brannitsa. To the southeast

the lowlands become narrower; but even here they are of great importance. From Maritsa City to Svilengrad and along almost the entire reaches of the Maritsa River the valley is shaped like a convenient door for the Aegean Sea influence, which can be felt throughout the lowlands.

(Note: In Bulgaria the upper Thracian lowlands are usually referred to simply as the Thracian lowlands. But the historical region of upper Thrace includes not only the lowlands, but also the entire region located between the Rhodope Mountains, the Sredna Gora Mountains, and the Manastirski heights, including the east Rhodope foothills.)

Thus delineated, the Thracian lowlands cover 6,026 km^2 and, together with the neighboring hilly areas, they cover a total of about 11,500 km^2. Almost everywhere the plain is level. In all directions the land is flat, bordered by a frame of bluish mountain chains in the distance. But when the summer heat shimmers over the plain this faraway frame disappears; then Thrace appears boundless.

PHYSICOGEOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

Formation of the Thracian Lowlands

The Thracian lowlands represent a large geographical depression. Their shaping began during the first half of the Tertiary Epoch. During the Eocene Period the east half of the upper Thracian lowlands sank and turned into a sea, which extended on the west almost to Asenovgrad, Popovitsa, and Belozem. Today the Eocenic deposits are considerably eroded, but still cover vast stretches. They consist of thick layers of nummulitic limestone and marls largely covered with Pliocene, Quarternary, and alluvial deposits. These formations can be seen particularly clearly in the quarries located

in the central part of the former Eocenic basin. They are of great economic importance to the lowlands, which suffer a shortage of rock. In the Khaskovo region the Eocene deposits have been covered by Oligocene deposits. During the time of transition between the Eocenic and Oligocenic periods active volcanic activities took place in this area. Many effusive rocks have remained from the eruptions which occurred at that time. The principal one is andesite, which is found in the peripheral parts of the lowlands of today. By the end of the Miocenic Period and the beginning of the Pliocenic the Thracian lowlands were already dry. The sinking of this area and its filling with water had speeded up by the end of the Pliocenic Period, when its new phases of development began. The Pliocenic basin located along the valley of the Maritsa River is the largest of its kind in Bulgaria. At that time the lowlands were covered by thick lake and river deposits, such as sands, clay sands, and clays, which at present cover vast deposits of brown coal. The western part of the basin has not been so thoroughly explored. Here the Pliocenic materials have been mostly covered with Quaternary deposits. These Quaternary deposits also cover certain areas in the northern and northeastern parts of the basin. In the westernmost part of the basin the Pliocenic deposits lie directly over crystalline schists, which indicates that the lowlands were dry here during the Eocenic Period.

This Pliocenic sea did not entirely cover the lowlands, but covered individual basins. For example, the present-day Plovdiv plain was covered by several basins which appear to have been connected by canals. Its northwestern part -- from the Topolnitsa River to a point close to the Stryama River Pass -- was a lake which covered approximately the area of the villages Ovchepoltsi and Krushevo

on one side and Golyamo Konare and Kaloyanovo on the other. The northeastern part of the lowlands from Ruzhevo Konare village and the Stryama River to the Sredna Gora foothills (Brezovo and Streltsi villages) was covered by another lake. A third lake was located in the southeastern part of the Plovdiv plain from Popovitsa and Debur to Asenovgrad, Bryagovo, and Ezerovo. Sands, together with sand clays and clays were deposited all over this area. The Stara Zagora plain was an individual basin situated between the Sredna Gora Mountains and the Uzundzhovski hill on one side and the Chirpan, Sveti Iliya, and Manastirski heights. This part of the plain is very well known. Located here is the Maritsa coal basin containing brown coal from the Pontic Age. The Levantine formation also includes coal seams which are being worked at present. This basin was subdivided into smaller parts connected by channels. These follow the present-day reaches of the Maritsa River, which was connected with the Kharmanli basin to the southeast, which in turn stretched toward the west into the Khaskovo region where clays and sands were deposited.

The waters of these basins were drained off by the end of the Pliocenic Era when the depression of the Aegean region took place. The lowlands then became dry land again. Then the erosion process along the Maritsa River became more active. In its eastern reaches the Maritsa River cut deeper and deeper into the ground, thus forming the particularly beautiful passes west of Maritsa City and north of Kharmanli. It was through these passes that the waters of the Pliocenic lakes were completely drained off.

The Quaternary Era came with its cooler, moister climate. The rivers from the neighboring mountains deposited a huge quantity of alluvial material consisting of sand clays, sands, and gravel. A

new depression of the lowlands took place at the beginning of the Quaternary Era. Only this can explain the almost ideal flatness of wide areas in the upper Thracian lowlands and particularly in the Pazardzhik plain, the region around the Chepelarska River between Asenovgrad and the estuary river, and in other places. Except for those due to a sinking of the plain, old Quaternary terraces such as the Sicilian, the Milazzian, and the Tyrrhenian are not present in this basin. Preserved are only the Wuerm terrace (15-18 m) at the Kadievo village east of the Krichim railroad station, and the Nizzean terrace (5 to 6 m), which is found more frequently than the others. The former terrace was created along the passes of the Maritsa River at Belovo and near Maritsa City. After these two terraces were formed a new process of gradual sinking took place which is still continuing today. The Maritsa River has made its bed in the lowlands thus formed, and this bed follows some of the faults. This sinking can be best traced from the 1928 earthquake which took place in the Plovdiv-Chirpan-Purvomay region in which two main faults were formed: one north of Chirpan (about 38 km away), the other north of Purvomay (about 62 km), which followed the riverbed of the Maritsa River. In addition, the cumulative activities of the rivers, the formation of new islands in the wide riverbed of the Maritsa River, and the turns of the same river are other proofs that sinking of the lowlands is continuing in our days as well. This is particularly clear in the Pazardzhik plain, which is the widest entirely flat land in Bulgaria. The almost ideal flatness of the topography is not due to the Pliocenic Age, since the Pliocenic deposits in the peripheral parts of the Pazardzhik plain are to be found on the very surface of the soil; while at the Pazardzhik railroad station they lie 15 m deep (2) [numbers in parenthesis refer to Bibliography].

The depression of the Thracian lowlands was accompanied mainly by the flexural folding of the southern slopes of the Sredna Gora Mountains on which a Levantine terrace was formed. In addition to the Levantine, the western part of these foothills includes a Pontic foothill terrace. These strata can be seen along the northern edge of the lowlands, covered with old Quaternary gravel. The southern border between the lowlands and the Rhodope Mountains can be observed mainly by the faults, but flexural faults can occur there as well. Here too Levantine and Pontic terraces have been formed on the Rhodope slopes. The Rhodope slopes, which have been formed by faults and which rise steeply above the flat plain, are particularly impressive. The lowlands are gradually sinking, while the Sredna Gora and Rhodope Mountains are slowly rising. The sinking of the lowlands is most pronounced in its southern part along the Maritsa River valley. A proof of such sinking of the lowlands is the lack here of old Quaternary river terraces. Unlike the Danube plain the Thracian lowlands include neither deep river beds with passes and antecedent valleys, as found in the sub-Balkan Mountains, nor plateaulike hills. An antecedent pass here is a rare exception. Such passes are those at Maritsa City and at Kharmanli, which have been cut into the Levantine foothill terrace. This does not change at all the flat nature of the lowlands, a flatness which is so characteristic of the upper Thracian region.

During the Quaternary Era the Maritsa River spread over a vast surface and formed three river terraces. The lowest of them is located 3 to 4 m above the present Maritsa River bed. The most fertile soils, consisting of fine river silt, are located here. About 5,000 years ago this youngest terrace of all was a riverbed and was located at the same altitude as an Aeneolithic terrace (9). Despite the fact

that this terrace is a low one, it is rarely flooded in the Pazardzhik and Plovdiv plains; and in certain places this terrace can never be flooded. This favorable condition is due to the present wide riverbed which can accommodate huge quantities of water. In addition, the terrace in these plains is 1 to 1.5 m higher than is the standard altitude of the Aeneolithic terrace elsewhere (which is 2.5 to 3 m high) (9). This terrace covers a huge area reaching almost to the Rhodope Mountains. To the east, however, toward the Stara River, this terrace becomes narrower. It widens again between the Stara and Vucha Rivers, then spreads east of the Vucha, reaching the Chepelarska. Here there is an abundance of Quaternary deposits, and the gravel found here is extensively used in railroad embankments and construction. The flood terrace continues, entering the Purvomay region; but here it is already considerably narrower. Farther to the east it narrows even more and reaches as far as Svilengrad.

The second Maritsa terrace is much smaller, being 6.5 to 7 m high. It is covered with quite fine river deposits, which make it important for agriculture. It is the result of erosion by the river of deposits of old gravel, but at places it has been entirely destroyed by the river. Physicogeographers give it the name Flanders terrace (Nizzean terrace) (9).

The third terrace of the Maritsa River has been preserved only in separate small plateaus and small heights and is very narrow in the Plovdiv plain. It is about 18 m high and belongs to the Wurm age.

The settlements in this region are located usually on the second and third terraces, while the flood terrace is covered almost entirely by arable land.

The alluvial cones located in the periphery of the lowlands are of great economic importance. They can be found in the Krichim, Stara Zagora, and many other regions. Here can be found a considerable wealth of underground water, which can be used for the irrigation of orchards, strawberries, and fields.

The gradient of the surface of the upper Thracian lowlands is clearly observed by following the directions taken by the rivers which cross the lowlands. In the Plovdiv plain the gradient goes from the north and south toward the Maritsa River, while in the Stara Zagora plain the gradient is more complex: it follows the Syuyutliyka River to the east and then follows the Sazliyka River and the other Maritsa tributaries to the south, leading toward the Maritsa. The average altitude of the Thracian lowlands is 168 m (the highest point is 358 m, the lowest 50 m).

Stara Zagora City is located at a higher altitude (234 m), but the overall altitude of the entire Stara Zagora plain is far lower, ranging about 160 m. The gradient and the altitude of the Maritsa lowlands along the Maritsa River can be seen by the following data: at Pazardzhik 205 m, Plovdiv 160 m, Sadovo 150 m, Purvomay 134 m, Dimitrovgrad 100 m, Maritsa City 95 m, Kharmanli 85 m, Svilengrad 50 m.

In general the east Rhodope Mountain foothills slope toward the east along the reaches of the Kharmanliyska River. The average altitude at Khaskovo is 180 m.

There is a continuous sinking of the layers, and the shape of the lowlands changes in accordance with the geologic epoch; but this movement cannot be noticed when measured in terms of human history.

The Plovdiv Syenite Hills

The only elevations which disturb the flatness of this plain are the Plovdiv hills. They are remnants of an old mountain which was connected with the Sredna Gora Mountains on one side and the Rhodope Mountains on the other. Because of the sinking and shaping up of the Thracian lowlands during the Tertiary Era the connections of these hills with the mountains located north and south of them were broken and covered by lake and river deposits. Only the highest parts of this mountain remain visible like islands in a Tertiary sea, which today are only lonely elevations on the flat Plovdiv plain. Denudational processes rapidly pulled down the crystalline schist cover of these heights, under which was located an intrusive mass of rocks which had cooled off after their eruption. Later on, under the continuous destructive action of atmospheric changes, the Syenite Hills acquired their present shape. According to some authors the eruption of the magma rock took place during the Mesozoic Era, while according to others it took place much earlier, during the Paleozoic Era. There are seven such hills. The Youth Hill (Dzhendemtepe) is the highest. Its altitude is 282 m; it rises 122 m above the lowlands. The other hills are named Stalin (Bunardzhika), Vasil Kolarov (Sakhattepe), the three Orfey hills (Dzhambaztepe, Nebettepe, and Taksimtepe), and, finally, the Markova Mogila Hill, which has almost been leveled off, due to rock quarry mining. All these hills are solidly connected underground. The Sakhattepe and Bunardzhika hills, as well as the Bunardzhika and Markova Mogila hills, are connected near the ground, while the Nebettepe, the Taksimtepe, and Dzhambaztepe hills look almost like one hill.

The Plovdiv hills have played an important defense role in the past, and today they are the best decoration of the Bulgarian "capital" of the south.

The Chirpan Hills

From the point of view of physical geography the Thracian lowlands are divided into two plains: the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain and the Stara Zagora plain. The Chirpan heights are the boundary between these two plains. To the north they are almost connected with Mount Surnena, while on the south they end north of Chirpan City. The western border is the valley of the Medovska River, while to the east they reach a point near the Vinarovo and Mogilovo villages and also the valley of the upper Syuyutliyka. These are small hills grooved and crossed by many ravines stretching in all directions and deeply entrenched in the body of the hills. The highest peak among these hills is Kitkata Peak, 651 m in altitude. The second highest peak there is Kaleto, 647 m. However, there are many other peaks located on these hills which reach almost the same altitude. Most of them are named the same -- Kaleto -- and are covered with remnants of former fortresses.

The northern slopes of these elevations are covered with forests, while the southern slopes are almost bare or occasionally covered with small bushes. Seen from afar, these bushes look as if they are artificially planted, being located in almost regular and parallel lines. The cause of this peculiarity is the rock content of the elevations. These elevations are made of cretaceous (Cenomanian) limestone marls and sandstones. With rain the sandstone erodes more easily, to form soil favorable to the development of vegetation. The limestone marls are harder, however, and more difficult to erode; hence they remain as long white stretches on the surface of the hills. Because a wavelike structure takes place in the folding of the various strata, the vegetation follows these folds; and when seen from afar offers an extremely picturesque view (6).

To the south the Chirpan elevations become lower and flatten out. They end with the heights rising immediately before Chirpan City. To be found on the slopes of these heights, which consist of old Tertiary limestone, are the most beautiful vineyards of this region.

Some of the rivers emerging from these heights continue as individual rivers, while others merge with side rivers which spring from the Sredna Gora Mountains. Along its reaches one and the same river may be given various names after the name of the particular settlement through which it may be passing. For example, one river can be called the Chekhlarska, then the Medovska, etc.

Despite the fact that they are hills, the Chirpan heights are of great economic importance. They are covered with fields, vegetable gardens, and vineyards. Vineyards predominate in this region and are the main livelihood of many settlements in this region.

The East Rhodope Foothills

Even though included within the boundaries of upper Thrace, the East Rhodope foothills are entirely different from the flat Plovdiv and Stara Zagora plains. This vast region covers the southeastern part of Thrace. It resembles the topography of the hilly parts of the Danube plain. To the north and northeast it reaches the valley of the Maritsa River, which at this point has narrowed considerably.

To the south it is limited by the slopes of the northeastern Rhodope Mountains. To the west the hilly nature of the terrace gradually disappears west of Taterevo village (Purvomay okoliya), west of the valley of the Mechka River at Dulbok Izvor village. Finally, the end of the terrace extends west of Lenovo village more to the south.

Until recently certain parts of this region bore other names, such as Purvomay plain, Khaskovo plain, Khaskovo valley, etc., regardless of the fact that these names did not correspond to the geographical nature of the region, since these were not valleys with flat fields at the bottom. The entire region is in folds and consists of long hills, individual mounts, and low slopes of the Rhodope Mountains protruding to the north and closely connected with the mountains. The northern part of this region includes two long hills which at places are entirely flat and cultivated, and at other places quite high and covered with rocks, forests, bushes, and grass. The hill located more to the north is the Uzundzhovski hill, which stretches east of Klokotnitsa and Kasnakovo villages, passes south of Krepost village (Bluska Chuka, 285 m altitude) and reaches up to Aleksandrovo village (highest point of the hill, 313 m). From there it goes to the northeast and the east where the Maritsa River cuts a path through it, then goes west of Maritsa City and north of Kharmanli City. The second hill is Khaskovo Hill. It is a branch of the Rhodope Mountains and a continuation of the Golyamo Gradishte Hill, which is located south of the Khaskovo Mineral Dam. Increasing its height it reaches south of Klokotnitsa Village, at which point can be seen ruins of the remarkable fortress built by King Asen which once held an important defense position. At this point both hills touch. Then farther on to the east the Khaskovo Hill continues, passing north of Khaskovo City and the Kharmanli Highway and gradually disappearing in the direction of Kharmanli City. Coming from the south numerous branches of the Rhodope Mountains go down these foothills. The most important of them is Khukhlata, whose various branches and individual peaks are higher than the Uzundzhovo and Khaskovo Hills. These heights cover large areas in the Khaskovo and Kharmanli areas, thus giving a

semimountainous character to this land eroded by many rocky ravines and small rivers. South of Khaskovo this region is a folded terrace and is crossed by highways which run almost to the south and climb up or down these hills. This entire region is cut across by the Kharmanliyska River and its tributaries, as well as by the Banska River to the north and by many karst springs and ravines. There is water in all these ravines, but during the drought period this water decreases until it is entirely insufficient to irrigate the thirsty agricultural crops. Only the pumps built near the river beds of the Kharmanliyska, Khaskovska, Uzundzhovska, Banska, and other rivers operate 24 hours a day; but this water helps irrigate only part of these river valleys. Dam irrigation is required for this region, and such an irrigation project has already been undertaken.

The Climate of the Thracian Lowlands

The geographical location of the Thracian lowlands is 42° 15' N. latitude. The geographical location of the Danube plain is 43° 35' N. latitude. The difference between them is approximately 1° 20'. This difference in location has in turn brought about a difference in temperature which is of great importance to the cultivation of the various agricultural crops. In this case the difference in temperature should normally have been 0.8° C (at sea level), while in fact the difference is larger, ranging from 1 to 1.5° C. It is clear that this difference has a favorable influence in the protection of the more delicate crops of the Thracian lowlands during the winter.

The higher temperature of the Thracian lowlands compared with the Danube plain is due to the long Stara Planina Mountains and to

the wide opening of the Maritsa River valley to the Aegean Sea. Of course the lowlands would have been even better off and warmer without the huge and wide Rhodope Mountains, which hinder the free passage of the Aegean Sea climatic influence. If we compare the annual temperature variations of Pleven with those of Sadovo, both of which are located at almost the same geographical longitude and latitude, this difference in temperatures of the Danube and the Thracian plains becomes even clearer. In addition, the Thracian lowlands are lower in altitude than the Danube plain.

COMPARATIVE TABLE SHOWING
TEMPERATURES IN PLEVEN AND SADOVO
(For the period 1916-1945; Roman numerals indicate months)

	Altitude	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Pleven	163	-1.8	-0.4	5.8	12.5	17.3	21.0	23.5	22.8
Sadovo	153	0.0	1.9	6.5	12.4	17.2	21.2	24.0	23.4

	IX	X	XI	XII	Annual average	Annual amplitude
Pleven	18.8	13.1	6.2	0.1	11.6	25.3
Sadovo	19.1	13.3	7.3	1.8	12.3	24.0

The above table shows that Sadovo and the Thracian lowlands are 0.7° C warmer than the Danube plain.

In order to point out clearly the temperature situation of the entire Thracian lowlands, it is necessary to give data relating to the temperature of the various parts of the lowlands.

The table on page 16 shows that the predominating climate of the lowlands is a transitory continental climate with maximum temperatures occurring in July and minimum in January. The average annual temperature in Purvomay is higher than that of all the other weather stations except Svilengrad. Here the January temperature is

the lowest in the lowlands, while in Stara Zagora it is the highest (except Svilengrad). This is why figs, pomegranates, and other subtropical fruit in the Purvomay region regularly freeze, while in the Stara Zagora region they last through the winter season (with rare exceptions). Conditions are better in Khaskovo and best in the Svilengrad region. The absolute minimal temperatures, which occur in January, are as follows: in Purvomay -32.8° C (the lowest in the lowlands), in Stara Zagora -20° C, (the highest, and even higher than that in Svilengrad). The state of the climate of the lowlands becomes even clearer when we see the dates on which the last and first frosts occur in several places of the lowlands. (See Table, page 16, top). Stara Zagora again is in the most favored position.

If we analyze the average monthly temperature of the soil (for Sadovo), we can see that it never drops below 0° C. On the surface the soil is 1.4° C; at 2 cm it is 1.8° C; at 20 cm it is 2.2° C; at 95 cm it is 7.2° C. The average minimal temperature on the surface can reach up to -4.6° C. At 2 cm it reaches -2.6° C, and even up to 10 cm underground it is still below zero (-0.4° C). In the case of Stara Zagora the situation is considerably better. The subsoil parts (roots) of the subtropical vegetation in the Sadovo-Purvomay region do not freeze, but the stem above the surface of the soil does. In order to be protected it must be covered with protective mulch such as straw, etc. Analysis of the temperature of the Thracian lowlands indicates that the following warmth-loving crops could be successfully grown here: cotton, anise, poppy, sesame seed, peanuts, "rezine," etc. Certain parts of the Thracian lowlands are also favorable to the cultivation of certain Mediterranean fruits such as figs, pomegranates, etc., particularly in the Stara Zagora,

Khaskovo, Kharmanli, and Svilengrad regions. If special care is taken (trenches and other means of crop protection), these crops may be grown all over the lowland.

AVERAGE DATES OF FIRST AND LAST FROST (1930-1949)

	Last frost	First frost	Latest date of last frost	Earliest date of first frost
Pazardzhik	9 April	27 October	30 April 1948	29 September 1931
Plovdiv	7 April	29 October	5 May 1935	28 September 1931
Stara Zagora	24 March	23 November	17 April 1945	2 October 1931
Khaskovo	11 April	2 November	5 May 1935	4 October 1930

AVERAGE MONTHLY AND ANNUAL TEMPERATURES (1916-1945)
(Roman numerals indicate months)

	Altitude	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Pazardzhik	205	0.3	1.9	6.6	12.2	16.8	20.8	23.3	22.6
Plovdiv	160	0.3	2.1	6.6	12.4	17.2	21.1	23.6	22.7
Purvomay	134	0.1	2.1	6.7	12.7	17.7	21.8	24.5	23.9
Stara Zagora	234	0.9	2.0	6.3	11.8	16.8	20.7	23.5	23.0
Khaskovo	192	0.6	2.2	6.8	12.3	17.0	20.9	23.7	23.4
Svilengrad	52	1.7	2.8	7.1	12.7	17.6	21.7	24.2	23.3

	IX	X	XI	XII	Annual average	Annual amplitude
Pazardzhik	18.5	12.8	7.1	2.0	12.1	23.0
Plovdiv	18.7	13.1	7.3	2.0	12.3	23.3
Purvomay	19.6	14.0	7.8	2.1	12.8	24.4
Stara Zagora	19.2	13.6	7.7	2.5	12.3	22.6
Khaskovo	19.2	13.9	7.8	2.3	12.5	23.1
Svilengrad	19.1	13.9	8.4	3.0	13.0	22.5

AVERAGE MONTHLY AND ANNUAL PRECIPITATION QUANTITIES

(For the period 1921-1945; Roman numerals=months)

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Pazardzhik	41	35	29	49	61	58
Plovdiv	40	32	32	43	49	61
Purvomay	51	39	37	52	60	59
Stara Zagora	47	35	37	54	68	77
Khaskovo	61	41	43	57	56	71
Svilengrad	54	45	40	51	48	70

	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	XII
Pazardzhik	47	33	3?	39	45	48
Plovdiv	40	27	32	38	44	54
Purvomay	45	26	34	54	66	75
Stara Zagora	53	32	27	49	63	58
Khaskovo	36	19	27	53	67	76
Svilengrad	37	18	33	52	64	76

	Annual Average
Pazardzhik	516
Plovdiv	492
Purvomay	598
Stara Zagora	600
Khaskovo	607
Svilengrad	588

Northwestern or western winds predominate over most of the lowlands. Winds come from the north only in the Stara Zagora region, but this is a purely local phenomenon due to the influence of the Zmeevski Pass and the valley of the Bedechka River. In the Khaskovo region winds are northern and northwestern. The moisture-bearing masses of air which come into the lowlands usually originate from the west. Here the warm southern winds do not have the warmth which could burn or damage crops, as is the case in some of the southernmost regions of Bulgaria. These winds merely bring warmth and hasten the melting of the snows. The southern wind is sometimes hot and burning and damages certain agricultural crops, chiefly in the Khaskovo, Svilengrad, and Stara Zagora regions.

The fertile Thracian lowlands lack an adequate even distribution of precipitation. The Table showing the distribution of monthly and annual average precipitation proves clearly this unfavorable condition.

The heaviest rainfall in the larger part of the Plovdiv and Stara Zagora plains occurs in May and June, and in the Khaskovo, Purvomay, and Svilengrad regions in December. In August when crops need an abundant amount of moisture in the course of their maximum growing period, precipitation is not sufficient. The valley of the Maritsa suffers from this condition, particularly in the region between Sadovo and Purvomay, where rainfall is less than elsewhere. Rainfall is much needed in August in the Khaskovo region and along the entire reaches of the Maritsa River in the Kharmanli and Svilengrad areas. During that time there are few clouds, the sun is hot, and temperatures soar. A good, high-quality

crop needs an adequate amount of moisture, but this is lacking in the plains. The Mediterranean climatic influence over the lowlands is expressed by the high amount of precipitation in December.

In the past, during the entire capitalist period, artificial irrigation was not carried out, and thousands of decares of very valuable crops were ruined. At present Bulgaria has undertaken the construction of irrigation projects in this region on a scale never before seen. The results are already obvious, and in the near future there will be no piece of land in the Thracian lowlands left unirrigated. The famous rich soil of the lowlands will then show its hidden possibilities of unheard-of fertility.

Rivers in the Lowlands

The Thracian lowlands are drained and irrigated by the Maritsa River and its numerous tributaries. This river network is wide and collects the waters of a vast basin covering about 2/3 of the area of central and southern Bulgaria (35,200 km^2). The Maritsa tributaries begin as mountain rivers from the Rhodope, Sredna Gora, and Stara Planina Mountains and then enter the lowlands themselves as large and more tranquil rivers. The central water artery, however, the Maritsa River, springs from a more distant place, i.e., from the Rila Mountains, which are the highest Bulgarian Mountains.

The Maritsa River is the largest river in Bulgaria and is extremely important economically. It is the pride of Bulgaria and has been immortalized in any number of folksongs. It has witnessed glorious and sad episodes from Bulgaria's past and has seen the stormy events in Bulgaria's changing history. The Maritsa River is

the source of the most fertile alluvial soils in Bulgaria and of the incomparable fertility of the lowlands, which was achieved through the labor of the people who lived there. In Turkish times the Maritsa River transported barges loaded with grain from Pazardzhik to Enos.

The Maritsa River originates in the Marichini Lakes high up in the Rila Mountains below Manchu Peak. From the Rila Mountains many rapid mountain rivers and streams flow into it as it plunges down to the Dolna Banya plain. There, already swollen and wider, it crosses the Momina Klisura Pass, which has been dug in the body of the mountain by the river in the course of thousands of years. At this point there was once a solid connection between the Sredna Gora Mountains and the Rila-Rhodope Mountain massif. East of the Belovo railroad station the Maritsa River enters the flat Pazardzhik plain and, even bigger and quieter, takes its waters slowly toward the east. From this point until it leaves Bulgarian territory at Svilengrad it collects the waters of its numerous tributaries and runs in a wide riverbed which is filled in winter and spring with huge masses of muddy waters. The entire length of the Maritsa River up to its estuary at the Aegean Sea is 472 km, while its length within the borders of Bulgaria (up to Svilengrad) is 271 km.

In the Thracian lowlands the Maritsa River flows more on the side of the Rhodope Mountains, following the lowest parts of the lowlands which have sunk in places along a long fault.

The flow of water in the Maritsa River is not steady. In winter and spring, when the melting of the snow on Bulgarian mountains coincides with lengthy and torrential precipitation, the

river floods. At that time its wide river bed is filled with rapidly flowing waters which undermine and destroye river banks and which accumulate in places huge amounts of alluvial material to form islands. When the water rises even higher terrible floods occasionally take place. Particularly disastrous floods took place in 1858 and 1911. In the 1858 flood great destruction was caused by the river. It carried away half of Pazardzhik together with the bridge and huge quantities of hay and sheaves from the fields, and drowned a large number of cattle. At that time the Maritsa River flooded the low sectors of Plovdiv, destroying houses and carrying away furniture, timber, hay, and cattle. All the lowlands from Kharmanli to Svilengrad were flooded.

The flood of 18 June 1911, however, has never been surpassed. All the lowlands from Belove to Svilengrad were flooded. An area of more than 230,000 decares was flooded. Every settlement that suffered from this flood still bears traces of it. At that time not only the Maritsa River, but also its tributaries, all the small streams and little rivers, were flooded. The destruction was incalculable. The hay and rich wheat crops which were in the fields were taken away looking like small islands floating on an endless sea which had covered the plain. One could see timber and the wooden village barns filled with wheat floating on the water, beehives, and the thick trunks of trees where madly-frightened animals clung. The hay and sheaves clogged the river beds, and the rivers spread ever wider over the plain. This catastrophe destroyed many cattle; some people were also victims. Fields, vegetable gardens, and meadows located on the vast, low Maritsa terrace and along many other rivers were also destroyed. The crop which was the result of an entire year of peasants' labor was destroyed.

On the other hand, in contrast to the high waters of June, the waters of the Maritsa and its tributaries greatly decrease in August. The wide sand-covered river bed is almost dry. Maritsa then becomes an insignificant river in the middle of which a narrow streak of water can scarcely push its way through the dry sand. At that time of the year nobody expects any rain. The soil becomes hot and cracked. The crops dry out, and there is not enough water for irrigation.

The successive Bulgarian bourgeois governments took no measures to prevent these damages. Bulgaria lagged centuries behind the other advanced capitalist countries. Some people who "studied" the irrigational improvement works in Bulgaria considered that "the idea to build irrigational systems with dikes, canals, streams, channels, etc., "should be abandoned since, "it will never justify the huge expenditures which will be incurred in their construction." Other experts considered that no measures could possibly be taken against flood. All of these theories have already been disproved, and at present we are witnessing a previously unheard of construction program, aimed at strengthening the banks of rivers and irrigating the parched lands. The riverbed of the Maritsa has been straightened now, and beside this river bed stretch long dikes. The shores of the river have been solidified, and the danger of floods has been permanently removed.

From an airplane the Maritsa River looks like an endless silvery ribbon shining in the sun and bordered by dark green belts of willow, poplar, acacia, and other forests which have been planted there to strengthen the shores of this river which is so powerful in winter and spring. The dikes are thickly covered with

grass, and the water cannot pierce them. At present the shores of the Maritsa River include hundreds of standard pumps, as well as powerful pumping stations, which draw water night and day for irrigation. The river bed of the Maritsa has been greatly changed and this has changed life along the Maritsa valley.

The Maritsa tributaries are also of great importance to the economy of the Bulgarian people.

The right wing tributaries of the Maritsa River are shorter but have more water in them. This is because they collect their waters from the vast Rhodope Mountains which, with their higher altitude, are richer in water.

The Chepinska River gets its waters from the Rhodope Mountains. It drains and irrigates the Chepino valley, crosses a beautiful narrow pass, and enters the lowlands at Varvara village. At this point originate many canals which irrigate the fields, rice paddies, vegetable gardens, and vineyards which stretch in the southern half of the Pazardzhik plain. This entire region from Varvara and Septemvri villages to Pazardzhik are irrigated by the Chepinska River.

The Stara Reka River springs from the Rhodope Mountains. It collects its waters from the Batashki Snezhnik region. Reaching the lowlands, it is so entirely cut up into various branches and irrigation canals that its old river bed, which originally led toward the Maritsa River, has almost disappeared. Its irrigational system joins that of the Grezinska (Vucha) River.

The Vucha River is a considerably larger river. Its basin includes huge areas between Syutkya, Kainchal, and Perelik Mounts.

At Krichim village the river leaves the mountains. One of the oldest Bulgarian electric power stations has been built at this point. It was among the largest of the first power plants built in Bulgaria; and, even though it was built on the shores of this large river, it did not operate to full capacity. In summer the waters of the Vucha River greatly decreased and did not suffice to operate the power plant or to irrigate the land. The people's regime has solved this problem by building the "Vasil Kolarov" Dam. Now the power plant works with full capacity, and irrigation water reaches even the Purvomay irrigation system. The waters of the Vucha River irrigate the vineyards of Krichim, Perushtitsa, and Brestovitsa; the vegetable gardens around Kurtovo Konare; and the strawberry and tomato gardens around the Krichim railroad station. Soon even larger amounts of water collected in the vast region of the hydropower network in the Rhodope Mountains will flow in summer, coming from Peshtera and Krichim into the Thracian lowlands.

The Chepelarska River originates above Chepelare village in the vicinity of Belomorski Pass and collects its waters from a vast basin located between Mounts Chernatitsa and Radyuva, and the Cherni hill. After its waters have been used to run the "Asenitsa I" and "Asenitsa II" VETs [Vodnoelektricheska tsendrala -- hydro-electric power plant) built by the people's regime, the river enters the plain. Its waters and the waters of similar but smaller rivers help irrigate the entire region located between Asenovgrad and the Maritsa River, which includes the big Katunitsa, Sadovo, and Popovitsa villages.

The Mechka and Kayaliyka Rivers almost completely dry up in summer. The Banska River has more water, since it is joined by water coming from the Khaskovo Mineral Baths.

The Kharmanliyska River collects its waters from the northern slopes of the northeastern Rhodope Mountains. Its largest tributary is the Khaskovska River. Many pumps operate along the shores of the Kharmanliyska River to help irrigate the areas along the river terraces. This river merges with the Maritsa River at Kharmanli City.

The left Maritsa tributaries are longer, but all of them except the Stryama River spring from the much smaller and lower Sredna Gora Mountains which have poorer water resources. In addition, since they are longer, they lose large amounts of water because of their gravel-and sand-covered riverbeds; and the water evaporates much more than in the right tributaries. The smaller tributaries nearly or entirely dry up in summer.

The Topolnitsa River is the westernmost river of the left Maritsa tributaries. It springs from the northern slopes of the Sushtinska Sredna Gora Mountains, crosses the rocky area along the southern borders of the Zlatitsa-Pirdop plain, and passes across the Sredna Gora Mountains through a picturesque pass. Its largest tributary, the Mutivir River, drains the high Ikhtiman plain. After leaving this plain it is put to good irrigation uses in the Thracian lowlands, split into many canals. It joins the Maritsa River west of Pazardzhik.

The Topolnitsa River carries a large amount of sand and gravel on its way. Because of inadequate planning, the construction of a dam which was begun at Mukhovo village has been temporarily interrupted. At present the banks of the Topolnitsa are being strengthened in order to prevent floods. The construction of the dam was started again in September 1955.

The Luda Yana River runs down the southern slopes of the Sushtinska Sredna Gora Mountains, and that is why it has little water. It is a fast, quite tempestuous river and drags along a great amount of rocks to deposit on its wide, gravel-covered bed. Its basin must be strengthened. This work has already begun. The Peschenik River is a smaller river which also originates in the Sredna Gora Mountains and enters the Maritsa River east of Plovdiv.

The Stryama River is the longest left Maritsa tributary in the Thracian lowlands. It is the only one of the rivers flowing into the Thracian lowlands that begins in the Stara Planina Mountains. It flows across the Levskigrad plain and through a wide pass located between the Sushtinska Sredna Gora Mountains and the Surnena Gora Mountains and enters the Plovdiv plain. The Dulgata Vada Canal branches off this river at the pass. This canal is used for irrigating the region located from the pass up to the Maritsa River at Belozem. The big village Ruzhevo Konare is located on the Stryama River. This village is famous for its record yields in tomatoes.

The Sazliyka River flows across the Stara Zagora plain. It is formed by the merger of two large rivers, the Syuyutliyka and Blatnitsa. The Syuyutliyka River springs from the Surnena Gora Mountains, turns to the east, and passes across the Stara Zagora plain south of Stara Zagora City. The Blatnitsa River comes from the city of Nova Zagora. The Sazliyka River enters the Maritsa River east of Maritsa City. The largest tributaries of the Maritsa, the Tundzha and Arda Rivers, are located outside the Thracian lowlands.

SHORT REVIEW OF SOILS

The types of soil here are of great importance to the fertility of the Thracian lowlands and to the variety of agricultural crops which are grown here. (The distribution of soils in the lowlands is given in the newest soil map (in manuscript form) prepared by the Soil Institute at the BAN /Bulgarska akademiya na naukite -- Bulgarian Academy of Sciences/ and the "Pushkarov" Soil Institute.) There are three main types of soils in the lowlands. The best of them cover a vast flood terrace located on both sides of the Maritsa River starting at Belovo and ending at Svilengrad. Located here are alluvial and diluvial meadow soils. In addition to being near the Maritsa River, this type of soil covers the valleys (mainly the flood terraces) of the Topolnitsa, Stryama, Chepinska, Vucha, and Chepelarska rivers.

Alluvial soils became of great agricultural importance particularly after the construction of the Maritsa dikes, which helped save the most valuable lands from floods and silting. Alluvial soils are easy to cultivate, and the fertilizer used here is assimilated very easily by the vegetation. Here the subsoil waters which could be used for artificial irrigation are shallow, located from 1 to 3 m under the soil. Artesian waters are also found in the Plovdiv plain. Where the subsoil waters emerge on the surface, such areas can also be cultivated but must be drained before cultivation. The alluvial meadow soils are covered entirely with intensive crops, vegetables, strawberries, melons, peanuts, rice, etc.

The cinnamon forest soils with all their subtypes cover a large area of the lowlands. Typical cinnamon soils can be found in the Nova Zagora region. The bleached cinnamon forest soils can be found in various places in the Plovdiv plain; they cover a large part of

the Stara Zagora plain south of the Sredna Gora Mountains -- from the Rozovetska River to Stara Zagora and Chirpan --- and also occur in the Nova Zagora region. They exist also around Purvomay City and west of that city and can be found occasionally in the southern half of Purvomay okoliya, mainly along the Kayaliyka River and east of Asenovgrad. Such types of soil can be found in scattered spots in almost the entire region of the Khaskovo submountain terrace from the Kayaliyka River to Svilengrad and north up to the valley of the Maritsa River (including the lowest terrace of the Maritsa shores). Podsolis cinnamon forest soils cover the northwestern and the northernmost parts of the Thracian lowlands, as well as the region situated between the Stryama and Rozovetska Rivers.

In general, cinnamon soils are located on gravelly and sandy clay river deposit strata. They consist mainly of heavy sand clays rich in iron compounds, thick, and with clay characteristics. During the droughty period the cinnamon soils become hard; when plowed they break into chunks. In places such soils are very poor;, but given artificial fertilizing and the necessary measures for improving their consistency and fertility, they could yield very good crops. Such measures could expand the areas covered by vegetable gardens, rice paddies, and many other crops which even now are being grown on such soils.

The chernozem-pitch (bleached) soils are a rich type covering an important section of the Thracian lowlands. They are seen mainly in the Purvomay region, which is a submountain terrace south of the Maritsa valley reaching up to the Rhodope Mountains. Following this same terrace, they spread south and west of Khaskovo; cover a large percentage, the northwestern part, of Khaskovo okoliya south of the Maritsa River valley; and can also be seen in another region northeast

of Khaskovo along the Uzundzhovska River toward the west. However, the chernozem-pitch soils cover chiefly the largest percentage of the Stara Zagora plain between the valley of the Maritsa from the south, the Rozovetska River to the west, and Chirpan, as well as the entire northeastern part of the plain (excluding its northeastern-most borders). Individual regions covered by such soils are found along the northern parts of the Plovdiv plain.

The chernozem-pitch soils are mostly clayish with thick seams and are heavy. Their color varies from dark brown to black. They are more difficult to cultivate than other soils, which is why they must be cultivated while they still retain the greatest amount of moisture. In droughty seasons they dry out and crack. However, considering their good water-retaining capacity, given good irrigation, fertilizing, and the necessary agrotechnical measures, these pitch soils can give very high yields should they be planted with crops which produce best on these types of soils. In the past these regions were planted mainly with wheat and corn. Later on such crops were planted in diminishing quantities as the cultivation of cotton and sunflower seed expanded.

Already famous for its fertility, the Thracian lowlands will be even more worthy of their fame as a rich and generous land after being completely irrigated and after its soils are improved.

Vegetation

In the past, about 200 years ago, the Thracian lowlands were covered by rich natural vegetation. A large part of the plain was covered by forests, which at places were thick and impenetrable. This is testified to by many travelers who crossed the lowlands, mainly along the diagonal road, from Sofia to Constantinople. These

travelers mentioned the flight into the forests of the population during epidemic diseases. Old people also remember thick forests and struggles against wild animals for the protection of agricultural crops and cattle. Furthermore, the existence of these forests is proved by huge century-old trees which are still alive or were growing until recently, as well as by thick uprooted oaks and beeches which can be found individually or in groups. Further proof of the existence of former forests is the number of names given to localities named for the kinds of trees which predominated in the forest, or for wild animals, or for the appearance and nature of the various forests. Existing in the valley of the Maritsa River were vast forests entwined with creeping vegetation, inaccessible, and frequently flooded by the Maritsa. Until recently one could find them in many places, particularly in the Purvomay and Khaskovo regions. However, far wider forests existed farther away from the large settlements, particularly in the mountain foothill regions.

Little forest has been preserved today. Even the meadows and pasturelands which existed until recently are now cultivated. At present the predominating forest vegetation along the various rivers, particularly along the Maritsa River, is represented by willows, various kinds of poplars, ash, elm, hornbeam, acacia, and other trees. Along the higher areas south of the Maritsa valley the forest vegetation consists mainly of oak forests, thick in places. Elsewhere it consists of individual trees scattered among bushes. Occasionally in the higher and still uncultivated areas can be found the extremely thorny bush, Paliurus aculeatus Lam, known by the population by its familiar name "Karachaliya." Now, however, the Thracian lowlands have no forests left, having become almost entirely a cultivated area. But even though the cutting out of trees in order

to use the fertile land for agriculture seemed wise, it proved unwise in our present days of socialism to cut all of the forest, as this allowed running waters to erode the soil in certain areas. This cutting of forests included even patches of natural forest belts necessary to soften unfavorable climatic influences. At present reforestation has become necessary, particularly in the heights and occasionally along hillsides, river beds, irrigation canals in areas subject to swamping, etc. Orchards and forests must find their places on this vast plain in accordance with the nature of the area and the need to strengthen lands exposed to erosion or silting.

POPULATION

Information describing the warm and fertile Maritsa lowlands in glowing terms has come down to us from ancient times, as well as from travelers during the Turkish domination period. Endless wars have been fought for the possession of these rich lowlands from the time of the Thracians and Romans, on through the Middle Ages, and in the recent past. Along with careful cultivation and economic successes these lowlands have seen much bloodshed and destruction and temporary neglect. The bosom of this land was nurtured by the sweat of many people, few of whom became rich out of it. Only today under socialism has this land found its real master, the real owner of the land, the real master of his own labor.

The Thracian lowlands were inhabited even in the prehistoric epoch. Information about the material life of this population can be obtained from the artifacts discovered. Only a few objects have been unearthed, but they still give us some idea about the period of the communal regime under which the population lived.

These artifacts consist of stone and bone tools, remnants of the population's food (mainly animal bones), ceramic objects (dating from more recent times), megalithic monuments, etc. These remnants have been discovered in various parts of the lowlands, mainly along certain naturally fortified rocks and peaks such as the Khasarya Peak at the Stalevo village, Purvomay okoliya, the Dragoynovo and Dobri Dol villages, in Purvomay okoliya, near Plovdiv, Khisar, etc. We have much more information about the life and social structure of the population during the era of slavery. The population then consisted of Thracians and Romans. Many objects from this epoch have been found in the Thracian mounds (with which the lowlands are covered) and in the unearthing of Thracian and Roman settlements. These objects consist of idols, decorations, coins, household utensils, graves, ruins of houses and fortress walls, etc. It was during that epoch that there appeared famous cities such as Evmolpias and Pulpudeva (which later became Philippopolis, Besapara, the Avgusta Trayana fortress at Khisar village, and many others. The development of this multiphased life stopped during the great migration of the people. Then here and in the entire country the Thracian and Roman settlements were subjected to mass destruction until the Slavs finally settled down. The history of Bulgarian-Byzantine relations is also the history of the upper Thracian region.

The largest amount of data concerning life in the Thracian lowlands has been left from the time of the Turkish feudal epoch, at which time life in this land had greatly changed. In the course of early colonization by the Turks a large percentage of the Bulgarian population was killed or chased away, but later on the people again descended from the neighboring mountains to the fertile lowlands to seek a livelihood.

Bulgaria's liberation from Turkish enslavement found poor backward villages and small unplanned cities in the lowlands. Of all cities only Plovdiv was of some importance, with its 33,440 population. It was the largest city in Bulgaria. Feeling its freedom at the beginning, the population increased exceptionally rapidly; but later on the annual increase slowed down considerably, particularly during the time of the economic crisis which appeared at the end of the first decade following World War I. The increase of the population in the Thracian lowlands since 1910 can be seen in the following data:

Years	Total population	Urban population
1910	530,556	155,709
1926	656,292	227,023
1946	822,175	298,921

The increase in population in the lowlands between 1910 and 1926 was 237 per thousand, i.e., the annual increase in population was 14.8 per thousand. The increase in population during the following period, from 1926 to 1946 (the period of capitalist crisis and fascist terrorism in Bulgaria) was 254 per thousand, i.e., the annual increase during this period was reduced to 12.6 per thousand. Still, the increase during that period was higher than the average for the total of Bulgaria (8.5 per thousand in 1946).

Taking into consideration that the entire population of the Thracian lowlands in 1946 was 822,175 people, of which the urban population amounted to 298,921 people, it becomes clear that the urban population amounted to 36.3% of the total population of the lowlands. This indicates that the percentage of urban population here is larger than the average percentage of urban population for

Bulgaria (25%). Unofficial data on the population indicates that the percentage of urban population has increased even more since the beginning of the period of socialist reconstruction.

The Thracian lowlands is the most densely populated part of Bulgaria. Geographical density of the lowlands alone is 112.6 people per km^2; together with the east Rhodope foothills, it amounts to 71.5 people. (The average geographical density in 1946 for the total of Bulgaria was 64 people per km^2). This density is even greater in the most fertile areas along the Maritsa River, amounting to about 200 people per km^2; and if we take into consideration the cities (Pazardzhik, Plovdiv, Purvomay, Dimitrovgrad, Maritsa, Kharmanli, and Svilengrad) which are located along the Maritsa River, density becomes even greater. The average agricultural density (compared to the arable land) of the lowlands, together with the hilly parts of the east Rhodope foothills and in other places, is considerably larger than the average geographical density. In the Plovdiv, Purvomay, and Khaskovo regions it varies between 140 to 150 people per km^2, and in the Stara Zagora region it is 120 people per km^2.

The population of the Thracian lowlands (on the basis of 1946 data) has a predominantly homogeneous structure. The lowlands are populated by Bulgarians. The other ethnic groups in the various parts of the lowlands are only 1 to 4% of the total population, and in certain okoliyas they are even less than 1% (they are 1.5% in Plovdiv okoliya; 4% in Stara Zagora okoliya; less than 1% in Purvomay okoliya, etc.). Of the minorities only the Gypsies and the Turks are worth mentioning. The Gypsies are scattered in almost all settlements (villages and cities), while the Turks are concentrated mainly in cities. The number of the other ethnic groups is insignificant.

The mass of the population in the lowlands (mainly in the villages) is engaged in agriculture, while industry predominates as a means of livelihood for the population in the larger cities.

The rapid development of socialist reconstruction in the Thracian lowlands has basically changed its structure. Industry has expanded, and agriculture has become mechanized. New city quarters, as well as entirely new cities, have been built with excellent housing premises and good living conditions. A new man has appeared there along with the changes in the economy of the area. This new man is the builder of socialism.

The People's Economy

The Thracian lowlands is one of the richest regions of Bulgaria. Here are produced in large quantities industrial and agricultural goods of great importance to the economy of the Bulgarian people. By their economic geographical structure the Thracian lowlands are a typical industrial-agrarian sector of Bulgaria.

Under capitalism it was chiefly agriculture and certain branches of light industry which ensured rapid, easy, and immense profits for the capitalists and which were developed in the Thracian lowlands. However, here the people's regime under the leadership of the Bulgarian Communist Party developed a wide and expanded socialist reconstruction. Industry is developing rapidly, and agriculture is becoming more and more modernized.

After the industrial enterprises were nationalized, they were expanded, equipped with modern machines, and better supplied with locally produced raw materials. In addition, the people's government

radically changed the industrial structure of the area. Along with the development of light industry, large enterprises of heavy industry sprang up here. These enterprises are a powerful lever in the development of the entire people's economy. The Thracian lowlands already produce chemical fertilizers, valuable chemicals, cotton and silk fabrics and yarns, cement and asbestos products, machines, machine parts, etc.

A large amount of the industrial and agricultural products of the Thracian lowlands are shipped to other parts of Bulgaria where they help feed the population or contribute to the development of industry, construction, etc. In addition, a large percentage of the produce of this fertile Bulgarian region is exported far beyond the borders of Bulgaria to the USSR, to the peoples' democracies of Europe and Asia, and to certain capitalist countries.

Industry

Industry has a leading role in the economy of the Thracian lowlands. The lowlands include important branches of heavy and light industries which help each other and are closely interdependent. The profitable utilization of mineral and agricultural raw material depends on them.

Marbas is the second basic energy-producing basis of Bulgaria. Under capitalism the Thracian lowlands did not have a developed local basis for the production of energy. The mining of coal and the production of energy did not satisfy by far the needs of the people's economy in the lowlands. The coal mines in the Maritsa coal basin, despite the fact that they were known since the years of Turkish enslavement, were not well managed and were very poorly

mined. Bulgarian capitalists did not succeed in promoting the prospecting for large reserves of deposits of lignite coal along the Maritsa River valley. The capitalists were also unable to use adequately the coal which is such a valuable source of energy for the people's economy. The production of coal was in the hands of several private companies and was done in a very primitive way and on a very small scale.

During the years of the people's regime the Maritsa coal basin has radically changed its economic status. Discovered here were the largest Bulgarian deposits of lignite coal, deposits amounting to several billion tons. Coal mining was reconstructed on a socialist basis and rapidly expanded. The old mines were modernized, and numerous new mines are constantly being opened. The production of coal has already been expanded not only around Dimitrovgrad and Merichleri, but also far to the east along the basin of the Sazliyka River (Troyanovo village) and has reached even the foothills of Mount Brannitsa (Sakar).

This sector of the coal basin is known as Maritsa-East. Here have been discovered thick seams of coal which are located close to the earth's surface and which can be mined by the open-pit method. The people's regime is already profitably using these favorable mining conditions. Powerful, ultramodern Soviet earth-digging machines operate in the Maritsa-East region. These machines remove the earth which covers the coal and thus do the work of thousands of workers. These same machines have already started mining the coal itself, using completely mechanized methods of work. Thus the people's economy is already supplied with coal at an extremely low cost.

Thanks to the great concern of the people's regime for the

industrialization of Bulgaria and for the modernization of agriculture, the eastern part of the Thracian lowlands has become the second basis for coal and electric energy for Bulgaria. By the end of the First Five-Year Plan the production of coal in the Maritsa coal basin increased many times as compared with 1939 production.

There are great future prospects for the development of coal production in the Marbas area. This coal is of great importance in the production of electrical energy and is an important raw material for the chemical industry. In addition, this coal is used for heating purposes, and, mixed with higher quality coal, it also serves railroad transportation needs.

Under capitalism the production of electrical energy in the Thracian lowlands was extremely poor. Mariyno village (now part of Dimitrovgrad) had a very small and primitive electric power plant. Certain cities were provided with electric energy by some very small diesel-powered electric power plants. A powerful thermic electric plant was completed in Plovdiv only in 1927, and the "Vulcan" Thermic Electric Power Plant at the Maritsa mine was completed in 1929. It was quite big for its time. In addition, the "Vucha" Hydro-Electric Power Plant was completed in 1933. This plant was located on the Vucha River in the foothills of the Rhodope Mountains very near the Thracian lowlands. Due to the lack of water in the river this power plant did not operate at all as it should.

The production of electric energy from these power plants failed to satisfy even the then small needs of the economy of the Thracian lowlands. In this region of Bulgaria the people's regime

inherited from capitalism a great need for electric energy. The lack of adequate amounts of electric energy in the Thracian lowlands hindered the development of industry, agriculture, and the improvement of the cultural and living conditions of the population. That is why the people's regime devoted and continues to devote large amounts of capital investments to the development of the production of electricity in the Thracian lowlands. This creates a solid foundation for the development of industry and agriculture in this fertile Bulgarian region. The coal mined in the Maritsa basin is of the greatest importance to local electricity production. This basin has already become the largest center for the production of electric energy in the entire central and southern Bulgaria. From afar one can see the proudly rising chimneys and huge cooling towers of the electric power plants in the Dimitrovgrad region. The old "Maritsa I" TETs /Toploelektricheska tsentrala -- thermo-electric power plant/ has been expanded several times and has been supplied with modern machines imported from Czechoslovakia. A special thermic electric power plant has been built to satisfy the need for electricity of the cement and asbestos plants. However, the production of electrical energy in the Thracian lowlands was increased the most by the construction of the "Vulko Chervenkov" TETs. This plant is the heart of Dimitrovgrad's industry. It is one of the most modern thermic electric power plants of Bulgaria. It was built with the help of the extensive aid given by the USSR. It began operations in 1951, and now it transmits electrical energy not only to the Thracian lowlands, but also to the Rhodope mining basin, and even as far as northern Bulgaria.

The eastern part of the Thracian lowlands in the Marbas region will become an even larger and more modern center of electric

production. A large new entirely modern thermic electric station named "Maritsa-East," which is also known by the name, "Maritsa II," will be built in the eastern part of this region. Its original production capacity will be about 50,000 kw, which is 50% of the production capacity of all Bulgarian power plants in 1938. Later on other electric power plants will be built in this region.

The production of electric energy in the Marbas region is a powerful lever in the development of the people's economy in the Thracian lowlands, the east Rhodope Mountains, southeastern Bulgaria, and even northern Bulgaria.

The Thracian lowlands have an inadequate supply of water; nevertheless, hydro-electric power stations are being built. The waters of the Tundzha River, channeled in the "Georgi Dimitrov" Dam and taken through tunnels into the Sredna Gora Mountains, already give power to the powerful turbines of the "Stara Zagora" VETs.

The western part of the Thracian lowlands -- the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain -- lacks adequate facilities for generating electricity, but it is being helped by the electric energy produced in the Maritsa basin and by the water power of the Rhodope Mountains. The Construction of the "Vasil Kolarov" Dam helped the production of electric energy of the "Vucha" VETs. In addition, the people's regime built two electric power plants on the Asenitsa River: "Asenitsa I" and the "Asenitsa II" VETs. The electric energy produced by these power plants is used mainly in the Thracian lowlands.

Great successes in the electrification of the Thracian lowlands were achieved during the people's regime. The system of high

tension electric cables spreads the useful electric energy which helps operate machinery in factories and plants, which pumps out huge quantities of subsoil water with the help of thousands of small and large pumps in the Maritsa River valley, and which banished the centuries-old darkness in the settlements of the entire Thracian lowlands. When ones plane flies over Thrace at night one feels that beneath one is a very real sky glittering with bright constellations of light.

The Thracian lowlands is the most important center of the Bulgarian chemical industry. Prior to 9 September the Thracian lowlands, despite its raw materials, had no chemical industry. However, the Bulgarian people's regime, greatly concerned with the industrialization of Bulgaria, with the increase of yields of agricultural crops, and with raising the living and cultural standard of the working people, changed the Thracian lowlands into the most important center of Bulgarian chemical industry. The chief raw materials for this industry are the lignite coal from the lowlands, as well as the timber and limestones of the Rhodope Mountains.

Dimitrovgrad is the most important nucleus of the chemical industry in the Thracian lowlands and in the whole of Bulgaria. Thanks to the great aid given by the USSR, the people's regime built the "Stalin" Chemical Combine, which is the largest and most modern industrial enterprise not only in Bulgaria but in the entire Balkan peninsula. The most important raw material in its various kinds of production of chemicals is the lignite coal of the Maritsa basin. Soviet specialists showed how to convert this coal into gas and how to use it as a source of raw materials for chemicals. The "Stalin" Chemical Combine is of great importance

to the economy of the Bulgarian people. It produces annually over 70,000 t of nitrogen fertilizers, large amounts of sulfuric and nitric acids, ammonia, plastics, and other chemicals. With this varied production this combine helps the development of agriculture, as well as many industrial enterprises, and produces considerable quantities of goods for export.

The western parts of the Thracian lowlands have developed the production of cellulose, paper, carbide, chemicals for vegetable sprays, etc. The production of cellulose is an entirely new branch of the economy of the Thracian lowlands. The people's regime built at the Krichim railroad station a large modern combine for the production of natron cellulose, paper, paper bags, tannin extracts, etc. This plant uses the timber from the Rhodope Mountains and the abundant water supply from the karst springs located not far from the plant. The production of this plant is of great importance to the whole of Bulgaria. In addition, a paper mill operates at the Belovo railroad station.

Making use of the inexhaustible reserves of high quality limestone located in the foothills of the Rhodope Mountains in 1953, the people's regime built near Asenovgrad a modern factory for carbide. There with the help of electric energy limestone is heated in special furnaces. A small amount of coke and charcoal is added to it, and this combination turns into carbide at a temperature of 2,000° C.

The Thracian lowlands is the most important region of the Bulgarian canning industry. Even under capitalism vegetable and fruit canning industries were strongly developed in the Thracian lowlands. These industries ensured for the capitalists tremendous quick profits. This industry is concentrated mainly in the western part of the

lowlands. The Krichim railroad station, Plovidv, and Pazardzhik are the most important canning industry centers, not only in the lowlands, but in the whole of Bulgaria. Stara Zagora, Dimitrovgrad, and Purvomay also have a certain number of canning enterprises.

There are favorable conditions for the development of the canning industry in the Thracian lowlands. The lowlands have a strongly developed production of vegetables and fruit. Wooden packing is easy to find, and there is already an adequate supply of electric energy. In addition, the railroad and highway networks are well developed in the lowlands. These favorable circumstances have also been used by the capitalists; but because of the chaotic development of industry it resulted in a super-concentration of canning enterprises in the region of the Krichim railroad station, in Plovdiv, and in Pazardzhik, as a result of which these centers experienced difficulty in being supplied with raw materials from their vicinities. Of course the people's regime devoted much effort to supplying these canning enterprises with raw materials produced in the lowlands themselves, but still a certain part of the vegetables must be supplied from more distant regions. Thus, for example, in 1954 alone the canning enterprises at the Krichim railroad station, Plovdiv, and Pazardzhik were supplied for canning with about 6,000,000 kg of tomatoes and peppers from northern Bulgaria. However, the socialist reconstruction of agriculture, the expansion of irrigation in the Thracian lowlands, the mechanization of a large part of agricultural production, the better zoning, etc., will help improve and even further conditions regulating the production of vegetables and fruit, which in the future will entirely satisfy the needs of the strongly developed canning industry in sunny Thrace.

The high-waulity, vitamin-rich, delicious, and flavorful jellies, jams, preserved fruits, tomato paste, and other products of the canning enterprises of the Thracian lowlands are widely known all over Bulgaria. In addition, the glory of these products has reached far beyond the borders of Bulgaria into the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Germany, Sweden, Great Britain, etc. Man experiences a particular national pride when observing in Prague, Dresden, Leipzig, Berlin, or even on Rugen Island the high-quality produce of the Bulgarian canning industry in the shop windows of these countries.

Textile industry: In the course of the reconstruction of socialism industry in the Thracian lowlands is being developed in a planned way and in the interests of the entire Bulgarian people's economy. Under capitalism this part of Bulgaria, which produces the largest amount of cotton in the country and is an important market for cotton fabrics, had only a poor cotton textile industry. This anomaly has already been removed, however. The people's regime has transformed the Thracian lowlands into an important center of the cotton textile industry. The old small textile enterprises in Khaskovo have already been enlarged, modernized, and expanded. However, the strongest boost in the development of textile industry in the lowlands was given by the construction of the "Maritsa" cotton textile combine in Plovdiv. This combine is the largest in Bulgaria.

The silk textile industry is also well developed in the Thracian lowlands. This industry has a secure local supply of raw materials. Svilengrad, Kharmanli, Khaskovo, and Plovdiv have some of the most modern Bulgarian enterprises for spinning silk and for the production of silk fabrics. Pazardzhik has a well developed hat industry.

Machine building: This industry is a new branch in the economy of the Thracian lowlands. Under capitalism the lowlands included only a few workshops and small factories for the production of metal goods, tools, machine parts, etc. Now these enterprises have been reconstructed in a socialist way. They have been expanded and are of great importance to the economy of the entire lowlands. Plovdiv has the "Anton Ivanov" Machine Building Plant and the "V. Kolarov" Automobile Repair Plant. Stara Zagora, Chirpan, and Nova Zagora have developed the production of agricultural machines and tools. In addition, Plovdiv has a well-developed metal-processing industry. Here are produced stoves, steam-heating radiators, nuts, kitchen utensils, etc.

It must be noted that machine building in the Thracian lowlands is insufficient by far to satisfy the needs of the economy of this part of Bulgaria. Here are produced mainly machine parts, while machines are being supplied from abroad or from machine-building plants in other parts of Bulgaria.

The tobacco-processing industry: The tobacco-processing industry is very well developed in the Thracian lowlands. Its main centers are Plovdiv and Khaskovo. Plovdiv is the most important center for the production of cigarettes in Bulgaria.

The construction-materials industry: This industry is an important part in the over-all industrial activity of upper Thrace. It entirely satisfies the needs of the various construction projects in the entire lowlands and even provides excess materials which are shipped to other parts of Bulgaria. Dimitrovgrad produces good quality cement and asbestos and cement goods. The

production of lime is also well developed here. Lime production uses as raw material the large deposits of good limestone around the Ognyanovo Railroad Station (Pazardzhik okoliya) and at Dimitrovgrad. In both places there are large modern kilns for the production of lime. The thick clay strata near the Maritsa River are an excellent raw material for the production of bricks, tiles, etc. Large factories for the production of tiles and bricks are located in Pazardzhik, Plovdiv, Skobelevo village, Purvomay okoliya, the Cherna Gora village (Chirpan okoliya), Nova Nadezhda Railroad Station, Kharmanli, and Lyubimets. A large percentage of the production of these cities is shipped to the extended socialist construction sites in the Rhodope Mountains, and recently a certain percentage of this production has even been exported abroad.

It should be stressed that the Thracian lowlands, which were a purely agrarian region under capitalism, have rapidly become a typical industrial-agrarian part of Bulgaria in the period of socialist reconstruction. Light and heavy industries are well developed in the lowlands. They use in the main local raw materials and greatly help the development of agriculture.

Agriculture

There is no other part of the territory of Bulgaria which can be compared with the Thracian lowlands in the variety and abundance of its agricultural production. There is hardly anything that is not grown in this fertile region of the Bulgarian fatherland! The glory of the Stara Zagora wheat of the "Zagariya" type is widespread over all Bulgaria. The sea of heavy rice fields in the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain is a joy to the eye. The large, juicy bright-red tomatoes and the golden yellow peppers of the Thracian lowlands

amaze everyone. Here growing in great abundance are delicious, sweet, flavorful strawberries, fruit, grapes, and watermelons. When the cotton ripens in autumn the eastern parts of the Thracian lowlands become a real garden. In addition, sun-bathed Thrace produces high-quality tobacco for the economy of the Bulgarian people. Growing in its warmest southeastern part are crops which are scarcely seen in other parts of Bulgaria, e.g., the warmth-and sun-loving crops of sesame, anise seed, caraway seed, etc. This part of Thrace is the largest Bulgarian producer of high-quality, solid, natural, glossy silk.

Natural conditions in the Thracian lowlands are very favorable for an extensive and varied agricultural production. In the period of transition toward socialism the economic conditions regulating the upsurge of the rural economy in this region of Bulgaria are improving more and more. The people's regime has created ever-improving conditions for the rational use of natural resources of the lowlands, taking into consideration the interests of the over-all Bulgarian people's economy.

Arable land: Both flat topography and rich soil are favorable national conditions for a large amount of arable surface in the Thracian lowlands. During the epoch of feudalism the lowlands were used mostly for pasture, and later on it was gradually plowed up more and more. Today the Thracian lowlands include a large percentage of arable land. The average arable land in Bulgaria is 46% of its territory, while in the Thracian lowlands alone the arable area covers an average of 75% of the total area. In this respect the difference between the Thracian lowlands and the Rhodope Mountains is quite noticeable. In the Rhodope Mountains only 5 to 10% of the soil is cultivated.

However, the percentage of arable land is not the same all over the lowlands. The lands located 10 to 15 km away from the Maritsa River and mainly in the western part of the lowlands are almost entirely under cultivation. This area includes many settlements such as the Krichim railroad station, Komatevo Yagodovo, Katunitsa, Sadovo, Kalekovets, Parchevich, and other settlements whose areas do not include any noncultivated lands (such as pasturelands, forests, etc.). In general, 80% of the area of the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv and Stara Zagora plains are cultivated; while in the more hilly lands, such as the Chirpan heights and the submountain Khaskovo terrace, arable land covers about 40% of the total area of the region.

The Thracian lowlands do not offer prerequisites for a considerable expansion of the arable area. Only here and there could one uproot non-profitable forests which grow on fertile soil. Along the Maritsa River, and particularly in the Kharmanli and Svilengrad regions, a small amount of swamp areas could be drained and cultivated.

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Socialist reconstruction of agriculture: Under the people's regime agriculture in the Thracian lowlands rapidly took the path of socialist reconstruction. Here were organized a comparatively small number of state farms, but the Farm Workers' Cooperatives included by the middle of 1955 over 2/3 of the farmers and of the arable land. In this respect the best achievements were reached in the Chirpan and Nova Zagora regions. Over 80% of the arable land here belongs to the TKZS /Tzudovo koopezativno zemedelsko stopanstvo -- Farm Workers' Cooperative/. In this respect the Pazardzhik and Stara Zagora regions are lagging behind, since only 50% of the arable areas of these okoliyas belong to the TKZS.

The Farm Workers' Cooperatives in the Thracian lowlands are becoming better and better organized. Many of them have specialized as vine-growing, fruit-growing, vegetable-producing, cotton-growing, and other type farms. However, there exists a tendency for them to become highly profitable agricultural farms raising more than one type of crop.

The Thracian lowlands include some of the richest Bulgarian Farm Workers' Cooperatives. They serve as models for the Farm Workers' Cooperatives in other parts of Bulgaria. In 1955 earnings in money and goods per work day on these farms were as follows: 28 leva for the Zlatitrap TKZS, 27 leva for the Komatevo village TKZS, and 24 leva for the Kurtovo Konare village TKZS.

Agricultural mechanization: Being a region of intensive agricultural crops, the Thracian lowlands are considerably behind the grain-producing Danube plain in agricultural mechanization. The people's regime has changed the aspect of agricultural equipment in Thrace. A considerable number of machine-tractor stations have been organized in the lowlands. Powerful tractors plow the fertile lands of Thrace. Modern combines harvest part of the grain crops. Cultivators plow the spring crops, and even airplanes are used in agriculture. These airplanes dust vast orchards in the lowlands with chemicals. Of late a part of the cotton grown in Thrace is being picked with special machines. In addition, the lowlands lead in Bulgaria in the number of diesel pumps and electric pumps used in artificial irrigation.

Irrigation in the Thracian Lowlands

Irrigation has long been practiced in the Thracian lowlands. Vegetables, almost exclusively, were irrigated. This was a primitive

type of irrigation using running water only partially, and more extensively, water drawn from wells by domestic livestock, such as donkeys, horses, and mules. Such irrigation is still being practiced, though it is rapidly disappearing at present. Some irrigation canals probably date from the end of the fifteenth century, from the time rice began to be grown in the Pazardzhik and other regions along the Maritsa River. During the Turkish feudal period several large irrigation canals were dug, some of which are still being used. The water for these canals was taken from the Maritsa River by dikes. The waters of the various Maritsa River tributaries such as the Chepinska, Vucha, Chepelarska, Topolnitsa, Luda Yana, and Stryama, were also used for irrigational purposes.

The main crop which was under irrigation during the Turkish domination was rice. By the end of the Turkish domination the area used for rice crops in the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain reached 75,000 decares. After the liberation the area of irrigated lands decreased because of the ban on planting too much rice in connection with the fight against the spreading malaria. By 1890 rice-growing expanded once again. Despite this, the over-all irrigated area up to 1923 (73,848 decares) could not reach the acreage achieved prior to the liberation.

During Turkish feudal times irrigated lands were covered almost exclusively with rice, while after the liberation irrigation began being applied to numerous other crops. Almost through the entire capitalist period, however, the irrigated areas of other crops in the lowlands remained considerably more limited than that of rice. Thus in 1920 rice covered 38,600 decares, while all other crops under irrigation covered a total of 24,922 decares. In 1927

rice acreage increased, reaching 73,372 decares; while all other irrigated lands decreased to 23,183 decares. From 1940 to 1944 the over-all irrigated area of the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain reached 205,000 decares. This data regarding irrigation also applies to the entire lowlands, since in the other parts of the lowlands there was almost no irrigation through permanent irrigational canals.

After 9 September in the epoch of transition toward socialism extensive construction work was done in the Thracian lowlands. The irrigation systems in the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plains expanded, and by the end of the First Five-Year Plan irrigated areas reached a total of 600,000 decares. This proves that irrigated areas were now 3 times as big as those during the last years of capitalism, and that here the irrigated area covered almost 1/2 of all irrigated areas in Bulgaria. Despite these indisputable successes, the people's regime is continuing to expand even further the old irrigation systems and to build entirely new irrigation systems, such as the Purvomay, Kharmanli, and Stara Zagora systems. By the beginning of 1955 irrigated areas were divided into four irrigational systems (see Figure at the end of the book).

The Pazardzhik irrigational system covers a large region north and south of the Maritsa River, at whose center lies Pazardzhik. This system uses the water of the Maritsa, Chepinska, Topolnitsa, and Luda Yana rivers. The irrigated lands here cover almost entirely the Pazardzhik plain between the Sredna Gora and Rhodope Mountains. The Plovdiv irrigational system covers an even larger area. In addition to the Maritsa River waters, here the irrigation system uses those of the Stara, Vucha, Chepelarska, and Stryama rivers. This system also uses the waters of the "Vasil Kolarov" dam. This system also includes the newly created Purvomay

irrigation system, which uses only the Maritsa River waters pumped with the help of three central pumping stations. (The total irrigated area is 62,000 decares.)

The Kharmanli irrigational system consists of two separate systems located along the Maritsa River: the first one includes the Yabulkovo, Dimitrovgrad, and Brod regions, which system has three pumping stations (about 9,000 decares), and the second is the one consisting of the Kharmanli, Biser, and Lyubimets regions (16,400 decares).

The Stara Zagora irrigation system included until 1955 a small region located mainly southwest of Stara Zagora. It used the waters of the Bedechka River.

However, the irrigated areas of the Thracian lowlands do not comprise only those included in the various irrigational systems. Hundreds of pumps draw subsoil or river waters and send them into the higher areas and along the valleys of the Kharmanliyska, Banska, Kayaliyka, Mechka, and Sazliyka rivers, and along many other small river valleys outside the various irrigation systems. In addition, dozens of small dams, small water reservoirs, and other dammed waters are used for irrigation purposes. Despite all this, vast areas of the fertile Thracian lowlands still lack irrigation. A battle with nature for the irrigation of these lands has been waged since 9 September 1944. The irrigation of these lands is the purpose of the current widespread construction aimed at collecting all the distant mountain water resources to help irrigate the rich Thracian lowlands and the other plains in northern Bulgaria.

The waters of the Tundzha River have now been diverted into the Stara Zagora plain. Nature was kind to the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain,

while the Stara Zagora plain was unfavorably situated from this point of view. The only river of any significance which ran through it -- the Syuyutliyka River -- almost dries up in summer. There is a big river, however, which runs not far from this plain -- the Tundzha River, but it was isolated from the Stara Zagora plain by the Sredna Gora, an extensive mountain chain. Over a long period of time the people dreamed of diverting the waters of this river to flow through the rich chernozem soil of this plain, but in the former capitalist system this was impossible. This difficult problem was solved under the people's regime, and the dream of the people has already become reality. The waters of the Tundzha River, while flowing in the Kazanluk plain, have been diked by a long wall. Behind it there has formed a beautiful lake, 9 km long and covering an area of 8.6 km^2. When there is a wind, rolling whitecapped waves strike thunderously onto the solid concrete wall. Even though the lake has not yet been noted on geographical maps, it appears to have existed for some time. Here the air is as fresh as near a seashore.

From the dam two canals lead to the east. The left irrigational canal includes the waters going to the Kazanluk plain; while the right canal, 26 km long, the main irrigational canal, leads to the Stara Zagora plain. This canal meanders like a silver ribbon, going in the direction of the foothills of the forest-covered Sredna Gora Mountains; and at Yagoda village entering the first of a series of tunnels under the mountain. The over-all length of all the tunnels through the mountain is 12,730 m. One of them is the longest tunnel ever dug in Bulgaria (6,296 m long). At Stara Zagora the canal goes south of the Sredna Gora Mountains. Located at this point is the "Stara Zagora" VETs, where the water carried by the canal, already used once by the "Georgi Dimitrov" Electric Power Plant,

plunges with dizzying speed through the waterpipe to give power to two big turbines. In May 1955 the Stara Zagora plain had abundant water for the first time. This water will irrigate an area of about 400,000 decares, out of which 240,000 will be irrigated beyond the "Georgi Dimitrov" Dam. In a short while this water will rapidly change the aspect of the plain. There will be vast rice fields; cotton yields will triple; the Stara Zagora grain will be big and heavy; and new industrial crops will be planted. The administrative building which will direct the irrigational system is now being built near the railroad station at Stara Zagora. From here the Irrigation Administration will check and manage irrigation work in the lands covered by the Stara Zagora irrigational system.

The construction of the "Topolnitsa" dam has resumed. Due to the large amount of gravel and sand, which are dragged down the bare slopes of the Sredna Gora Mountains, the construction of the dam at the Topolnitsa River, which had been started at the Mukhovo village, had been temporarily interrupted. After studies which lasted 5 years and after taking measures against the silting of the dam, the lovely voices of construction workers were again heard here in September 1955. Dump trucks started humming up and down; the huge jaws of heavy earth-moving machinery dug into the earth. The concrete plant which had been built earlier began operations. Near it, high in the sky is the mobile tower of the crane made of solid steel. To the south one can see the seemingly endless width of the flat Pazardzhik plain across which speeds the unruly Topolnitsa River. The waters of the river have long been diverted from the construction site. Now these waters run through a tunnel which emerges from the ground about 300 m below the construction site. Powerful pumps suck up the waters of the

small lake which has formed there and which otherwise would have flooded the trenches dug to house the foundations of the dam. A shop has been erected there for the repair of machines. New premises are being built, such as a cement depot, a canteen for the workers, and housing. The narrow-gauge railroad leading to the construction site has been completed. A vast construction project has been begun here using complex mechanized machines.

The Topolnitsa Dam is one of the most difficult hydro-technical sites in Bulgaria. It will have far more storage space for water than the Georgi Dimitrov Dam. The wall of the dam will also be considerably longer than the Georgi Dimitrov Dam. It will require the pouring of 410,000 m^3 of concrete.

Much of the construction material is not located close to the site. The gravel will be brought from a gravel deposit 2 km away. About 130,000 m^3 of stone will be necessary; it will be taken from the quarry which is 1 km away from the construction site. There are, however, inexhaustible quantities of sand near the construction site itself, which facilitates the transportation of this sand to the concrete plant. The erection of the wall will be started in 1946 [sic] and will be finished in 1958. At that date the waters of the Topolnitsa River will start flowing for the first time from the lake at the dam toward the fertile Pazardzhik plain.

The Arda River will flow across the Rhodope Mountains to the north. The entire Khaskovo submountain terrace, which includes fertile lands, is parched by heavy summer droughts; while the tempestuous waters of the Arda River speed along the rocks of the Rhodope Mountains and enter the Aegean Sea. They have been flowing freely for a long time without anybody's devising a method of using

them. The idea of how to turn those waters to the north of the mountain is a recent one, born under the people's regime. It was immediately given serious consideration.

Construction work on a huge scale has begun above the famous narrow passes of the Arda River, called Sheytankyopryu Passes, near the Studen Kladenets village. A solid concrete wall will be erected at this place. Its construction has been started. It will collect the waters of a huge lake which at its upper end will reach Kurdzhali. Here not only will there be built a powerful electric power plant, but also the waters of the dam will be used to irrigate over 1 million decares in Khaskovo, Purvomay, Kharmanli, and Svilengrad okoliyas. In addition to this dam, the construction of several more dams has been envisaged along the Arda River for the production of electric energy and irrigation. The construction of the dam above Kurdzhali will be started soon. Kurdzhali itself will remain in the area between two artificial lakes. The plans envisioning the digging of the main irrigational canals are even bolder and more difficult than those of the construction of the dams. These canals will probably be 2 in number and will begin from the upper and lower dams. Their construction will be difficult; but as usual this task will be fulfilled. These canals will be the longest tunnels ever built in Bulgaria, dug deep under the chains of the northeastern Rhodope Mountains. The entire irrigation system of the Arda Dams will be extremely complicated, connected with many other small dams, micro-dams, and pumping stations located along the river in the hilly submountain terrace. The Kharmanliyska River will have dams built along its course at the Karamantsi and Trakiets villages. A dam will be built on the Banska

River at Voden village, and one will be built on the Biserska River at Biser village. All in all, the area they will irrigate will amount to about 143,000 decares. This will include areas watered by the Maritsa River, by other rivers, and by deep wells.

The waters of the Arda Dams will be sufficient to irrigate other areas, as well. That is why the problem is raised as to a more extended use of these waters. The waters of the "Georgi Dimitrov" Dam will not be adequate to irrigate the entire Stara Zagora plain. In order that not one single corner of land will remain unirrigated, waters from the Arda will be transferred north of the Maritsa River to help irrigate about 170,000 decares. The areas irrigated with waters from the Arda and with waters from the west Rhodope Mountains will include land beyond the Thracian lowlands, reaching up to the Tundzha River to the east, and will include an over-all area of about 1,635,000 decares. The construction of this irrigational system will be completed around 1972, which is the end of the Fifth Five-Year Plan.

The Rhodope Hydro-Combine: The "Vasil Kolarov" Dam, which was completed and began operations in 1951, ensured the regular operation of the "Vucha" VETs, as well as an adequate supply of water for the irrigation of the Plovdiv and Purvomay irrigational regions. This, however, has far from completed the over-all hydro-technical construction work which has been undertaken in the Rhodope Mountains. The "Vasil Kolarov" Dam became an important starting point for the construction of the still most powerful electric power plant system in Bulgaria, consisting of a triple-terraced system known as the Batak Hydro-Power System. This system will consist of the "Batak," "Peshtera," and "Aleko" hydro-electric

power plants. Its construction is in full swing at present. By the end of 1956 the "Batak" Power Plant will be completed. The "Peshtera" Power Plant will be completed by the end of 1957, and the "Aleko" Power Plant will be completed by the end of 1958. The over-all production of electric energy here will reach about 500,000,000 kwh.

The hydro-power system includes the construction of the "Batak" Dam, which will have an average annual flow of 264,000,000 m^3 of water. It will receive the waters of the "Vasil Kolarov" Dam and of several other rivers which will be channeled into this dam. From the west it will receive water along the Bistritsa Tunnel, which will collect a considerable quantity of water from the Chepinska River. The "Batak" Hydro-Electric Power Plant, which is the largest Bulgarian hydro-electric power plant, is being built above Batak village. Along with the "Peshtera" VETs, it will be the first Bulgarian underground power plant. The waters of the "Batak" VETs will drain into the former Batak swamp, which will be changed into a large dam. From here the dam waters will be directed along tunnels to the "Peshtera" VETs, from which another tunnel will take them to the "Aleko" VETs. From here a surface canal will carry the Rhodope Mountain waters to the Pazardzhik plain; and, west of Pazardzhik City, they will be siphoned north of the Maritsa River, where they will be used for the irrigation of another 500,000 decares in the Pazardzhik and Plovdiv plains.

But this construction project is not ended here. All the Rhodope Mountain waters, as far as possible, should be collected. The construction of dams has also been envisaged along the Chepelarska River and along its tributary, the Yugovska River. A dam

will be built on the Kayaliyka River at Bryagovo village. These waters will irrigate an over-all area of 340,000 decares. The waters of the Purvenetska River will also be used. These waters will irrigate another 4,000 decares, and the other waters of the region will be used to supply water to Plovdiv. The waters of the Vucha River, the expansion of the hydro-power system, the new dams, the collection of the Tospat-Devin waters, and other waters and construction sites will help irrigate an additional 2,213,000 decares.

This construction will also be carried out more to the west into the Rila Mountains with the construction of the Belmeken Cascade, which will include the construction of the "Momina Klisura" VETs, etc., which will help produce more electric energy and water for irrigation.

The construction of a dam with a power plant is envisaged north of the Maritsa River on the Peschanik River, which is a tributary of the Maritsa.

Main Agricultural Crops in the Lowlands

Grain Crops: As in the rest of Bulgaria, during the Turkish enslavement and during the first few decades of the capitalist development of Bulgaria, grain crops were the basic agricultural crop in the Thracian lowlands. At that time the needs of the population and livestock were completely satisfied with locally produced grain. Moreover, a large percentage of the grain was exported on barges along the Maritsa River and later by railroad transportation. In the decade following World War I, the Thracian lowland was still a grain-producing region. However, later on, due

to the ever-growing expansion in the planting of industrial crops, vegetables, and perennial crops in the Thracian lowlands, the areas covered by grain in the lowlands gradually decreased. Thus for example in the first 5 years of the twentieth century grain crops covered about 75% of the area. In the period 1927-1931 they covered 72%, and at the present they cover only 45% of the entire arable area of the lowlands. This part of the territory of Bulgaria is no longer an important grain-producing region.

In the lowlands the production of grain crops is best developed in the Stara Zagora plain. Here grain occupies about 50% of the arable land. Here is grown the famous hard wheat of the "Zagariya" type. The wheat from this grain is used in the baking of the highest quality products. However, with the introduction of irrigation in the Stara Zagora plain, part of this grain-growing will be abandoned at the expense of irrigated industrial crops and other crops necessary to the economy of the Bulgarian people.

In the eastern parts of the Thracian lowlands -- Khaskovo, Kharmanli, and Svilengrad okoliyas, grain crops cover 40 to 50% of the cultivated area but do not satisfy local needs. Here barley is the highest yielding crop. This crop should be expanded, being an important grain crop for fodder; it must be sown more extensively.

The western parts of the lowland -- the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv Plain: The production of grain crops is the least developed here of all the lowlands. Here they occupy only 36% of the cultivated area and are quite insufficient to satisfy the local needs of the population and of livestock. Grain crops are planted even less in the areas located around the Maritsa River or in the small vineyard-growing

regions. In some places they occupy only 20% to 30% of the cultivated lands. Thus, for example, only 20% of the cultivated areas of Purvenets, Markovo, and Brestovitsa villages (Plovdiv okoliya) are devoted to the cultivation of grain crops.

North of the Thracian lowlands grain crops cover only about 45% of the cultivated area, as opposed to the 63% of cultivated land covered by grain crops for the total of Bulgaria. The production of grain crops in the lowlands is not well developed, being an important region for the cultivation of industrial crops, vegetables, and perennial crops. The lowlands are supplied in their need for grain by southeastern Bulgaria and by the Dobrudzha region.

Wheat and corn are the most widely distributed grain crops in the lowlands. In addition to the Zagariya type, new and highly productive types, such as the Okerman, Sadovka, and others, are widespread in the lowlands. With the presence of properly applied agrotechnical methods, including irrigation, high yields of wheat can be obtained in the Thracian lowlands. Thus, for example, in 1953 the TKZS in Gradina village (Purvomay okoliya) obtained from an area of 40 decares an average of 619 kg of grain per decare of the Okerman type of wheat. In 1955 the TKZS of the Zvunichevo village (Pazardzhik okoliya) obtained an average of 300 kg of wheat per decare in an over-all area of 1,050 decares.

Corn is less widely distributed than wheat. Average for Bulgaria, it occupies 26% of the area devoted to grain crops; while in the Thracian lowlands it occupies only 15% to 20% of the grain-crop-sown areas. In the lowlands it is most widespread in the Stara Zagora plain. The expansion of the irrigated areas in the

lowland will improve conditions for corn growing. In the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain, and particularly in the vegetable growing micro-regions, corn is cultivated as a second crop for fodder, and when irrigated it yields a good crop.

The Thracian lowlands is the most important region for rice growing in Bulgaria. The Thracian lowlands have favorable natural growing conditions for the production of rice. These conditions are flat areas, rich alluvial soils, fat chernozem-pitch, a thick river network, a high temperature in summer, a sufficiently long autumn season, etc. These conditions were used for the cultivation of rice in the fifteenth century, when the Turks introduced this culture in Bulgaria for the first time.

At first the cultivation of rice was a privilege of the Turks only, but by the end of the nineteenth century Bulgarians were also granted the right to grow rice. The growing of rice was done on publicly and privately owned lands which the Turks divided into parcels. These were planted with rice once every 3 to 4 years. The production of rice was responsible for the construction of the first irrigation canals in the Thracian lowlands. In the nineteenth century many travelers commented that Thrace is an important region for rice growing. According to Ami Boue and Auguste Viquenel, who were noted travelers on the Balkan peninsula and in Bulgaria, by the end of the nineteenth century 4 to 5 million kg of rice were being produced in the Thracian lowlands [presumably per season]. According to Yordan Ivanov, prior to the liberation of Bulgaria from Turkish enslavement about 75,000 decares of rice were being planted annually in the lowlands. During the first years after the liberation rice growing declined, since the sowing of rice was

forbidden for hygienic reasons (to limit the spreading of malaria). However, by the end of the nineteenth century this ban was lifted, and rice production again gradually increased. The great experience of the population in the production of rice was used during the epoch of capitalism.

Under capitalism the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain was almost the only region in Bulgaria which grew rice. In 1929, 95% of Bulgarian rice production was concentrated here. Later on rice growing was also developed along the Tundzha River valley in the Yambol, but Thrace was still definitely the champion in this respect. For example, in 1939, 80% of Bulgarian rice production was concentrated in Thrace.

After 9 September 1944 rice production in the Thracian lowlands was not only preserved but even considerably expanded. However, the relative percentage of rice production in Bulgaria decreased, because the people's regime created a second center of rice production in northern Bulgaria. In northern Bulgaria rice is grown along part of the drained lowlands by the Danube River and the well irrigated valleys along the Iskur, Vit, Osum, Rositsa, Yantra, and other rivers. In 1954 the Thracian lowlands held only 44% of the total area devoted to rice cultivation in Bulgaria. This indicates that the lowlands have as many rice fields as entire northern Bulgaria. Consequently, even today the Thracian lowlands remain the most important rice-growing region of Bulgaria.

The most extensive rice-sown areas in the Thracian lowlands are in the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain, particularly in the areas north of the Maritsa River between Plovdiv and Pazardzhik and even farther

east. Typical rice-growing villages in the Pazardzhik okoliya, which have an average of 1,000 decares of rice sown per village, are Velichkovo, Gara Septemvri, Dinkata, Karabunar, Pishtigovo, Chernogorovo, and other villages. In the Plovdiv area the largest amount of rice is grown by Tsalapitsa village (almost 5,000 decares), Golyamo Konare village (over 2,000 decares), Benkovski, Kalekovets, Sekirovo, General Nikolaevo, Rogosh, and other villages. Less rice is grown in the Asenovgrad and Purvomay okoliyas. The introduction of irrigation in the Stara Zagora plain will help establish this plain as another important center for the cultivation of rice.

The Thracian lowland population is experienced in rice growing. The people's regime helps the Farm Workers' Cooperatives and private farms carry out measures aimed at high rice yields from large areas. The average yield of undecorticated rice grown in this area varies between 350 to 400 kg per decare. Far higher yields of rice per decare have been obtained when modern agro-technical methods of cultivation have been applied. For instance, in 1951 the TKZS in Tsalapitsa village obtained an average of 1,180 kg of rice (not decorticated) per decare from an area of 40 decares. In 1954 the TKZS in Ruzhevo Konare village obtained from an area of 175 decares 812 kg of rice (undecorticated) per decare.

Production of industrial crops: The Thracian lowlands is an important production center of industrial crops for the cultivation of which there are very favorable climatic and soil conditions. The warm, sunny summer and the comparatively long autumn season favored the normal development of many agricultural crops which need heat and light, such as cotton, sesame seed, anise seed, tobacco, etc.

The great variety of soils, such as thick alluvial soils, fat chernozem-pitch, cinnamon, cinnamon-forest, and other types of sod in the Thracian lowlands also represent a favorable natural condition for the growth of various valuable industrial crops. In addition, the people's government improves more and more the economic conditions regulating the production of industrial crops which are of value to the people's economy. In this respect the socialist reconstruction of agriculture, the expansion of irrigation, the use of more chemical fertilizers, the introduction of modern agro-technology, and the planting of new highly productive types of crops, etc., are of great importance. Many of the industrial crops which are raised in the Thracian lowlands are valuable raw materials for the rapidly developing food, textile, and other industries. Some of these industrial crops are of great importance to increasing Bulgarian exports.

The Thracian lowlands is the most important cotton-growing center of Bulgaria. As compared with all the other parts of Bulgaria the Thracian lowland appears as a region which combines most favorably all the natural conditions for cotton-growing. The lowlands include vast areas of chernozem and alluvial soil, rich in food substances required for the normal growth of cotton. Such soils are those of the Stara Zagora plain in the Chirpan area, the Khaskovo area, the northern part of the Plovdiv plain, etc. Here, due to the considerable influence of the Mediterranean climate, the summer is very hot and sunny. This type of summer ensures the required heat (36 C to 39° C, which is the average daily temperature), which lasts through the vegetational period of cotton — 5 to 6 months. Good temperature conditions exist even for the production of long-fiber cotton in the warmest southeastern parts of

the lowlands, particularly in the Svilengrad area. As is well known, cotton is "a child of the sun." It grows best at high temperatures, but requires a considerable amount of soil moisture. The precipitation in the Thracian lowlands alone is not sufficient to provide this moisture. Accordingly, here cotton suffers from the frequent July and August droughts; but the dry September weather, and particularly the October weather, is favorable for the ripening of cotton. But these favorable natural conditions were not sufficiently exploited under capitalism. The Thracian lowlands is the oldest cotton-growing region of Bulgaria. A large percentage of the population is very experienced in cotton growing. The people's regime made use of this experience, increasing it even more and improving it. In order to help cotton growing in Bulgaria, and above all in the Thracian lowlands, the people's regime made the Agricultural Scientific and Research Institute in Chirpan into a Central Scientific and Research Institute for Cotton. The Experimental Agricultural Station at Sadovo village has also been changed into a complex experimental cotton station. In both places scientific workers and specialists carry out thorough studies aimed at improving types of cotton and at the creation of new, highly productive, early-ripening, and other types of cotton. In addition, research is carried out in order to determine which are the most favorable agro-technical undertakings on the basis of soil and climatic conditions for obtaining high yields of cotton. The agricultural technical schools in Sadovo and Khaskovo train specialists in cotton growing.

The expansion of irrigated areas in the Thracian lowlands, and particularly in the Stara Zagora plain, are of particular importance

to the improvement of cotton growing. As is well known, cotton suffers from drought, which destroys a large part of the crop. But, with skillful use of irrigation, far greater yields and better quality cotton fiber could be obtained. Research regarding the most favorable irrigation of cotton areas on the basis of predominating local conditions have been carried out in the "Maritsa" Agricultural Scientific and Research Institute in Plovdiv, in the Hydro-Amelioration Station in Pazardzhik, and in the complex cotton experimental station in Sadovo. This research established that two to four waterings, depending on climatic conditions, would increase the yield of cotton 2 to 3 times. For example, in the Five-Year Plan experiments conducted in Plovdiv an annual average of 253 kg of cotton was obtained per irrigated decare, while only 127 kg of cotton were obtained per nonirrigated decare. Irrigation and fertilizing applied by the TKZS in the Kapitan Andreevo village (Svilengrad okoliya) in 1953 helped obtain from an area of 8 decares an average of 455 kg of unginned cotton per decare. In this respect the cultivation of cotton with irrigation would guarantee high and stable yields for the Thracian lowlands. That is why the people's regime devotes particularly great care to expanding the area of irrigated lands in the cotton-producing regions of the lowlands. In this respect the transfer of the waters of the Tundzha River across the Sredna Gora Mountains into the Stara Zagora plain is of particular importance. When the waters of the Arda River start flowing in the Khaskovo region another strong impulse to cotton growing will be given the Thracian lowlands.

Even without irrigation the application of modern agro-techniques has helped many areas in the lowlands obtain comparatively high yields of cotton: between 100 kg and 120 kg of unginned cotton per decare.

The new types of cotton -- nos 2,362 and 2,367 -- produced by the scientific workers of the Central Scientific and Research Institute in Chirpan are becoming more and more popular. Type 2,362 has a higher yield than the widespread type 38, a longer fiber (28 to 30 mm); it ripens earlier, and the cotton yield of the plant is 35%. This new type of cotton is widely distributed in Thrace, even in irrigated regions. Type 2,367 has a longer fiber (31 mm to 32 mm) and a bigger cotton boll, but ripens later. This type of long-fiber cotton is widespread mainly in the warmest southeastern parts of Thrace, and particularly in the Svilengrad area. An increase in the production of this type of cotton will ensure for the Bulgarian textile industry a considerable quantity of locally-produced, long-fiber, high-quality cotton.

The Thracian lowlands are the oldest and most important cotton-growing region of Bulgaria. In the years preceding World War II over 75% of Bulgarian-produced cotton was grown here. However, after 9 September 1944 the people's government expanded cotton-growing in northern Bulgaria, which became the second important cotton-growing center of the country. Despite this fact, the Thracian lowlands continue to hold first place in Bulgaria in cotton growing. On the basis of 1954 data the Thracian lowlands included 43% of Bulgarian cotton-planted areas, which area produced over half the total amount of cotton produced in Bulgaria. The cotton produced here is of better quality than that in many parts of northern Bulgaria. Again, on the basis of 1954 data northern Bulgaria also includes 43% of the total of cotton planted areas; while the remaining 16% are along the valley of the Tundzha River, along the Burgas lowlands, and in the fields along the middle reaches of the Struma River.

It should be stressed that cotton growing is developed above all in the eastern part of the Thracian lowlands, in Purvomay, Khaskovo, Kharmanli, Svilengrad, Chirpan, Stara Zagora, and Nova Zagora okoliyas. In these okoliyas cotton covers an average of 8 to 12% of the cultivated area; while in some micro-regions of this area even 20% of the cultivated area is devoted to cotton. Many of the settlements in this area plant an average of 3,000 to 6,000 decares of their lands in cotton. This crop brings the largest percentage of monetary income of the farms. Typical cotton-growing settlements in this region are Uzundzhovo, Gorski Izvor, and Merichleri villages in the Khaskovo okoliya; Slavyanovo, Biser, and Obruchishte villages (Kharmanli okoliya); Lyubimets, Svilengrad, and other settlements.

Cotton growing is less widespread in the western parts of the Thracian lowlands, where it is located mainly in the zone of the chernozem soils north of the Maritsa River. In the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain cotton covers only 3% of the cultivated area. In the entire Pazardzhik okoliya 12,000 decares of cotton were sown (in 1954), while 7,400 decares were sown in the area of Chirpan, 4,000 decares around Svilengrad, 5,000 decares around Uzundzhovo, etc.

Hemp production: Hemp is an old textile crop grown in the Thracian lowlands. It has a deep spindle-like root, because of which it grows very well in the thick alluvial soils which are located mainly along the Maritsa River.

Usually an average of 25,000 decares is planted annually in the Thracian lowlands; 70% of this area is concentrated in the Pazardzhik okoliya. The largest hemp-producing settlements here are Malo Konare

(it plants over 4,000 decares), Ognyanovo, Dobrovnitsa, Yunatsite, and others. However, in general, hemp production is not typical of Thrace. Thrace yields only 12% of the over-all amount of hemp produced in Bulgaria. In this respect northern Bulgaria is a much larger center, producing 70% of the hemp grown in Bulgaria.

Tobacco growing: In some parts of the Thracian lowland tobacco growing is of great importance. Tobacco is grown in the peripheral parts of the Thracian lowlands, mainly in the foothills of the Rhodope Mountains, in the so-called collar, which is one of the big tobacco-growing regions of Bulgaria. The population of these areas considers tobacco its primary agricultural crop. Soil conditions for tobacco cultivation here are far more favorable than in the plains and central parts of the lowland. In the foothills of the Rhodope Mountains and in the southern border parts of the Thracian lowlands tobacco covers 5 to 10% of arable areas, and in the individual micro-regions it is even more strongly developed. Tobacco growing is developed mainly in the southern parts of the Pazardzhik and Plovdiv okoliyas, the northern parts of the Peshtera and Asenovgrad okoliyas, and in the Purvomay, Khaskovo, Kharmanli, and Svilengrad okoliyas.

The areas located near the Maritsa River and north of it have almost no tobacco growing. What tobacco is grown here is of the lower quality type -- tobacco of the Virginia type. Tobacco growing is comparatively well-developed in the northern peripheral parts of the Thracian lowland in the neighborhood of the Sredna Gora Mountains, but it is not well developed in the Stara Zagora plain because of the unfavorable types of soil. For example, the tobacco planted in the entire Stara Zagora okoliya is equal in quantity to that in the areas around Svilengrad, Lyubimets, and Mezek.

Tobacco growing is of very great importance to the Khaskovo submountain terrace. Here is grown the so-called Kharmanliyska basma type of tobacco.

Production of oleaginous crops: In the Thracian lowlands, as in the rest of Bulgaria, sunflower seed is the most important oleaginous crop. It is most widely distributed in the Stara Zagora plain, where it covers about 10% of the cultivated area and produces abundant harvests. Sunflower seed growing is less widespread in the other parts of the lowland. In certain irrigated micro-regions it is also cultivated as a secondary crop. In the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain and in the Khaskovo submountain terrace sunflower seed covers only 2 to 4% of the cultivated area and is not sufficient to satisfy local needs. The Stara Zagora plain successfully supplies sunflower seed to the population of the remaining parts of Thrace.

Sesame seed is a typical oleaginous crop of the southeastern parts of the Thracian lowlands. This plant needs high temperature and abundant light. Sesame seed develops best at a temperature of 22 to 25° C, which is why it is most widespread in the warmest parts of Thrace and in general in the warmest parts of Bulgaria. Because of these temperature requirements, sesame seed is the latest of annual crops, being planted by the end of May or the beginning of June and harvested in September. Given proper irrigation it can also be cultivated as a second crop. About 85% of sesame seed production of Bulgaria is concentrated in the Svilengrad, Kharmanli, and Khaskoval okoliyas. Sesame seed is the first oleaginous agricultural crop ever grown in Bulgaria. It was first planted in Bulgaria by the Turks. Its seed contains about 50% high-grade vegetable oil, which is not inferior in any of its nutritive or taste qualities to the highest-quality olive oil and could be compared to walnut oil. Sesame seed is used mainly in the confectionery industry and in the production of halva.

Another valuable oleaginous crop which is well-developed in the Thracian lowlands is peanuts. Peanuts need high temperatures and a large amount of sun, but because they come to fruition with pods which grow down into the earth, they need loose soil. Such soil is found mainly around the Maritsa River.

In the past the Thracian lowlands held first place in Bulgaria in the production of peanuts. For example, in 1933 the lowlands produced 63% of the peanuts of Bulgaria. However, now the first place in peanut production is held by the valley of the middle reaches of the Struma River, where about half of all the peanuts grown in Bulgaria are produced. In 1954 the Thracian lowlands yielded only 30% of the total amount of this valuable oleaginous crop. Being a leguminous plant, peanuts enrich the soil with nitrogen, which is why it is a good crop to be planted before other agricultural crops. Given irrigation and good fertilizing and proper cultivation, the Thracian lowlands can produce up to 400 kg of peanuts per decare.

Another volatile oleaginous crop typical to the Thracian lowlands is anise. Anise is grown mainly in the Purvomay and Khaskoval okoliyas. In the years preceding World War II the lowlands held almost a monopoly in Bulgaria in the production of anise (over 90% of total Bulgarian anise production). However, during the last few years anise growing also spread along the valley of the Tundzha River and even farther east. Today the Thracian lowlands produce about 60% of Bulgarian anise production.

The northern parts of the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain produce another valuable volatile oleaginous crop -- mint. With irrigation excellent yields of mint can be obtained. In the northernmost parts

of the lowlands at the foothills of the Sredna Gora Mountains the oleaginous rose is grown. The lowlands also hold an important percentage of the Bulgarian production of pyrethrum.

The Thracian lowlands is an important center of vegetable-growing in Bulgaria. Natural and economic conditions in Thrace favor the production of various types of high-quality vegetables. The rich clay and sand alluvial soils along the Maritsa River and the almost transitory Mediterranean climate with its hot sunny summer and comparatively long autumn help the proper growth of vegetable crops, their early ripening, and the obtention of high-quality products. The presence of abundant shallow subterranean waters, a thick river network, and flat topography favor artificial irrigation, which is absolutely necessary for most of the vegetables grown in Bulgaria.

Vegetable growing is an old means of livelihood for a large part of the population of sunny Thrace. The population has collected much experience in vegetable growing and continues to perfect it under the care of the Party and Government. In addition, the development of vegetable production in the Thracian lowlands is aided by the very well developed canning industry, the presence of large consumption centers, a well-developed transportation network, etc.

Under capitalism the Thracian lowlands was the most important vegetable-growing region of Bulgaria. In the period of transition toward socialism, despite the fact that vegetable production increased in the remaining parts of the country, Thrace continues to hold one of the first places in this respect in Bulgaria. According to 1954 data, the Thracian lowlands include 1/4 of the total

of vegetable-planted areas in Bulgaria. These are concentrated mostly in the lands located at a distance of up to 10 to 15 km along the Maritsa River. The largest vegetable-growing region in Bulgaria is the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain. Many of the local settlements obtained their highest incomes from the production of vegetables. Of particularly great importance here is the production of early vegetables which, because of the favorable climate, ripen 10 to 15 days earlier than those in northern Bulgaria.

The main specialization in vegetable growing in the Thracian lowlands is the production of tomatoes. The lowlands include about 40% of the tomato-planted areas of Bulgaria. The production of early-ripening tomatoes is particularly well developed. In this respect the lowlands are definitely leading, since they produce over half of all the early tomatoes of Bulgaria. By using special humus pots, growing the seedlings in cold frames, and because of other agro-technical undertakings, the tomatoes ripen by the middle of June. A large percentage of them are exported. Here there is also a well-developed production of early and late tomatoes. Nevertheless, tomato production in the Thracian lowlands does not satisfy the needs of the canning enterprises, which are capable of great production.

The production of tomatoes is best developed in the settlements around Plovdiv and Pazardzhik. Typical settlements for great tomato production are the following Plovdiv okoliya villages: Kurtovo Konare, Gara Krichim, Zlati Trap, Brestovitsa, Purvenets, Tsalapitsa, Ruzhevo Konare, Streltsi, Pravishte, Nedelevo, and others. Many of these settlements plant about 4,000 to 6,000 decares of tomatoes each. The TKZD in Ruzhevo Konare village has

grown 24,826 kg of tomatoes per decare, which is a world record in tomato production. Early tomatoes for the same TKZS have been cultivated, reaching 7,384 kg per decare.

Tomato growing is less developed in the Pazardzhik area. Main centers of this production are the following villages: Govedare, Khadzhiev, Lozen, Malo Konare, Chernogorovo, and others. In addition, tomatoes are produced in villages along the Maritsa River in the Purvomay, Khaskovo, Kharmanli, and other okoliyas.

Pepper is also well developed in the Thracian lowlands, but in this respect this part of Bulgarian territory is not a very important production center. It includes only 22% of the area devoted to pepper growing in Bulgaria. High-quality types of pepper, such as the Pazardzhishka kapiya, the Kurtovska kapiya type, etc, are grown here.

It is worth noting that the production of cucumbers is very well developed in the Svilengrad okoliya (Lyubimets, Novo Selo, and other villages).

The Thracian lowlands is one of the important viticultural regions of Bulgaria. Under capitalism some parts of the Thracian lowlands became typical viticultural regions. In the epoch of transition their specialization in the growing of grapes and the production of wine was preserved, increased, and will continue to be increased.

Most favorable to viticulture are the peripheral, slightly hilly parts of the lowlands located in the foothills of the Rhodope and the Sredna Gora Mountains. These are windy areas here, a factor

in preventing many types of vine diseases. In addition, the soil in these areas is thinner and poorer, and the yields of one-year agricultural crops are far lower at these places. On these same soils vines grow beautifully. Having a well-developed system of roots, the vines draw the moisture from the deeper parts of the soil, which is why they suffer far less from drought. In the climatic conditions prevailing in the Thracian lowlands vines develop normally. The grapes ripen late and are full of sweet juice, highly sugared.

The Thracian lowlands include 1/3 of all Bulgarian vineyards. The vineyards cover about 3% of the cultivated land of Bulgaria, but in the Thracian lowlands this percentage is doubled. Viticulture is best developed in the western part of the lowlands in the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain and in its peripheral parts, where about 12% of its cultivated lands are covered by vineyards, i.e., 4 times higher than the average for Bulgaria. However, even here vineyards are not equally distributed over the entire plain. For example, in the central parts of the plain, particularly north of the Maritsa River, vineyards cover only 1 to 2% of the cultivated areas; and the grape-growing does not satisfy even local needs. However, the southern and western parts of the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain located between the Maritsa River and the Rhodope and Sredna Gora Mountains are famous as the most typical viticultural region of Bulgaria. The larger part of this region is covered by huge vineyards which in many villages occupy 20 and even up to 40% of the cultivated lands. Viticulture is particularly strongly developed in the following villages: Markovo, Purvenets, Brestovitsa, Perushtitsa, Ustina, Krichim, etc. West of Pazardzhik typical vine-growing villages are the following:

Vetren, Vinogradets (11,000 decares of vineyards), Lesichovo (7,500 decares), the Septemvri railroad station, Tserovo, and others. In this entire region viticulture is the basic agricultural crop which provides the largest part of the income of the farmers.

The second important viticultural region is located in the northeastern part of the Thracian lowlands. It covers the Chirpan Hills and the foothills of the Sredna Gora Mountains in the northwesternmost part of the Sredna Gora plain. Here vineyards occupy about 10 to 15% of the cultivated area. Typical vine-growing settlements here are Chirpan, Svoboda village, Stara Zagora, Khrishteni village, Dulboki village, Korten village, et al.

Viticulture is less developed in the remaining parts of the Thracian lowlands despite the fact that those parts also have favorable natural conditions for the development of vineyards. For example, in the Purvomay, Khaskovo, Kharmanli, and Svilengrad okoliyas vineyards cover about 2% of the cultivated land and are quite unimportant to the economy of this region. However, thanks to the concern of the people's regime, here too new areas have been planted with vineyards during the past few years.

The Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain is one of the most important orchard regions of Bulgaria. Fruit growing is a comparatively new branch in the economy of the Thracian lowlands. It has developed mainly in the period between World Wars I and II. For example, in 1930, when orchards covered 0.5% of the cultivated area in Bulgaria, the orchard-covered area in the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain amounted to 0.2%; and in the Stara Zagora plain and the Khaskovo submountain terrace only 0.05% of the cultivated areas. Later on fruit growing

developed mainly in the western part of the Thracian lowlands, particularly in the irrigated lands along the Maritsa River, from the Belovo railroad station from the west up to Sadovo village to the east. During the years of the people's regime this branch has developed much more in this part of the country.

About 200,000 decares of orchards are found in the Thracian lowlands today. This represents 20% of the entire orchard-planted area in Bulgaria. However, orchard growing is not an important agricultural branch for the entire lowlands. It is particularly important to the economy of the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain, where, according to 1954 data, 15% of the area covered by orchards in Bulgaria is located. For a large percentage of the local population fruit-growing is the branch of rural economy from which it obtains the largest percentage of its income. In the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain orchards cover over 4%, in Bulgaria as a whole only 2% of cultivated land. However, certain parts of the plain, particularly of the irrigated lands around Pazardzhik, the valley of the Stara River, and the Vucha River valley, as well as the area included between Plovdiv, Asenovgrad, and Sadovo, have become an excellent orchard-growing region. In density and variety the orchards in this region can be compared with the most highly developed orchards in Bulgaria. In these parts of the Thracian lowlands orchards cover 10 to 30% of the cultivated areas. If one travels along the railroad from Belovo railroad station through Pazardzhik, Krichim, Katunitsa, and Sadovo one will see almost everywhere well arranged orchards covered with large, juicy apples, plums, peaches, pears, quinces, etc.

Villages typical for fruit growing (having over 1,000 decares of orchards each) are the following villages in the Pazardzhik okoliya: Malo Konare, Zvunichevo, Ognyanovo, Pishtigovo, and Chernogorovo. The

center of orchard-growing in Thrace is the Krichim plain. Here this plain includes parts of the valleys of the Stara and Vucha Rivers. Over 1/3 of this area is covered by vast orchards. This field includes some of the best orchard-growing villages not only in Thrace but in Bulgaria. Among them can be particularly stressed the villages Krichim, Jurtovo Konare, Novo Selo, and the Krichim railroad station. These four villages total 11,000 decares of splendid, highly-productive orchards. The record production of apples in Bulgaria has been obtained in this orchard-growing micro-zone — 13,000 kg per decare (in an area of 2 decares) in Byaga village (Peshtera okoliya).

The best developed orchard-growing settlement in the eastern part of the Plovdiv plain and in the Asenovgrad region is Katunitsa village. This is a real forest of orchard trees which surrounds the village. The village has nearly 4,000 decares of various orchards which are irrigated and produce a large quantity and variety of fruits.

Orchard growing is far less developed in the remaining parts of Thrace. For example, orchards in the northern parts of the Plovdiv plain, the Chirpan hills, and in the entire Stara Zagora plain cover only 1% of cultivated areas.

In general the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain produces 80% of the fruit raised in the Thracian lowlands, while in the remaining parts of the lowlands orchard-growing is very poorly developed. For example, the central and northern parts of the Plovdiv plain, the Chirpan hills, and the entire Stara Zagora plain devote only 1% of their cultivated land to orchard growing. Of course these regions include many orchard trees scattered mainly among the vineyards in the foothills of the Sredna Gora Mountains.

The poor development of orchard growing in these lands can also be seen from the fact that two entire okoliyas, such as the Chirpan and Stara Zagora okoliyas, have only 16,000 decares of orchards -- an area equivalent to that planted in orchards around only 10 villages in the Krichim plain.

In the southeastern part of Thrace, mainly in the Khaskovo submountain terrace, orchard growing is even less well developed. Here orchards cover less than 1% of the cultivated lands. Of course during the last few years, thanks to the concern of the people's regime, larger and larger areas are being planted with orchard trees. Despite this, orchard-growing does not satisfy local needs in the entire eastern part of the Thracian lowlands. It should be developed to a point where it could satisfy entirely these local needs. However, some micro-zones, particularly in the hilly areas, could specialize in the growing of fruits even for export. For example, the Khaskovo submountain terrace has excellent conditions for the growing of cherries, almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts, etc.

Typical of fruit growing in the entire Thracian lowlands is the growing of apples, which is the most widely distributed of all the fruits. The Bulgarian average in apple orchards is 30% of the area devoted to orchards, while in the Thracian lowlands nearly 50% is devoted to apples. Apple orchards are located mainly in the area around the Maritsa River, where there is thick alluvial clay and sand soil, good irrigation, convenient transportation, canning enterprises, etc. The typical apple types grown here are Ayvaniya, Karastoyanka, Zlatnaparmena, Kurtovka, Kandile, etc. Ayvaniya apples are one of the best-tasting and longest-lasting of Bulgarian apples.

Plum trees are less widespread in the Thracian lowlands than apples. For the whole of Bulgaria they cover nearly 34% of the area allocated to orchards; while in the Thracian lowlands, chiefly because of the warmer climate, they comprise only 15% of the orchards. In addition to apples and plums, the Thracian lowlands grow pears, cherries, apricots, peaches, walnuts, almonds, etc. From early spring to late autumn fruit grown in Thrace thrills one with its wonderful aroma and sweet flavor. The glory of these high-quality vitamin-laden fruits has spread beyond the borders of Bulgaria.

Warm and sunny Thrace also grows sweet, very flavorful strawberries which ripen earlier than the strawberries in northern Bulgaria. During the period preceding World War II the Thracian lowlands held first place in Bulgaria in the production of strawberries. Now the growing of strawberries has increased in other parts of Bulgaria. Nevertheless, Thrace produced about 1/2 of the entire Bulgarian strawberry production. This crop is most typical of the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain, where 80% of the area allocated to strawberries in Thrace has been concentrated. A certain percentage of the strawberries are exported by plane; another part goes to the large consumption centers of Bulgaria; a third part is frozen, canned, made into jam, etc.

Livestock Raising

Livestock raising does not play an important role in the economic life of the Thracian lowlands. It brings a far smaller percentage of income to the population than industry or vegetable growing. Usually the Farm Workers' Cooperatives in the lowland receive only 10 to 15% of their income from livestock raising. Only certain parts of the lowlands, particularly the eastern parts, obtain 20 to 25% of their monetary income from livestock raising.

In the past the Thracian lowlands were a typical livestock raising region. During the Turkish enslavement vast pasturelands stretched here, where large herds of sheep, cattle, horses, etc., roamed. A large part of the livestock was sold in the markets in Edirne and Istanbul. However, after the liberation livestock raising declined. Most of the land was plowed up; hence pasturelands decreased. The thirst for land which prevailed under capitalism had a poor influence upon livestock raising. At that point a large percentage of the natural meadows were plowed, and a large percentage of grain-fodder crops were neglected at the expense of grain or industrial crops. All this worsened the fodder basis of livestock raising in the Thracian lowlands. During the years of the people's regime a number of improvements were achieved in supplying livestock raising with fodder; but despite this improvement, this important problem has not yet been finally solved.

Because of the large percentage of cultivated area, pastureland is rare in the Thracian lowlands. For example, in the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain, pastures cover only t to 15% of the areas; while in the lands of many villages along the Maritsa River there are almost no pasturelands. Pastures cover considerable areas only in the eastern parts of the lowlands, mainly in the Stara Zagora plain and in the Khaskovo submountain terrace.

The area of natural and artificial meadows in the Thracian lowland is insufficient. In Bulgaria as a whole natural meadows cover 5% of the cultivated area, while in the Thracian lowlands they cover only 2.5%. The best meadows in the Thracian lowlands are those along the Maritsa River. Many of them can be mowed twice

a year. After artificial meadows the most important are alfalfa meadows. They are widespread mainly in the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain and in the narrow valley of the Maritsa, east of Purvomay. With the introduction of irrigation the area covered by alfalfa is rapidly increasing. The areas sown in alfalfa will be increased in the future in the Stara Zagora plain, as well. Alfalfa is a very valuable fodder crop. It produces juicy forage and hay, rich in starch, vitamins, and salts. In addition, alfalfa, being a perennial leguminous vegetable, enriches the soil with nitrogen and restores the structure of the soil, a factor of great importance, particularly for lands under irrigation. This crop should be even more widely distributed in sun-bathed Thrace. The Thracian lowlands have a poorly developed crop of fodder beets. It is necessary to point out that vetch is the most common fodder crop of the Stara Zagora plain.

Thanks to the great concern of the Bulgarian Communist Party and the people's government, the ensilaging of fodder has been practiced more and more widely in the Thracian lowlands during the last few years.

Livestock raising in the Thracian lowlands is still too insufficient to entirely satisfy the local market for animal products and raw materials. The best developed is pig raising, mainly of the white Bulgarian pig. The number of pigs has increased greatly since capitalism. But pig raising is insufficiently developed, except in the main viticultural and orchard micro-zones of the lowlands.

Cattle raising is less well developed. The predominating breed is the local gray cattle, which is not, however, purebred.

The Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain excepted, 98% of the cattle are gray cattle. However, in the western parts of the lowlands, mainly around Plovdiv, there are purebred cattle, mainly the red Sadovo type and mixtures of Montafon cattle. Red Sadovo cattle has been established as a breed in Sadovo by Bulgarian specialists by crossing several other breeds. It is a large type of cattle which is a good producer of milk. Its average milk production is 4,000 to 5,000 l, but a maximum milk production of 8,305 l has been achieved. Crossbreeding of Montafan cattle is also being carried on. Of the cattle in the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain 13% are purebred.

It is typical of the Thracian lowlands that cows are only a small percentage of the cattle. For example, in the Stara Zagora, Nova Zagora, and Kharmanli okoliyas they include only 30% of the number of cattle; in the Khaskovo and Pazardzhik okoliyas, 36%; and only in Plovdiv and Purvomay do they reach the average percentage of Bulgaria, 45%.

Less widespread is the raising of water buffaloes (mainly along the Maritsa River), horses, donkeys, and mules.

Sheep raising is less well developed in the western parts of the lowlands because of insufficient pastureland, but in the eastern parts of the lowlands it is comparatively better developed. There are more pasturelands in that area, particularly in the Khaskovo submountain terrace. The large purebred semifine-fleeced white South Bulgarian sheep is widely developed there. In the Stara Zagora plain 70% of the sheep belong to this breed; in the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain, 60%; only 4% in the Khaskovo submountain

terrace. The remaining sheep are local crossbreeds. More white sheep are to be found in the Thracian lowlands than in the whole of Bulgaria. For example, in the Stara Zagora plain 83% of the sheep are white.

Poultry is not commonly raised, but the Stara Zagora plain is famous for the raising of large amounts of turkey.

The Thracian lowlands is the largest producer of raw silk in Bulgaria. The raising of silk cocoons is an old occupation for a large part of the population of the Thracian lowlands, and is most typical of the southeastern part of the lowlands, i.e., Svilengrad, Kharmanli, and Khaskovo okoliyas. This small corner of Bulgaria includes 75% of the mulberry orchards of Bulgaria and produces the largest amount of silk produced in Bulgaria. It is not by chance that Mustafa Pasha was successfully renamed Svilengrad, i.e., the city of raw silk. It is really the most strongly developed cocoon center of Bulgaria. The Svilengrad okoliya includes 40% of the mulberry orchards of Bulgaria. These orchards are distributed mainly along the valley of the Maritsa River. Cocoon growing is strongly developed not only in the cities of Svilengrad, Kharmanli, and Maritsa, but also in the villages of Hyubimets, Biser, etc. The areas of Lyubimets and Biser include as many mulberry orchards as can be found in all of northern Bulgaria.

Transportation

The Thracian lowlands are criss-crossed by a thick railroad and highway network. In this respect this region holds first place in Bulgaria. It is true that the flat topography facilitates the construction of roads, but the construction of roads is based

above all on the prevailing social and economic conditions. During the epoch of Turkish feudalism, despite the flat topography, the Thracian lowlands were poorly equipped with roads. It was crossed by the old International Highway from Vienna through Belgrade, Sofia, Plovdiv, Edirne, ending at Istanbul. Traces of the cobblestones covering this road can still be seen here and there in the lowlands. These roads were unpaved and were very muddy when wet. Large caravans and oxen- and water-buffalo-driven carts hauled goods from the Thracian lowlands to the ports of the Aegean and Black Seas. Part of the transportation was even accomplished by primitive barges on the Maritsa River. Loaded with grain, hides, Samokov iron, etc, the barges arrived at the then lively port of Enos, located at the estuary of the Maritsa River.

More modern highways were built in the Thracian lowlands during the nineteenth century, mainly in connection with the penetration of capitalism into the Turkish Empire. The first train crossed the Thracian lowlands in 1875. That year saw the completion of the Dedeagach-Svilengrad-Belovo railroad line with a branch leading from Turnovo Seymen (now Maritsa) to Nova Zagora and Yambol. This railroad was owned by a capitalist Austrian firm whose main shareholder was Baron Hirsh. That is why for years on end it was known as the Baron Hirsh Railroad. After the liberation this railroad was continued to the west and, through Sofia, connected with the railroad to Belgrade. Thus in 1888 the first international train (Vienna-Belgrade-Sofia-Plovdiv-Constantinople) crossed Thrace. This railroad line is still important today for transportation between central Europe and Asia.

Prior to the completion of the Yambol-Burgas railroad line (1890) the connection between Sofia and Burgas was Baron Hirsh's

railroad, which passed through Belovo, Plovdiv-Turnovo, Seymen, Nova Zagora, Yambol, and Burgas. Obviously, this passing through Turnovo Seymen was not in the interests of the Bulgarian people's economy. It would have been better to have the connection between Sofia through Plovdiv and Burgas use the shorter route, which passed through Chirpan and Stara Zagora. However, for many years the privately-owned capitalist company of Baron Hirsh, in order to ensure greater profits for itself, obstructed the construction of the Plovdiv-Chirpan-Nova Zagora railroad line. The construction of this railroad line began in 1896, but because of the strong pressure exerted by the company the line was not completed. First, only the sector Chirpan-Nova Zagora was built; but for the remaining part of the line foreign banks refused to grant Bulgaria the credits they had promised. The influence of the capitalist company of Baron Hirsh was so strong that even the Bulgarian Government was forced to let the company operate the Chirpan-Nova Zagora railroad line for 24 years at a very low rent.

The predatory private capitalist operations of the first railroad line in the Thracian lowlands lasted until 1908. That year the Bulgarian Government purchased the Baron Hirsh railroad, and the Plovdiv-Chirpan railroad line was completed in 1910. Thus, Sofia and Plovdiv were connected with Burgas via a more direct railroad route. Later on several more railroad lines were laid in the Thracian lowlands. In 1913 the trans-Balkan Turnovo-Stara Zagora Railroad line was completed, and in 1932 the railroad line Rakovski (now a sector of Dimitrovgrad)-Khaskovo-Kurdzhali-Momchilgrad was completed. The construction in 1937 of the railroad line Mikhaylovo-Rakovski helped complete the first crosswise railroad line in the Thracian lowlands and northern Bulgaria and with the eastern Rhodope

Mountains. Thus the Rakovski railroad station became an important junction in the eastern part of the Thracian lowlands. However, the biggest railroad junction in Thrace remains Plovdiv. From here railroad tracks run in seven directions: to Sofia, Svilengrad, Burgas, Levskigrad, Panagyurishte, Asenovgrad (via Krumovo railroad station), Peshtera (via Krichim railroad station). In addition, narrow-gauge railroad lines from Pazardzhik and the Septemvri railroad station helped connect the Thracian lowlands with the western Rhodope Mountains and the valley of the Mesta River.

At present the density of railroads in Bulgaria is greatest in the Thracian lowlands. In Bulgaria as a whole there are 36 km of railroad lines per 1,000 km^2, in Thrace 60 km per 1,000 km^2. Thus the Thracian lowlands are 70% better equipped with railroad lines than is Bulgaria as a whole. This dense network of railroads is an important prerequisite to the development of the people's economy in the Thracian lowlands. It takes care of the haulage of agricultural and industrial goods, the transportation of passengers, etc.

The Thracian lowlands also have a dense network of highways. The International Highway from Vienna passes through Sofia-Plovdiv-Khaskovo-Svilengrad to Istanbul along the valley of the Maritsa River. Most of this highway in the lowlands is paved, cemented, or asphalted. A thick network of paved highways crisscorsses the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain. Several good highways connect the Thracian lowlands with the Rhodope Mountains. The more important among them are the following: Pazardzhik-Velingrad, Pazardzhik-Peshtera, Dospat-Plovdiv-Devin, Plovdiv-Smolyan, Dimitrovgrad-Kurdzhali, etc. Other highways connect the Thracian lowlands with the trans-Balkan valleys, e.g., the Zlatitsa-Pirdop, Karlovo, Kazanluk, and sliven highways.

The people's regime maintains the dense network of highways in the Thracian lowlands in good condition and is expanding it even further. A great number of buses and trucks take care of the increasing passenger and freight traffic.

Airfields in Plovdiv and Stara Zagora facilitate air transport. A large percentage of the fresh strawberry crop is exported by plane to Germany, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and other countries.

Internal and External Economic Relations

The Thracian lowlands play an important role in the internal and external trade of Bulgaria. This fertile region of Bulgaria, with its well-developed industry, agriculture, and transportation, maintains wide commercial relations with other parts of Bulgaria and with many foreign countries.

The produce of the industrial enterprises and of agriculture, despite their great variety, does not entirely satisfy the needs of the population and the people's economy. The larger percentage of industrial production, such as canning, textiles, tobacco processing, and chemical industries, uses locally produced raw materials. However, other economic branches in the Thracian lowlands need raw materials, semi-finished products, and machinery, which must be shipped from other parts of Bulgaria or imported from abroad. For example, certain industrial branches and certain construction projects in the Thracian lowlands need imported metals, machines, chemicals, rubber, timber, high-quality coal, electrical-insulation materials, transformers, cables, etc. The development of agriculture in the lowlands is furthered by importing agricultural machinery (tractors, combines, cultivators, row cultivators, cotton-picking machines, etc.), phosphate fertilizers, irrigation pumps, chemical insecticides, etc.

The Thracian lowlands has a large and varied production, a large percentage of which is shipped to the other parts of the country or exported abroad. The lowlands export industrial and agricultural products, such as cement, cement and asbestos products, nitrogen fertilizers, sulfuric acid, carbide, rubber goods, silk textiles, fresh vegetables, grapes, apples, strawberries, preserves, jellies, wine, tobacco and cigarettes, rice, sesame seed, raw silk, etc.

The Thracian lowlands has strong economic ties with the Rhodope region, from which it receives timber for construction work, for the timber-processing industry, and for the production of cellulose, colophony (a material necessary for the production of paper), electric energy, a large quantity of wooden stakes for vineyards and for the vegetable gardens of the lowlands, firewood, water for irrigation, etc. In turn, the Thracian lowlands aids the economy of the Rhodope Mountain region by supplying it with nitrogen fertilizers, cement-asbestos goods, cement, household utensils, tools, bricks and tiles, electric energy (particularly the Rhodope mining basin), vegetables, fruit, grapes, wine, textile goods, shoes, cigarettes, etc.

All this indicates that the extensive mutual trade between the Thracian lowlands and the Rhodope Mountain region helps the economic development of both these regions.

The Thracian lowlands has well-developed economic connections with the industrial Sofia-Dimitrovo region of Bulgaria. This region ships to the Thracian lowlands mainly industrial products such as metal-processing machines, electro-technical industrial goods

(transformers, electric motors, electrical-power household goods), metals, pectin for the needs of the canning industry, coal, coke, textile goods, sugar, etc. The Thracial lowlands supplies the large centers of Sofia and Dimitrovo mainly with food products, such as early vegetables, strawberries, grapes, fruit, jellies, preserves, canned vegetables, wine, rice, cigarettes, etc. These goods are transported mainly via the Sofia-Plovdiv-Svilengrad railroad line.

Economic relations of the Thracian lowlands with southeastern Bulgaria are not so extensive. Southeastern Bulgaria ships to the lowlands grain foods, milk produce, electric cables, transformers, woolen textiles, concentrated fodder, etc. The Thracian lowlands ship to southeastern Bulgaria cement and cement-asbestos produce, nitrogen fertilizers, a small quantity of silk textiles, cigarettes, etc. In the future the lowlands will also supply southeastern Bulgaria with electric energy.

The Thracian lowlands have good economic relations with northern Bulgaria. The lowlands receive from northern Bulgaria large amounts of grain food, flour, meat, agricultural machines, sugar, hides, fodder, etc. The lowlands export to northern Bulgaria almost the same variety of goods they export to southeastern Bulgaria.

All this indicates that commerce between the Thracian lowlands and the remaining parts of Bulgaria is very active. On the one hand, the economy of the lowlands is assisted by the other parts of Bulgaria; on the other, the Thracian lowlands render valuable aid to the economy of other regions of the Bulgarian Motherland in the period of socialist development.

Finally, the upper Thracian lowlands play an important role in external Bulgarian trade. The lowlands import from abroad machines for the chemical, textile, and machine-building industries, and machines for the production of electricity. The lowlands also import from abroad metals, rubber, paper, phosphate fertilizers, rolling stock, etc. The diverse high-quality industrial and agricultural production of the Thracian lowlands has been accepted very well in foreign markets. The lowlands export abroad mainly cement, sulfuric and hydrochloric acids, nitrogen fertilizers, preserves and jellies, fresh vegetables, grapes, wine, strawberries, fruit, paprika, etc. These have been accepted very well in the markets of the USSR, the peoples' democracies, and many capitalist countries.

ACROSS THE THRACIAN LOWLANDS

The train pulls out of the Momina Klisura Pass at Belovo to enter the upper Thracian lowlands. From the very beginning, to the south spreads an almost ideally flat surface reaching the very foothills of the Rhodope Mountains. Here the passengers see mainly vineyards and orchards or a combination of both. The vineyards are well arranged and consist chiefly of dessert-type grapes on their long stakes or fastened to trellises. Observing the orchards, one sees various kinds of apples, pears, quinces, plums, and the wide crowns of large walnut trees. This view continues almost uninterruptedly up to the Chepinska River. East of this river one sees the Pazardzhik rice fields, famous all over Bulgaria, which stretch over a vast area to the north and south of the railroad track and of the highway to Plovdiv. These rice fields continue within the Plovdiv plain. The entire Pazardzhik plain east of the Chepinska

River is covered with rice and wheat fields, industrial crops (mainly hemp), orchards, and vineyards. On the outskirts of the plain are the famous vineyard-growing villages Karabunar, Vetren, Vinogradets, et al.

Pazardzhik

The center of this rich plain is the rapidly-developing city of Pazardzhik. Leading from the railroad station to the city is a well-paved highway, bordered by rich, valuable crops covering vast fields and gardens. We cross a long bridge over the wide Maritsa riverbed and enter the city.

In Thracian times the city of Besapara flourished here. During the Middle Ages it was known as Batkun and was an economic center of the Pazardzhik plain. Modern Pazardzhik originated as a Turkish village of the fifteenth century; later a large number of Tatars settled here. The settlement was located at the junction of two important trade routes, the Constantinople and the Bothnia routes. Gradually this village became a city called Tatar Pazardzhik and soon became important. It grew particularly during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and became one of the most active commercial centers in the Turkish state. Circa 1870, the city had a population of 24,000, i.e., it was larger than Sofia. Sold here at annual fairs were rice and wheat from the Pazardzhik plain, iron from Samokov, and timber from the Rhodope Mountains. These goods were transported by barge along the Maritsa River down toward Edirne and Enos, and then on to Constantinople and other cities. A large caravansary was built to serve the needs of the merchants of the city; its name was Kurshumkhan. Its stables could shelter about 2,000 camels and 3,000 horses.

This caravansary was fortified by solid walls; its doors opened only after a certain signal had been given at dawn, and they closed at dusk. From that epoch (sixteenth century) only the Eski mosque has been preserved. The Sveta Bogoroditsa church, dating from the seventeenth century, is famous as an architectural monument with beautiful woodwork carved by master craftsmen from Debur.

After the liberation Pazardzhik declined. However, because of its fertile plain, it again became a market and administrative center of many villages. Its plain became famous for its high-quality rice and beautiful vineyards, and also for its hemp, tobacco, vegetables, and fruit.

Even prior to 9 September 1944 certain industrial enterprises were built in Pazardzhik. Under the people's regime these were improved and expanded to become an entire industrial quarter of the city. Pazardzhik has factories for rubber, hemp, and linen goods; a factory for decorticating rice, for vegetable oils, fruit and vegetable canneries; and paprika factories. The city also has the "Vela Peeva" Textile Combine (producing cotton fabrics). There are also wine caves in the city. Near the railroad station are warehouses for lumber supplied via the narrow-gauge railroad from the Rhodope Mountains. Pazardzhik is expanding because of the vast agricultural Pazardzhik plain and because of its railroad junction and busy railroad station. Here come goods from Panagyurishte, Peshtera, and Velingrad, which are sold all over the Pazardzhik region and shipped to other parts of Bulgaria.

Today the city has experienced a rapid economic and cultural upsurge. Its appearance is also changing. During a decade of

socialism its population has jumped from that of an ordinary city of 23,500 people (in 1944) to about 35,000. The nearby swamps have been drained and gardens planted there. The city is renovating itself and is improving its appearance. The new city plan is particularly interesting. The city will be crossed by wide green-bordered boulevards, along which there will be large housing units. The center of the city will include grandiose buildings such as the House of Soviets, a large department store, a hotel, and others. There will be a House of Culture, and a large stadium. The construction of the stadium has already begun. It will cover an area of 400 decares and will be able to seat about 16,000. The appearance of the city park, the "Svoboda," located on Svoboda Island in the Maritsa River, will also be changed. After straightening the riverbed, the area of the island will be considerably increased. This island will also include the Park for Culture and Rest, in which will be built a summer theater, a library with a reading room, restaurants, athletic fields with swimming pools; and there will be a considerable amount of grassy lawn for relaxation and games. The construction of this project has already been commenced. The City Soviet of the Deputies of the Working People has built here a large monument to the fallen heroes of the anti-fascist struggle. This monument includes a bust of Metodi Shatarov, member of the Central Committee of the Bulgarian Communist Party and commanding officer of the Third Operative Rebellion Zone. The monument is 4.8 m high and made entirely of rhyolite. The back of the monument includes a vault containing the bones of important local revolutionary fighters, fallen in the struggle against Fascism.

We leave Pazardzhik for Plovdiv. Before us are the Besaparski Hills, the northernmost branch of the Rhodope Mountains. East of

Pazardzhik these hills reach the riverbed of the Maritsa River. These low hills of old limestone are entirely bare. The rare grass here yellows and dries out in early summer. But even the Besaparski Hills are important to the people's economy. They are an inexhaustible source of limestone, used for gravel and for the production of lime. Near the railroad track are huge holes in the ground, the limestone quarries, with their laborers, air compressors, and small handcars all busy. From time to time powerful blasts shake the neighboring rocks and echo all over the area. Here are located the largest quarries of the Thracian lowlands. They supply lime for construction work in Plovdiv, Pazardzhik, Velingrad, Stara Zagora, etc.

East of the Besaparski Hills in the joint valley of the Vucha and the Stara rivers is the flat and very fertile Krichim plain. It is well known for its abundant production of high-grade fruit, grapes, strawberries, and vegetables, not only all over Bulgaria, but also far beyond the borders of Bulgaria.

Across the Krichim Plain

The Krichim plain covers the lowest part of the valley between the Vucha and the Stara rivers; these rivers flow between the westernmost branches of the Rhodope Mountains and the Maritsa River. To the south the plain reaches the steep slopes of the Rhodope Mountains around Krichim village, and to the west it is bordered by the Besaparski Hills, whose altitude reaches 400 m. In summer these limey, bare, yellowish hills stand in sharp contrast with the Krichim plain, which is green with thick vegetation. To the east the plain reaches the low hills around the historic Berushtitsa village; to the north it is wide open and merges with the vast Plovdiv plain.

The length of the Krichim plain, from Krichim village to the Krichim Railroad Station, along the Maritsa River, is about 15 km. At its center, particularly near Kurtovo Konare village, the plain narrows to a width of 3 km, but at both ends the plain is far wider. At the foothills of the Rhodope Mountains the plain expands to the west and merges with a small plain in the valley of the Stara River near Isperikhovo village, which plain includes part of the areas around Kozarsko and Byaga villages (Peshtera okoliya). The entire area of the Krichim plain amounts to about 80 sq km. Its surface is entirely flat, slightly sloped to the northeast toward the Maritsa River. Its altitude is about 200 m. It is covered by deposits of the Vucha and Stara rivers. Here the fertile soil consists of thick alluvial soil, and at places clay and sand soil.

The Krichim plain has a warm sunny summer and a comparatively mild winter. It is located opposite the pass of the Vucha River, favorably situated as far as wind is concerned, a factor of importance to the orchards. Here the average annual precipitation is 450 to 500 l of precipitation per m^2, which is quite sufficient. Droughts are particularly severe in summer. However, thanks to irrigation, which was expanded during the people's regime, droughts no longer affect agricultural crops. Drought has been completely conquered here. A thick network of canals distributes the waters of the Vucha and Stara Rivers and irrigates all of this fertile plain.

The Krichim plain is thickly populated. The largest settlements here are Krichim village (population: 7,600), the Krichim railroad station (over 6,000), and Kurtovo Konare village (3,800). The entire surface of the plain is cultivated. Pasturelands and

grazing grounds are nonexistent, and there is little arable land. In Bulgaria one farm family has an average of approximately 42 decares of arable land, while in this plain the average is only 12 decares, i.e., 3.5 times less than the average for Bulgaria. About 2/3 of the land here belongs to the Farm Workers' Cooperatives, which is well organized and one of the richest in Bulgaria. They have specialized in the growing of fruit, grain, and vegetables.

Thanks to irrigation, abundant use of fertilizers, and better and better application of modern agro-technical methods, the cooperative farmers and the private farmers of the Krichim plain have obtained high stable yields from the various agricultural crops. On vast areas here as many as two crops per year can be obtained.

The main economic branches in the Krichim plain are orchard growing, vineyard growing, and vegetable growing. The experience of the population in these fields is great, and it is correctly put to its best use by the people's regime.

A leading place in agriculture is occupied here by orchard growing. In many of the settlements it accounts for 1/2 of the population's income. Orchards in Bulgaria cover an average of 2% of the arable land, while here orchards cover 27% of the cultivated area. Even in the area of the Kurtovo Konare village 45% of the cultivated area is covered by orchards. These orchards resemble a real forest in the entire Krichim plain. If one travels from the Krichim railroad station by Peshtera by rail, one passes through vast orchard groves, both old and young, around Kurtovo Konare village, Novo Selo village, Krichim, Isperikhovo, and Byaga

villages. Everything here is concealed in a thick green forest. Abundant amounts of water quietly flow through the numerous canals and irrigate the orderly orchard groves, whose trees are covered with juicy fruit, bending the branches low. Looking at these vast orchards, one is convinced that this is the garden of Thrace.

The Krichim plain has over 16,000 decares of orchards, which is over half the orchards in the entire Khaskovo okrug, which equals 80% of the orchards in the entire Blagoevrad okrug. In orchard saturation the Krichim plain holds one of the first places in Bulgaria. In Bulgaria there is an average of 216 decares of orchard per 1,000 population, while in the Krichim plain there are 504 decares of orchard per 1,000 population. In the Kurtovo Konare village alone there are 740 decares of orchard per 1,000 population, or 2 decares of orchard for every 3 people.

The Krichim plain is a typical apple orchard. In Bulgaria apple orchards hold 30% of the total area of orchards, but in this plain they hold 85% of the area planted in orchards. The most widely distributed types of apple here are the ayvaniya, kurtovka, zlatna zimna parmena, et al. Orchard growing here is carried on by modern methods, particularly in the Farm Workers' Cooperatives. The orchards are irrigated and well fertilized, they are sprayed with special machines, and they are chemically dusted by planes. An airplane can dust over 3,000 decares of orchards per day, thus replacing the labor of 1,500 workers.

Fruit growers of the Krichim plain are famous all over the country. Applying modern agro-technical methods, they obtain high orchard yields. They obtain from vast areas from 3 to 5 tons of apples per decare. The champions in this respect have reached record

yields. For example, in 1952 in Kurtovo Konare village an average of 9,748 kg of apples per decare was obtained from an over-all area of 20 decares. The entire plain produces annually about 30 to 40 million kg of apples. The largest percentage of this production is exported to foreign markets; another part is consumed in Bulgaria; and a certain percentage of it is processed in the canning combine at the Krichim railroad station.

In addition to apples, the Krichim plain also has some peach (over 700 decares), cherry (350 decares), and plum growing. The DZS [Durzhavno zemedelsko stopanstvo — state farm] near Kurtovo Konare village raises lemons and other subtropical fruit in coldframes. Considering the demands of the canning industry of this part of the territory of Bulgaria, the production of sour cherries and peaches should be increased. Viticulture is of great importance to the local economy, along with orchard growing. This is an old and important occupation of the local population. Vineyards cover the sandier and even the gravel-covered soils of the plain. The Krichim plain has vast vineyards. They cover about 20% of the cultivated area, while the average for Bulgaria is only 3% of the cultivated area. Given proper irrigation, here up to 4,000 kg of grapes per decare can be obtained. The largest percentage of vineyards produce dessert grapes, which are sweet, golden-yellow, famous in the Bulgarian market as well as abroad.

Another important part of the rural economy of the Krichim plain is the production of vegetables. This is of great importance to Bulgarian export, and also supplies the Bulgarian canning industry with raw materials. The Krichim plain holds one of the first places in Bulgaria in the production of vegetables, particularly of early

tomatoes. The Krichim plain includes vast vegetable gardens. Vegetable gardens cover 1% of the cultivated area of Bulgaria, covering 13% of the cultivated area of the Krichim plain. The largest number of tomatoes (mainly early tomatoes) is produced in the following villages: Kurtovo Konare (1,200 decares), Krichim railroad station (over 800 decares), Novo Selo village, Kadievo village, etc. Even the courtyards in the villages of the Krichim plain are planted with early tomatoes, which are carefully cultivated. The local population has exceptionally wide experience in vegetable growing. The population here benefits from the assistance of the scientific workers engaged in vegetable growing, and it has made good use of Soviet experience. Thus great achievements have been obtained by making good use of the experience of Academician Vinogradov, a USSR scientist, in the raising of tomato seedlings at low temperatures. This helps obtain a disease-resistant, solid plant which can survive temperatures under 0° C, can be transplanted early in the season, and produces an early crop. For example, in 1954 the DKZS in the Kurtovo Konare village raised tomato plants by the standard method to obtain an average per decare of 2,820 kg of early tomatoes and 4,507 leva of income per decare; while with plants raised by the coldframe method the average yield per decare was 4,330 kg of tomatoes, and the income 7,805 leva per decare. In addition, tomatoes can be raised in special humus pots. The Krichim plain and the remaining parts of Plovdiv okoliya yield about 40% of the total production of early tomatoes in Bulgaria.

The production of red pepper of the Kapiya type is also quite well developed in the Krichim plain. The pepper is processed in the canneries of the Krichim railroad station.

Orchard-growing, viticulture, and vegetable-growing comprise the economy of the Krichim plain. The remaining agricultural branches are poorly developed and fail even to satisfy the needs of the local population. For example, grain covers only about 20% of the arable areas, and a large part of them are planted as a second crop. After early tomatoes, the area is usually planted with corn, which, given proper irrigation and fertilizing, yields 200 to 300 kg of grain per decare. Industrial crops and livestock breeding are poorly represented in the Krichim plain.

The traveler entering the plain can see from afar high smokey chimneys which pinpoint the industrial center of Krichim railroad station, one of the important industrial centers of the Thracian lowlands.

Krichim railroad station is a new settlement. Here there were only fields and pasturelands until 1875, when the Baron Hirsh railroad line was built. At first there was only the railroad station; it was called Krichim, since most of the lumbermen who floated their lumber along the Vucha River to the station came from Krichim village, which is located 12 km from the railroad station. For years on end there were only a few saloons and inns around the railroad station itself. During the years preceding World War I there were only some 10 houses here. Later on people from the neighboring villages, such as Kurtovo Konare, Perushtitsa, Tsalapitsa, and others, settled around the railroad station. Thus this settlement began to expand, and by 1926 it had a population of 224. Later on, when the production of vegetables, fruit, and grapes sold at the markets of Sofia, Plovdiv, and abroad was increased, the Krichim railroad station became an important export center of the entire Krichim plain

and of neighboring areas. Migration to the railroad station from the neighboring villages continued, but later on the village attracted merchants who grew wealthy from the export of vegetables and fruit. By 1934 the settlement around the Krichim railroad station had grown to 550 and represented a sector of the neighboring Bolatovo village, located 2 km north of the station near the Maritsa River.

During the years directly preceding World War II the export of fruit and vegetables from the Krichim railroad station increased even more. In order to accumulate even greater profits, the capitalists developed the canning industry to a considerable extent. During the period 1936-1943 eleven industrial enterprises for the production of canned vegetables and fruit and wine were built here. In 1947 these enterprises were nationalized, extended, and organized into the large "Vitamina" State Canning Combine. This is the largest canning enterprise in Bulgaria. In addition, the people's regime built at the Krichim railroad station the only Bulgarian plant to produce cellulose.

The population of the Krichim railroad station increased along with the industrial development there. After 1936 the railroad station became the administrative center of Bolatovo village, together with the Krichim railroad station. By 1946 this settlement had already grown to a population of 3,200. In the following years, because of the ever-expanding industrialization of the Krichim railroad station, the population began to increase even more rapidly. For example, in the period 1947-1954 alone 858 families came to live here from Plovdiv, Pazardzhik, Panagyurishte, Sandanski, Gotse Delchev, and other okoliyas. In addition, the Krichim railroad station provides employment for about 1,000 people

commuting from Plovdiv, Pazardzhik, and neighboring cities. At present the population of Krichim railroad station is over 6,000 while in summer the ingress of seasonal workers increases the figure to 8,000 or 9,000.

It is obvious to the traveler approaching the Krichim railroad station that this is an important industrial center. In the westernmost part of the settlement are the proudly-rising snow-white buildings of Bulgaria's only cellulose plant. This plant is the child of the life-giving Bulgarian-Soviet friendship. The plans for this plant were drafted and the machines produced in the USSR. Soviet specialists gave direct help in the construction of the plant itself. The Soviet Union trained the present staff of the plant.

Until 1950 there were only vineyards and fields at the location of the present "Stefan Kiradzhiev" Cellulose Plant. Then construction workers came here, and intensive work commenced. Wooden shacks and piles of construction materials appeared. Thanks to the enthusiastic labor of the construction workers, with the assistance of the neighboring population and the generous help of the USSR, the first Bulgarian cellulose plant was constructed in a short time. It was completed and began production in the autumn of 1952.

The basic raw material used by the "Stefan Kiradzhive" cellulose plant is coniferous timber. It is supplied by the western Rhodope Mountains, the region of Bulgaria having the greatest abundance of coniferous trees. Railroad freight cars arrive in the yards of the plant loaded with timber. A vast area is covered by huge piles of logs. Special equipment hauls the lumber to the top

floor of one of the buildings of the plant. Here the logs are sawed into rather long pieces, which are automatically fed into another mechanism whose huge jaws masticate the wood into splinters. Later, after a complex chemical treatment, the splinters are broken down into cellulose. Usually 200 kg of cellulose are obtained from 1 t of timber.

Great quantities of water are required in the process of cellulose production. For example, the production of 1 t of cellulose requires about 400 t of water. That is why a cellulose factory must be located near a large amount of water. In this respect the region of the Krichim railroad station is entirely suitable. Nearby are large karst springs from which abundant amounts of crystal-clear water spring. Using a special pipeline this water is brought to the plant and used in the production process.

Valuable improvements in the production of cellulose were made in the last few years. They have brought many savings to the people's economy. For example, the production of cellulose from beech timber was started in 1954. This effected an annual saving to the people's economy of over 5,000 m^3 of valuable coniferous timber to be used for construction purposes. The production of tall oil was undertaken here. This is a by-product of the processing of sulfated liquid soap, which until recently was rejected as waste by the Stefan Kiradzhiev Plant. Bulgaria will produce annually 350,000 kg of tall oil, which is used in the production of linseed oil. This will help the people's economy produce 350,000 kg of flaxen and hemp oil per year. It is common knowledge that Bulgaria imports a large percentage of these types

of oil. The production of tall oil at the Krichim railroad station will help the Bulgarian linseed oil and varnish industries and will save for the people's economy 1,500,000 leva per annum.

The cellulose plant at the Krichim railroad station is of great importance to the economy of the Bulgarian people. Cellulose is used in the production of natron paper, from which paper bags are made; these are necessary for packaging nitrogen fertilizers, cement, flour, soda, etc. In the future cellulose will also be utilized in the production of artificial textile fiber and yarns. In addition to the paper factory and the paper bag factory, a special shop for the extraction of tannates has been added to the plant. Tannate is extracted from oak, juniper, and other barks. The production of tannates will be of value to the Bulgarian leather industry and will save large amounts of foreign currency for Bulgaria.

An entirely new development of large, sunny, and hygienic housing units was built near the cellulose plant at the Krichim railroad station. These units are equipped with central heating and all modern conveniences. They house workers' families and engineering and technical personnel. A special housing unit has been devoted to young unmarried workers.

Visitors to the plant admire the new complex machinery, the large degree of mechanization in the production process, the hygiene of the place, the modern laboratories, the well-arranged reading rooms and libraries, modern housing premises, etc. If we observe the snow-white buildings of the plant, the high smokey chimneys, the high-piled trucks of logs, the sunny houses, we leave the plant with the special pride that, thanks to the concern of the people's regime, Bulgaria now has her own cellulose production.

We part with this champion of Bulgarian cellulose production and go to the center of the Krichim railroad station, which is very busy. Numerous trucks and horse cars loaded with fruit and vegetables constantly stop in front of the railroad station to load their goods on freight cars destined for the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Germany, etc.

The Krichim railroad station is not only an important export center of fruits, grapes, and vegetables; it is also one of the largest centers of the Bulgarian canning industry. Several departments of the "Vitamina" State Canning Combine process annually about 25,000,000 kg of vegetables, grapes, and fruit. The largest percentage of this produce, particularly the fruit and grapes, is grown in the fertile Krichim plain. The geographic location of this Combine is excellent. It is located in the midst of an important vegetable-growing, fruit-growing, and viticultural region, near an important railroad and highway junction. In addition, the canning combine is located close to the cities of Peshtera and Leningrad, which supply it with wooden packing crates.

Under capitalism the canning enterprises of the Krichim railroad station produced mainly tomato paste, marmalades, ground paprika, and canned vegetables. Under the people's regime this production became more varied and has improved and expanded. At present the Combine produces a variety of valuable goods, such as cherries, preserves, concentrated preserves, fruit juices, grape honey, ready-canned meat dishes, and others -- all in all, over 100 varied assortments. During the period 1950-1954 alone the annual production of the "Vitamina" State Canning Combine increased by 300% over the preceding period. A large percentage of this production is used for the feeding of the Bulgarian people, but part is exported.

The Krichim railroad station is also a wine center. Here over 7,000,000 kg of grapes are processed annually, yielding large amounts of liqueurs and wines, wine distillates, spirits, potassium tartrate, and other related products. A large modern wine cellar will be built here in the near future.

The famous fruit-growing, vegetable-growing, and viticultural Kurtovo Konare and Krichim are located north of the Krichim railroad station in the Krichim plain. These villages are famouse for their rich Farm Workers' Cooperatives. The "V. I. Lenin" TKZS in Kurtovo Konare village distributed in 1955, both in kind and in cash, an income of 24 leva per work day to its members. Krichim village is the larger of the two, having a population of 7,600. It is located on the Vucha River in the foothills of the Rhodope Mountains. Above the village on the steep mountain slope one can see remnants from the middle centuries of a fortress which guarded the routes leading into the Rhodope Mountains along the valley of the river.

Krichim village resembles a small city in a forest of orchards. The village is served by the Vucha railroad station, located on the railroad line leading to Peshtera. Shipped from this railroad station is timber which comes from the Rhodope Mountains by trucks which follow the valley of the Vucha River. Large quantities of apples, grapes, tomatoes, pepper, strawberries, and other produce are exported from Krichim village.

Typical viticultural villages are found east of Krichim village in the foothills of the Rhodope Mountains. They are Ustina, Perushtitsa, and Brestovitsa. The area around these villages is an interesting sight which cannot be seen in many other places in

Bulgaria. Grain is grown in these three areas on a total of 10,000 decares, while vineyards have spread over an area of 31,000 decares. Vineyards cover over 55% of the cultivated area of these three villages. Here the traveler can travel for km on end through vineyards. These vineyards have covered the hills in the foothills of the Rhodope Mountains around Perushtitsa and Brestovitsa villages, and have gone far to the north in the valley of the Maritsa River. The vineyards are carefully cultivated, and a large number of them are irrigated. Irrigation canals here have reached even the slopes of the hills. The large fields of this region yield 2,000 kg of grapes per decare; while in the smaller, more intensively cultivated areas up to 5,370 kg of grapes per decare have been obtained. The view is very interesting here in autumn. The carefully cultivated vineyards, a large part of which are supported on wires, are covered with sweet golden-yellow, rose, or deep blue grapes. A large part of the excellent fruit grown in Thrace is exported to foreign markets; part is consumed in Bulgaria; and part is processed in the two large modern wine cellars located near Perushtitsa and Brestovitsa villages. These cellars process annually over 10,000,000 kg of grapes in heavy and standard wines, spirits, etc. The sweet wine of the "Perushtitsa" type is widely known in the USSR, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and Germany. Any of the large restaurants in Prague, Dresden, or Berlin will include in its list of alcoholic beverages the sweet type "Perushtitsa 2".

Perushtitsa and Brestovitsa are large well-planned Bulgarian villages. Perushtitsa has a population of about 6,500. Its heroic struggle against Turkish tyranny during the time of the April

rebellion (1876) and its active participation in the resistance movement prior to 9 September 1944 will forever remain in the history of the Bulgarian people. The walls of the historical church of Perushtitsa still have marks of the shells from Turkish artillery. Here fell famous and heroic fighters for the freedom of the Bulgarian people. Some of them ended their lives rather than bow to the Turks. One among them is Kocho Chistemenski. Lauding the heroic deeds of the Perushtitsa people, people's poet Ivan Vazov enthusiastically wrote the following:

"Pale Perushtitsa, nest of heroes!
Glory! Eternal glory to your children!
Glory to your ashes and to your graves
Where the rebel slaves bravely fell!
With your terrible death
And with your brave maidens
You rose higher than Carthage
And you shamed Sparta!"

During the April rebellion Perushtitsa was entirely destroyed by fire, and 347 died for the freedom of the Bulgarian people.

The region of the Krichim railroad station also includes the large Tsalapitsa village, with a population of 7,000. It is located north of the Maritsa River. Its area under cultivation is more than 60,000 decares. Here are produced large amounts of grain, corn, rice (about 5,000 decares), vegetables, grapes, sugar beets, etc. The village's Farm Workers' Cooperative is growing in strength. The village itself covers a vast area. Almost every house of the village has a large courtyard around it. In the center of the village rises a tall cultural club, which includes a large movie hall, a well-organized reading room, a library, etc.

Plovdiv

The train nears Plovdiv, the second largest city in Bulgaria. Far away on the horizon one can see the lines of the famous Plovdiv hills, to which the setting sun gives a silvery hue.

Because of Plovdiv's interesting location among the seven syenite hills, called "tepe" by the local population, there is no more individual city than Plovdiv in Bulgaria. These hills can be seen from afar, like islands among the flat Thracian lowlands. It is true that they were once islands in a vast sea, but at that time neither the old city nor humankind existed on earth. Today the Plovdiv Hills are the decoration of the city. There is a broad view from those hills toward the Plovdiv plain, hidden under fresh vegetation. All around from the hill one sees the gigantic background of the plain consisting of several mountain chains, the Rhodope Mountains, the Sredna Gora Mountains (therebeyond, the Stara Planina Mountains), and the Chirpan Hills. Today the city is spread over a huge area. From the hills it gradually grew toward the lowlands. The entire area located between the hills has long since been built up. The city has also spread in the flat plain. Here have been built new housing and factory sections which cover ever-increasing areas to the east and west; to the south and known as the Kyuchyuk Parizh; and to the north beyond the Karshiaka sector. Today these old names have been replaced by new ones, just as the shape of the old sectors of the city have been changed.

North of the hills the Maritsa River slowly flows over its wide riverbed crossed by long newly-built bridges. The new city spreads down on the plain, and up the hills one sees old houses and remnants of fortified places which boldly stand out like eagle nests

above bare rocky precipices. Such a view cannot be found anywhere else in the world. The charm of the city changes with the seasons of the year. At this time of year the picture is complete with splendid parks whose roads reach the very peaks of the hills.

In the past the Plovdiv Hills played an important part in the life of the city. Around them was a plain famous for its fertility; while here was its center, and up among the hills its protection. The Maritsa River was also very important to the city. That is why these three elements in the development of the city -- the hills, the river, and the plain -- have been included in the old Plovdiv coat-of-arms. And, adding to this picture the warm and fertile climate of the plain, and particularly the character of the people who manufacture the goods, the flourishing economic situation of Plovdiv will be very well understood; since there has hardly ever been any decline for this city throughout the centuries. Even today Plovdiv has lost nothing of this favorable situation.

The Plovdiv Hills are mute witnesses not only to the historical development of the city, but also to the life which flourished here in earlier times. Since human beings first appeared here this naturally fortified place attracted them. Here human beings always kept a settlement. For 2,000 years an active city remained on these hills, and the heart of this city will never stop beating.

At first tribes which were not familiar with bronze or iron inhabited this area. This was in prehistoric times, during the epoch of the communal family. We have found only stone tools and several other remnants of that time. A settlement from the epoch of slavery, called Evmolpias, has been unearthed. It was located

on the left bank of the Maritsa River and was the predecessor of the Thracian city which was built among the hills. The Thracians are the first historically known settlers on these lands, about whom we have collected more than a little data. On the Orfey group of three hills the Thracians built a larger settlement which was then called Pulpudeva. When Phillip II, father of Alexander of Macedon, conquered the Thracians and their land, he well appreciated the strategic and economic importance of this settlement and changed it into a fortress. A solid fortress wall was built, and a garrison was left inside. He gave his name to the settlement, Philippopolis. Later on Phillip II established poor Greek families and a penal colony here. That is why the city was called Penaropolis (city of criminals). Since then a famous city grew at this place, under whose walls various conquerors appeared. These conquerors repeatedly destroyed and burned the city, but as if by magic a new city always arose from the ashes. Here lived Romans and Greeks, Goths and Huns. For a long time Bulgarians and Turks lived here, and Crusaders passed across. This settlement survived many wars and bloody destructions, earthquakes, catastrophes, and deadly epidemics of plague.

During the Roman domination the city grew even further. It was then called Tremontium (three hills). The city became rich and acquired the right to mint its own coins. The city grew so much that it no longer remained inside the old walls, but spread outside of them. A second external wall was built; it surrounded the city, as well as part of the plain. Emperor Trojan called it Fulpia Tremontium; and later, under Marc Aurelius and Adrian, this remarkable city was known as "the most brilliant." Lucian adds that

"this is the largest and the most beautiful city, and its beauty shines from afar." By that time a large temple had been erected in honor of Apollo on one of the hills called Khulma na mladezhte. This temple had a front of huge columns and a statue of the temple patron. The slopes of this hill were covered with a small cedar forest. Here were held the Alexandrian games, famous all over Greece in honor of Alexander. These were later called the Cendrian games, and were related to the Pythian games in honor of Apollo. Excavations conducted on these places unearthed well-preserved ruins of a large marble sports stadium where various popular celebrations and competitions similar to the Olympic games were conducted. In the city were many monuments and marble temples, a theater, and many buildings. In the course of current building construction more and more well-preserved remnants are being unearthed every day.

Many tribulations befell this city with the fall of the Roman Empire. When the great migrations of the peoples began, Plovdiv was not spared. Its development stopped for a long time because of the catastrophes which overcame all of Thrace. It was first taken by the Goths, who razed it. This was done in the third century A. D. After that hordes of Saracens and Huns overran the city. Justinian restored the city, but the Avarians attacked it and again destroyed it. Finally the Slavs occupied the entire lowlands. They solidly established themselves and remained there. The shape of the city changed.

Interminable wars between Bulgaria and Byzantium began with the establishment and strengthening of the Bulgarian state. Plovdiv frequently changed hands. At one point it even fell under the Latin

kingdom. It was conquered by the Turks in 1365. The Turks dominated and developed it for centuries, and it was given a new name -- Silibe. The name Plovdiv began being mentioned around the sixteenth century. It has had its present name since the seventeenth century. However, the Turkish name was preserved along with the Bulgarian one. This was rejected only after the liberation.

Travelers who passed or lived in Plovdiv during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries described it as a large commercial city with remarkable buildings, mosques, and a clock tower. Its famous caravansary -- Khurshumhan -- was preserved for a long time, but uneducated bourgeois rulers have destroyed this valuable historical monument. The city walls existed until the eighteenth century. When the Turks first colonized the place the Christian population was either killed or they fled. After a stormy period of conquest during the first half of the seventeenth century the Turks permitted the Christian population to return, and their number soon equalled that of the Turks. The settling of the Greeks in the city was encouraged by the Greek authorities in order to prevent the Bulgarization of the city. Many others migrated from the trans-Balkan and Sredna Gora Mountain cities as the Bulgarian craftsmen and traders acquired wealth in the centuries which followed. Plovdiv grew and became even richer. The railroad line from Constantinople to Sarambey, which was built in 1873, further assisted the city's development. Large warehouses were built for wholesale traders who traded with all the neighboring regions, Thrace, the Rhodope Mountains, the Sredna Gora region, and even further. The city became a world market with the help of the international fairs which took place.

During the Bulgarian Renaissance Plovdiv did not lag. The intelligent migrants who had come from the Sredna Gora region and the trans-Balkan plains created here a real center of Bulgarian culture and education. Nayden Gerov taught in this city. It was here for the first time that Cyril and Methodius Day was celebrated in Bulgaria in 1850 as the holiday of Slavic Letters. After the liberation, when Bulgaria was stripped following the decision of the Berlin Congress, Plovdiv became the capital of East Rumelia. In 1885 the unification between the Bulgarian principality and East Rumelia was declared here. During this time Plovdiv led an active political, cultural, educational, and economic life. Even though the unification resulted in Plovdiv's no longer being a capital city, it still remained the second Bulgarian city in size and importance and deservedly bears the name "second Bulgarian capital." In 1884 Plovdiv was the largest Bulgarian city, having a population of 33,440. In 1910 it had a population of 48,000, and in 1926 it almost doubled in size with 85,000. The city numbered 100,500 in 1924, 125,440 in 1946, and today (by the end of 1955) Plovdiv has a population of over 150,000.

After the liberation the city rapidly developed, but his development was not regular. It was chaotic and bore all the negative characteristics of capitalist construction. The center sectors of the city were comparatively the best planned. There were paved streets and beautiful gardens, hotels, shops, and buildings. The bourgeois lived there. The workers' quarters on the outskirts of the city were in a poor condition. They were not planned; the streets were muddy; there were only small low houses. It was a miserable life. This was the fortress of the Plovdiv proletariat.

Plovdiv has given Bulgaria many men and women heroes -- people's fighters who gave their lives for Bulgaria's liberation. This city was crossed by the bold apostle of liberty during the Turkish enslavement, Vasil Levski. A few years after the liberation Dimitur Blagoev arrived from far away Petersburg. Vasil Kolarov, Stefan Kiradzhiv, and N. Rinev lived in Plovdiv. Here Yordanka Chankova and Lilyana Dimitrove, Petur Chengelov, and others lived and fought against the fascist regime.

By whatever route you may choose to enter Plovdiv, or wherever you may walk along its streets and boulevards, there is much to be seen in this city. There are few cities in Bulgaria which have so many old monuments, and a history filled with such great events, men, and deeds; rare are the cities which have so many famous places and parks. Only a few cities in Bulgaria have such varied industries. In order to see and feel all this you must climb one of its higher hills. Here one is dazzled by the variety of sights to see and by the romantic beauty of the city.

Beginning at the railroad station, two boulevards cross the city in various directions. The left side boulevard, the Tsar Osvoboditel, leads to Stalin Park. This is a wide park, beautifully planned and covered with greenery. The right-side boulevard, Ivan Vazov Boulevard, leads to the center of the city. Huge trees have been planted on both sides. After the Chervenlya Square it becomes a commercial street, called "Vasil Kolarov" and filled with shops, hotels, and various offices. Here can be seen numerous buildings of the old style. Grandiose socialist buildings have also been erected. One crosses Aleksandur Stamboliyski Square (Dzhumayata) along which is a picturesque mosque with a narrow decorated minaret. This sector is an important commercial and craftsman center.

We reach the old city along hills crowned with old houses. We pass along steep cobblestoned streets leading upward to the three old hills called Orfey. These three hills are called Nebettepe, Dzhambaztepe, and Taksimtepe. During Roman, Greek, and Turkish times this part was a very lively center of the city, but now it is more like a museum sector. We can feel how romantic it is. Large old two- and three-story houses with balconies remind one of the brilliant life during the Bulgarian Renaissance. On top of these hills are certain famous buildings. Here is the house where the great French writer Lamartine lived in the course of his travels in the Orient. Nearby is located the house of a rich man of the nineteenth century, now transformed into a city museum. It has many rooms and halls and is a valuable relic of the Bulgarian architecture and wood carving of the past. Nearby one sees ruins of the fortress wall built during the time of the Byzantine emperors. It still includes the arched Khisarkapiya, the name given to the eastern entrance of the old fortress. Crossing this entrance and going along an old cobblestoned road, one reaches the old "Konstantin i Elena" church and the building which was the seat of the Rumelian government, now changed into a library named "Maksim Gorki." Old houses from the Bulgarian Renaissance have also been preserved on the other slope of the hill (inhabited even today). They have exquisite woodwork and very interestingly shaped designs on the walls, and furnished guestrooms. Going north toward the Maritsa River, a former Armenian street, narrow and steep, housed Dimitur Blagoev. Here at the foot of the Dzhambastepe Hill and near Sveta Marina church lived Vasil Kolarov. If we go down and cross Dzhumayata Square and then climb Sakhattepe Hill we will soon reach the old club of the Bulgarian Communist Party, now

changed into a Museum of the Resistance. But visitors to Plovdiv need rest after this excursion. They can sit in the Central City Garden, which is called Liberty Park. There are big shade trees, flower-bordered paths and grass, and a large artificial lake. In front of the park on Cherveniya Square there was recently unveiled a monument to the people's hero, partisan Petur Chengelov.

Many large construction projects are now under way in Plovdiv. The city is becoming unrecognizable. The city's center is taking shape. The various centers of the city quarters are also being built, and boulevards are under construction across the city. The banks of the Maritsa River have been strengthened with supporting stone walls. In the immediate future the Maritsa river bed will be blocked at two different places in order that the river may be constantly filled with deep water. There will be dozens of boats and motorboats on the river, and water sports will flourish. Lenin and Stalin Boulevards which run along the river, have been paved with new basalt tiles. In many places trees have already been planted alongside these roads. The river and the city will acquire a real charm when these boulevards and the imposing public buildings now being erected along their sides are completed.

The greatest achievement of the people's regime in this part of the city is the completion of the Sample Fair Quarters which will house the XVI International Sample Fair in Plovdiv in September 1955. On the left bank of the Maritsa River there are numerous white pavilions and administrative buildings. The largest of them is the monumental pavilion of the USSR, which has a 47 m high tower, topped by a sharp peak and a five-pointed star. Its Central

Exposition Hall is the largest and the most spacious in the fairgrounds. It is 56 m long, 28.4 m wide, and 15 m high. The pavilion also has one exposition hall on each side, administrative premises, and a movie hall seating 300. In front of the main entrance the vast hall has been faced with artificial marble.

The Vasil Levski Pavilion, which has been put at the disposal of the numerous exhibitors from capitalist countries, also covers a large area -- 6,000 m^2. This pavilion also includes the permanent exhibition promoting the sale of Bulgarian agricultural goods. The shops in it have been built in Bulgarian style and display Bulgarian folklore architectural decorations. During the fair the Farm Workers' Cooperatives of the Plovdiv okrug offer their produce for sale in these shops. Foreign goods are for sale in 20 other shops in the pavilion.

The premises housing the cattle show are built east of the Soviet Pavilion in the center of beautiful orchards. This also includes one peculiarly-built pavilion constructed entirely of prefabricated plastic concrete frames. It is a circular building 25 m in diameter, displaying a rich variety of Bulgarian mosaic designs.

A specially planted forest covering an area of 1,200 m^2, which contains large coniferous and deciduous trees, illustrates forcefully Bulgarian forest resources.

The exhibitors are served by a specially constructed railroad station and a sidetrack which is branched off the Filipovo railroad station.

The permanent pavilion of the Ministry of Posts is well equipped. It serves visitors and exhibitors during the fair, with its various facilities and postal services.

There is a park of 20 decares, covered with grass and deciduous, ash, plane, linden, birch, chestnut, and other trees where visitors may relax during the fair in pleasant surroundings. Various colored rosebushes increase the charm of this park. There are five fountains whose basins are lined with Venetian mosaics. They spray large quantities of water, and at night they create wonderful water arches in the ethereal light of the projectors. The two halves of the artificial lake, which stretches over an area of 20 decares, are connected to a canal over which is a beautifully-shaped bridge.

There are rowboats on the lake, where visitors can enjoy themselves; footpaths and fields of flowers surround the lake.

In other buildings fourteen joint pavilions demonstrate Bulgarian achievements in agriculture and heavy, light, and other industries. Here Bulgarian agriculture, as well as Bulgarian achievements in construction, crafts, and culture, are well represented.

Here are also the pavilions of all the peoples' democracies of Europe and Asia, including the Vietnamese Democratic Republic. Individual firms from England, France, West Germany, Italy, Austria, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, and Switzerland have their own stands in the pavilions. The Plovdiv fairgrounds is one of the best known sights of the city.

Many projects have been undertaken to improve and make Plovdiv more beautiful. All the main streets, boulevards, hills and public gardens are included. Many of the projects have already been completed; others are under construction.

One of the most beautiful parks at present is Stalin Hill (Bunardzhika Hill). Its slopes, crisscrossed by shady footpaths, are thickly covered by a young forest. It has places for rest and relaxation and flower gardens; stone stairways and fountains embellish the terraces of the hill. If one climbs up on its great syenite top one has an unforgettable view of the endless area stretching beyond the city and the valley. As a symbol of Bulgaria's eternal gratitude to the Russian people who liberated them from the Turkish enslavement, a monument to the Russian soldiers who perished here has been erected. Recently a new grandiose monument to the Soviet Army, which liberated Bulgaria from fascism, was completed at the peak. On the hill there will be a park with an architecturally-beautiful artificial lake, on which it will be possible to skate in winter. There will be a volleyball and basketball court and a large open-air summer theater.

Vasil Kolarov Hill (Sakhattepe) was given its old name during the Turkish enslavement, because of its old clock tower. The appearance of this hill will also be changed. A monument to Vasil Kolarov will be built on its top; there will be attractive restaurants, movie halls, and a theater hall.

The Hill of Youth (Dzhendemtepe), on which trees have been planted entirely by young people, is crisscrossed by many footpaths. Here there are a sports playground, a modern summer

swimming pool, small lakes, fountains, and waterfalls. There will be a restaurant and a summer theater. The other hills will also be changed. The most picturesque of them are the Orfey combination of three hills, and particularly Ivan Vazov Park.

A great deal of construction work is now underway in Plovdiv. Many new streets and boulevards are being built or improved. This construction work will reach its peak when the long and beautiful Georgi Dimitrov Boulevard is completed. Every citizen of Plovdiv looks forward to the day when this boulevard will be completed. It will tunnel through the syenite body of the three Orfey hills, and will end at the farthest outskirts of the city. Construction is at an advanced stage and will be completed in the immediate future. The tunnel itself will be a great monument to Bulgarian construction and artistry. Beautifully depicted on its walls will be numerous events of the present Bulgarian Dimitrov epoch. There will be designs in relief on marble; sculptured groups; columns; statues of great and famous people, including workers and inscriptions artistically carved in the rock. On both sides of the boulevards the white walls of many-storied housing and public buildings will rise. As a part of its city-betterment program, Plovdiv constantly builds new health, educational, and administrative establishments, and vast housing projects which contain hundreds of apartments for workers. The most notable of these construction projects are at the state university, which will have two departments, the I. P. Pavlov Medical Institute and the Vasil Kolarov Agricultural Institute. Plovdiv has a state symphonic orchestra, a state art gallery, a theater with a splendid new building, an opera, a higher school for music, and many other types of schools. Its archeological and

ethnographic museums have expanded; the number of books in the Maksim Gorki State Library has increased. If one looks toward the Hill of Youth one sees from afar the buildings of the university clinic on the slopes of the huge hill.

Plovdiv has numerous hotels, but they no longer satisfy the needs of its numerous visitors. To meet this need the biggest building built in the city since 9 September 1944 is rapidly being completed, a large modern centrally-located hotel. The hotel area includes 4,800 m^2, and the hotel itself will be five stories high. The first floor will have eight suites, and the other floors will have 167 rooms and many other premises. The ground floor alone is 7 m above the ground. It will include two banquet halls, a restaurant, and a tea room. The hotel building is being built in classical style with architectural elements which are related to the Bulgarian-folklore architecture which is so well represented in Plovdiv. In the courtyard of the hotel there will be an open-air garden-restaurant for summer guests. The entire courtyard will be covered with picturesque fountains, an orchestra stage, and a dancing stage for about 1,200 people. It will also include the preserved ruins of the old Roman city with its well-preserved road. The highest floor of the hotel will have balconies which will offer views of the flat Thracian lowlands, the Rhodope Mountains, and the Sredna Gora Mountains.

A large stadium on the right bank of the Maritsa River, near a large forest, will seat 25,000 people. There will also be a beautiful park for relaxation and cultural activities.

Plovdiv is important above all because of its well-developed industry. The industrial enterprises inherited from the past have

been expanded and considerably enlarged. The number of industrial enterprises has been increased by dozens of entirely new enterprises the construction of which was previously unthinkable. In the past the machine-building industry was unknown here, but today Bulgaria is justifiably proud of the V. Kolarov Automobile Repair Plant, the Anton Ivanov Metal-Processing Plant, a brand-new tractor repair plant, and other expanded metal-processing plants. Here can also be found the Petuz Chengelov Shoe Plant, the V. Kolarov Leather-Processing Factory, and many vacuum-process canneries. After 9 September 1944 a large bread bakery was built in Plovdiv; it supplies the city with bread. Milk centers were established here; the huge rolling mills were expanded; and there are rice-processing factories. The factories producing sugar, beer, alcohol, vinegar, textiles, and rope increased their production, as did the tobacco warehouses and the cigarette factories. Vegetables and meats are being canned, and vegetable oil and soap are being produced. Instead of the former small craftsmen's workshops, the Plovdiv City People's Soviet created here the largest industrial combine of Bulgaria. The combine includes a factory for Persian-type carpets. Here another child of socialist construction, the largest in Bulgaria and the Balkans, is the Maritsa Textile Combine for cotton yarn. Here endlessly work 30,000 mechanical spindles producing 1/3 of the entire output of the Bulgarian spinning industry. The factory produces many varied fine types of yarns which formerly were imported from abroad. At present the combine is being expanded even further by the construction of a new weaving department. The workers' class in Plovdiv, which bled and sacrificed in the struggle against fascism, became masters of these factories; and their work contributes to the welfare and happiness of the entire Bulgarian nation.

Before leaving Plovdiv one may wish to have a last view of the city at dusk. We climb Vasil Kolarov Hill, which is convenient for such purposes and from which there is a pleasant view in all directions. We shall wish to see everything. The romantic beauty in front of us is dazzling with the hills and their old buildings, the green parks below, and the thickly-built housing areas between the parks. A quite different type of view can be had in the outskirts of the city. There it is as if there had been planted a forest of factory chimneys hidden from the eye by smoke screens. To the north of us the Maritsa River still shines under the sun, stretching like a powerful silver ribbon disappearing into infinity. Farther beyond we could see the bluish shape of the lowlands bordered by the Rhodope and the Stara Planina Mountains. Dusk gradually falls upon the green fields around us, the rice fields, the vegetable and fruit gardens. Only electric lights remain, shining like thousands of stars in the deep background of the night.

Along the Valley of the Maritsa River from Plovdiv to Svilengrad

East of Plovdiv the plain is still as flat as we saw it west of the city. The city is behind us. We see only the highest parts of the hills until they also finally disappear. To the south stretches an almost ideally flat lowland across which the Chepelarska River has cut a wide path. At the Krumovo railroad station a branch line to Asenovgrad runs from the main railroad line. Here one sees young orchards which one has not seen before. Further on, however, at Katunitsa, Sadovo, and Popovitsa villages the orchard trees are thickly covered with leaves, a sign of their maturity. These trees are covered with fruit, and their heavily-bent branches are supported

by special wooden stakes. The vineyards here are mixed with walnut, pear, and apple trees. Vegetable gardens and watermelon patches cover vast areas. Numerous strawberry patches can be seen. The fields and gardens are crossed by canals through which clear water runs.

Sadovo has a remarkable state farm. The pleasant building of the Lisenko Agrotechnical School is located in the midst of its gardens and parks. Here scientific workers from the experimental station create new types of cotton and improve many crops. From here the red milk-producing Sadovo cattle have spread into many okoliyas, but they are particularly common in the Plovdiv, Khaskovo, and Stara Zagora okrugs.

Not far from Purvomay, at Vinitsa village the valley of the Maritsa River begins to narrow. Gradually to the south rise the limestone heights, covered with vineyards, which belong to Tatarevo village. Tatarevo village is the first viticultural village in the Purvomay okoliya. South of the Maritsa valley the topography becomes wavy and hilly, but the soil remains just as fertile. Only the consistency of the soil has changed. Here begins the east Rhodope submountain terrace, which continues to the east from the Purvomay region, passing through the Khaskovo and Kharmanli okoliyas, reaching the Greek border not far from Svilengrad.

On its northern side the Maritsa valley is also limited by higher altitudes, which go east from the Chirpan okoliya, passing north of Dimitrovograd into the Stara Zagora region, and finally reaching the foothills of Mount Bramnitsa.

Until recently the fertile Maritsa valley in the Purvomay okoliya had no irrigation. In the past the water syndicate in Purvomay collected high fees for the future irrigation, which was not carried out until 9 September 1944. This problem was solved only by the people's regime, with the construction of the Purvomay irrigation system. This system now irrigates 62,000 decares of very fertile land on the terraces of the Maritsa River in the Purvomay and Chirpan okoliyas. Five powerful pumping stations work 24 hours a day to fill the main irrigational canals with water from the Maritsa River. These irrigational arteries flow as if they were not really canals but natural rich rivers which were born and started flowing because of the will of the people, only to hide amidst droughty lands. When the water from the Maritsa River decreases, new amounts of water are released, reaching as far as the Vasil Kolarov Dam. The Vulko Chervenkov TETS in Dimitrovgrad supplies adequate electrical energy for the operation of these pumps.

There is now a vast artificial lake where until recently there were only steep, inaccessible slopes in the Dulbokoto Ravine, near which is located pumping station No 3. This lake is formed by a small dam with a 250,000 m^3 capacity, recently constructed by Purvomay. Its waters join the general irrigation system. Here the terrible floods of the Maritsa River have been conquered. These floods covered the Maritsa terrace, on which the most fertile land was to be found, and silted thousands of decares of fields, gardens, and meadows. Now dikes which have ended forever these catastrophes, have been erected along the entire length of the river bed.

The gardens and the fields here are fertile and green. All around one sees the huge cooperative fields. Here in the villages of the Maritsa valley in Purvomay okoliya 90% of the families and of the arable land have joined the Farm Workers' Cooperatives. Mechanization of agriculture has been increased. Modern agrotechnical methods are applied more and more.

Because of its favorable warm climate the lowlands permit the growth of many types of agricultural crops. The area planted with grain crops is gradually being reduced for the benefit of industrial crops, vegetables, strawberries, and watermelons. The area covered by industrial crops has reached 33% of the total cultivated area, while the total covered by vegetables, watermelons, and strawberries is 10%. Wherever one looks one sees vast fields. Some of them are crossed by dark green rows of peanut plants; others look like huge rectangles covered by vegetable gardens, melons, and strawberries. In this region tasty watermelons of the Mramorni type are cultivated. Cantaloupes and pumpkins are also grown. Lately a large percentage of the meadows have been converted into rich rice fields. Until recently only impenetrable swamps were to be found here. Fish breeding has been introduced in the rice fields.

Everything in this charming valley indicates that the maximal yield recently achieved will become the average for the whole region. At present the yield from peanuts has reached 300 kg per decare; that of strawberries 2,000 kg; that of watermelons, 5,000 kg; that of sugar beets up to 4,200 kg. Here have been obtained record tomato yields, 5 to 7 tons per decare, at places even 23 tons. Natural conditions here are suitable for the cultivation of many other crops, such as anise, mint, pyrethrum, basil, caraway seeds, and medicinal herbs.

A productive brand of livestock is being developed here alongside agriculture. More and more fodder, grain and grass fodder is becoming available for the cattle. Herds of red Sadovo cows and water buffalo grow and rest along the fresh banks of the Maritsa River. The breed of the gray Iskur cattle has been improved here. Sheep, hog, and poultry farms are growing. Many geese and ducks swim in the clear waters of the Maritsa River and on the mirror-like surface of the dammed lakes. The Maritsa valley is taking on a new form in the Purvomay okoliya.

Purvomay: The economic marketing and administrative center of all the villages north of the Rhodope, including the Maritsa River valley, is the city of Purvomay. It has at present over 6,000 inhabitants, but in the past it was smaller than many a village in its okoliya.

Purvomay appeared during the Turkish domination at the beginning of the eighteenth century. Here once stretched the vast farmlands of Khadzhi Chakur Elles, son of the Kazanluk lord, who, according to legend, was sent to live here with his mother, a Bulgarian woman from a neighboring village. At that time on the opposite bank of the Maritsa there was a fortified settlement which was later given the name Chakurdzhi (the present-day Gradina village). This probably is Ildopad village, which was founded by the Turks, and whose name appears in all documents in Istanbul. Located on the right river bank was the Khadzhi Elles Farm, which later on provided the old name of Purvomay City, Khadzhiles.

The first inhabitants of this settlement were Bulgarians who came down from the villages in the Rhodope Mountains and from other

neighboring villages around 1685. They worked as farm hands. Turks also came, but the Bulgarian element was always the predominating one. A village was formed here. It suffered frequent bandit attacks, and was destroyed by the plague in 1833. It was as if the Turks were being obliterated by the disease. As the Turks were victims of their superstitions and fatalism, the Bulgarian sector of the village became twice as large as the Turkish sector (with about 50 houses), because its population escaped into the forests during the plague. After the Baron Hirsh railroad was built the settlement gradually spread south around the railroad station. In 1884 it had grown to 1,230 people and was eighth largest in the okoliya. The Turks left the village in 1886, but this did not result in a decrease in the population of the village. More merchants, craftsmen, and workers settled there. In 1889 this settlement was given the status of a city and was called Borisovgrad. This small city developed faster than the villages in the okoliya, and in 1926 it was the largest settlement in the okoliya, with a population of 4,430 people. The city grew particularly fast after 1913, because it became inhabited by many refugees from western and eastern Thrace and from Greek Macedonia. Its annual increase up to 1926 was an average of 54 per thousand. Its location as an okoliya administrative center contributed even further to its development. Its railroad station helped export the entire agricultural production of the okoliya. The penetration of capitalism here was the signal for the disintegration of village life. Impoverished peasants went to the city to look for work. Many wealthy village landlords, merchants, and craftsmen also came to live in the city. Rapacious money-lenders appeared. Purvomay acquired the typical trades of a rural craftsman and

administrative center. Certain industrial enterprises appeared, but the largest part of the city's population remained agricultural.

The increase of the population from 1926 to 9 September 1944 was poor. Its annual increase amounted to 7 per thousand. Great damage was caused to the city in the earthquake of 1928, which practically destroyed it. After 1944 the annual growth in population immediately climbed to 28 per thousand. A stream of workers, employees of economic enterprises, administrative personnel, and cultural workers, etc, settled in the city.

Today the largest industrial enterprise of the city is the Partizanin Vacuum-Canning Factory. It processes a large percentage of the area's production of vegetables and fruit. A large plant for cotton ginning was built here. Cooperative enterprises and various craftsmen cooperatives appeared here. The busy railroad station of the city ships out large amounts of food, fruits, beets, cotton, and tobacco. Intensive construction work was done here. Large hospitals, schools, and many public buildings were constructed. A beautiful park, lush with vegetation, was built along the Maritsa River. Purvomay is now hurrying ahead to catch up with the time lost during the fascist period.

East of Purvomay the Maritsa valley gradually narrows. The high Khisare Peak, composed entirely of hard andesite, rises imposingly above the river bed at Stalevo village. This is the end of the Plovdiv plain, which is the largest plain in Bulgaria.

From here to the east the valley of the Maritsa River narrows further but preserves its nature. It is picturesque, green

and fertile. Once again vegetable gardens appear at Yabulkovo village. Vineyards and apricot and cherry orchards can be seen here. The high chimneys of the Dimitrovgrad plants can already be seen clearly at this point.

Dimitrovgrad: Travelers stop here at the large, extremely busy railroad station, which is also an important railroad junction. This is only one of the sectors of Dimitrovgrad, called the Rakovski sector. The entire city covers a huge area with its various sectors, which are scattered apart from one another. To walk around the entire city by foot would take a lot of time.

Formerly at this place there were only three small villages -- Rakovski, Mariyno, and Chernokonevo -- and the coal mines located near these villages. This place was officially declared a city in 1947, and the dream of the entire Bulgarian people was realized by giving it the name of the great son of the Bulgarian people, Georgi Dimitrov. The three villages became one settlement, and the construction of the new city was undertaken.

The selection of Dimitrovgrad was not without reason. The city is located on the Maritsa River in the midst of a fertile valley. It became a center of a vast region which includes rich agricultural villages. It was necessary to create at this point a solid bastion of the workers' class which was formerly lacking. The selection of the location of the city was facilitated by other very favorable prerequisites. This region has mines which have huge reserves of coal and which, in the absence of the difficult transportation problem, could be used in the production of electrical energy, as well as raw material, in the productional activities

of the Dimitrovgrad plants. South of the city there is a whole hill of good quality limestone, another important raw material. And the Maritsa, this largest of all Bulgarian Rivers, on which Dimitrovgrad is located, provides inexhaustible amounts of water required for industrial purposes, as well as for irrigation and for the use of the city. Dimitrovgrad has a good location as a railroad junction of important railroad lines which were built before the city existed. There were also favorable natural geographic conditions to warrant the construction and development of such a city.

Even before the city itself was built the Dimitrovgrad plant had to be constructed. The coal-production which had been ruined by the fascists had to be increased and mining methods modernized. An abundant supply of electric energy had to be assured from thermo-electric power plants.

The Maritsa coal mines: The history of the Maritsa coal mines is young. Coal mixed with soil was seen along the shores of the small rivers. The deposits around Merichleri and other places in this region indicated to the people the great amounts of hidden wealth which lay untouched under the thick seams of earth. However, nobody paid any attention to this wealth or imagined that it could be put to excellent use. Thus, buried under the ground and unknown to the people, the coal remained throughout the entire period of Turkish feudalism and the first years of capitalism in Bulgaria (following the liberation). Prospecting for this inexhaustible wealth began with the development of capitalism in Bulgaria. The first mining of the coal, which was very primitive and limited, was begun by private individuals

in 1896 and was destined to supply coal only for domestic heating purposes. In 1915 the state also began coal mining, staked claims, and continued the mining of the coal deposits at the Maritsa Mine, using improved methods. Many private owners and stock-holding societies jumped at the chance to mine this "black gold" and hurriedly took for themselves many sectors of the already explored coal deposits in the Maritsa basin. Thus, until the Bulgarian liberation from fascist oppression, coal was mined at some places very primitively and poorly, and at other places on a large scale but uneconomically. The coal that was mined was destined mostly for heating, and only a limited amount of it was allocated for the production of energy.

The coal in the Maritsa basin is of the brown Pliocenic variety and is younger than the coal in the Dimitrovo basin. This coal is of a poorer quality than the Dimitrovo coal, since it is moist. It has a 40 to 50% water content, and a 7% ash content. This coal could be used for the usual heating purposes only after being dried out. However, it can now be put to good use for the thermo-electric power plants. That is why after the mines were nationalized after 9 September 1944 the Marbas (Maritsa basin) acquired a huge importance to Bulgaria. During the capitalist period coal mining was limited, but today the mines have been equipped with modern equipment and have been adapted to produce huge quantities of coal. The rapid expansion of the mines is necessary in order to supply the newly built thermo-electric power plants with raw materials. The poor-quality coal of Marbas is today being changed into abundant amounts of electrical energy, which is sent over high-tension cables all over Bulgaria.

All the pits have been modernized; new pits have been opened; and more and more prospecting is being carried out on a wide scale. Far from Dimitrovgrad, by the Sazliyka River between the Stakhanovo and Beli Bryag villages a new coal-mining region is taking shape (Maritsa-East). The operations of the first pit of this new coal center began near Troyanovo village. The most modern machines helped remove the masses of earth, and the surface mining in the new pit has already been started. It became clear that the Marbas coal fields covered a huge area which spreads much farther than the boundaries of the Dimitrovgrad region. That is why Marbas coal became the reason for the appearance of other highly-productive enterprises, some of which will become enterprises unique of their kind in Bulgaria. Such will be the Maritsa-Iztok TET, which will be the largest power plant in the Balkans; another one will be the largest Bulgarian factory for briquettes. There will also be a factory for porous bricks, new chemical fertilizer plants, etc.

The Dimitrovgrad electric power plants: These have an important and responsible function to fulfill. They must supply abundant electrical power not only to the local plants, but also to the machines of all factories and plants in the Rhodope mining basin, to the powerful pumping stations located by the Maritsa River from Purvomay to Svilengrad. They must also supply numerous industrial enterprises and supply energy for lighting and household needs through an over-all high tension cable network. This task is done today with the help of the Maritsa I TETs, the Vulko Chervenkov TETs, and the Vulkan TETs. The increase in Bulgaria's need for electric energy and the expansion of coal production have been paralleled by the expansion of electric power plants. Some entirely

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new thermo-electric power plants may have to be built. The coal is located nearby, and its transportation is facilitated by air cable lines on which cable cars move up and down constantly. Suspended on these cables, these cars follow their endless road, supplying with "food" the insatiable furnaces of the power plants. If the supply of coal is stopped, the normal work process of the industrial enterprises will be disturbed in this region, in the plain which is crisscrossed by irrigational canals, in the cities, in the villages, and in the thousands of families of the working people living here. That is why the constant movement of the small cars must continue uninterruptedly night and day, winter and summer. The continuation of this process will be ensured by the rhythmical fulfillment of the plan in the mines of the Marbas, which plan is being implemented with a high degree of consciousness and feeling of responsibility for a duty which must be fulfilled.

The biggest acquisition of Bulgarian socialist construction from all the Dimitrovgrad power plants is the Vulko Chervenkov TET. This is one of the largest electric power plants in Bulgaria. In addition to the electric energy which it supplies to the over-all electric network, this plant is closely related to the productional activities of the Stalin Chemical Combine.

It was not easy to build this gigantic plant, which was extended even further later on. The plant was constructed despite the winter cold and wind which froze the faces of the workers who had climbed to the highest parts of the huge building. Despite this, the erection of the plant was carried out in only 7 months. The power plant began operation before the Stalin Chemical Combine.

Now we can see the numerous complex machines; we can see their owners, the workers who operate uninterruptedly in shifts. The production process is entirely mechanized. Uninterruptedly, trains with dozens of freight cars filled with coal enter the modern unloading plant. From here the coal is automatically conveyed to the building housing the crushing machinery. A long process follows until the coal dust is burned, and steam is produced. The latter powers the turbo-generators which produce electric energy. After the steam has been used by both turbines, it is used for heating purposes in the Stalin Chemical Combine and other enterprises. In the future "processed" steam will also be used for the heating of housing premises in the entire city.

Thus, the new Maritsa Thermo-Electric Power Plants bring life to many plants, factories, and mines, with which they are connected by high-tension cables. They are radically changing the life of the people in this rich region which until recently was only agricultural.

The Dimitrovgrad limestone is an important raw material for socialist construction. South of Dimitrovgrad the Maritsa valley is bordered by low hills which consist of good-quality limestone. At certain places these hills are covered with forests of bushes or with pastures. At other places they are bare and grooved by the operations of numerous quarries. For some time past limestone was produced here for the preparation of lime. Here a few primitive kilns operate. A modern lime kiln was built later on. This huge kiln plans an important role at present in the needs of Dimitrovgrad construction. Recently, with the expansion of the city to the south, the operation of the lime kiln near the housing quarters became unsatisfactory. Now this lime kiln will be moved elsewhere.

With the appearance of Dimitrovgrad the inexhaustible supplies of local limestone became even more important. This high-quality limestone became the most important raw material in the manufacture of cement at the newly constructed Vulkan Plant, the largest Bulgarian cement-producing establishment.

The Vulkan Plant was constructed in the first years of the young Bulgarian republic, before the other industrial enterprises in Dimitrovgrad. First there was one furnace in the plant; then a second followed; and recently a third has been put into operation. The Vulkan Plant has an imposing external appearance. When travelers approach Dimitrovgrad in a train coming from Plovdiv, they see this huge building with its three gigantic chimneys constantly covered with a thick cloud of smoke. A cable stretches from the limestone heights to the plant. Cable cars endlessly roll down the cable loaded with limestone. They pass above the railroad line, slide to the north over fields and vegetable gardens, over the wide silver ribbon of the Maritsa, and reach the other side of the river, finally reaching the plant itself. Here the rocks fall into the gigantic mouth which crushes them and grinds them into dust. Cars also come uninterruptedly from the northern heights which border the Maritsa basin, but these cars are loaded with another raw material -- coal. This is the food of the plant, thanks to which it remains alive. This coal is mined in the Vulkan Mine and is used entirely for the needs of the Vulkan Plant. The Plant has its own Vulkan TETs, which assure it the necessary electric energy. All processes in the Vulkan Cement Plant are mechanized. The cement which the plant produces is of very high grade, and is used in building dams because of its ability to harden rapidly.

The construction of the Vulkan Cement Plant made possible the operation of a new giant in Dimitrovgrad, the cement-asbestos plant. Its production is made possible by the production of the Vulkan Plant. The construction of this plant became very necessary in connection with the great expansion of construction works in Bulgaria and the need for new construction materials, various auxiliary and roofing materials, pipes and slabs. There was a need for a plant whose production would help the building of other Bulgarian plants, housing buildings, the new quarters of Dimitrovo and of other places.

This construction project was also a school for many new workers, construction workers, plumbers, and machine operators. The plant was built with the help of USSR specialists, who helped in the training of the future Bulgarian masters of the plant. All the difficulties in the construction were overcome, and by the end of 1950 the Eternite Plant, which was later called the cement-asbestos plant, began operations. At present Bulgarian cement-asbestos is widely used, and various products are made from it; water pipes, sewage pipes, water conduits, and other types of pipes, construction lining materials, light insulation materials, slabs, electric switchboards, gas-piping installations, roofing slabs (which replace the use of tiles), chimneys, and other things. In addition, this plant produces materials which help finish the interior part of buildings, multi-colored tables and other furniture, sinks, and other items.

The water supply of Bulgarian settlements is today facilitated greatly by the availability of an adequate supply of pipes. The water supply in the Dobrudja would have been rendered considerably

more difficult if Bulgaria did not have this cement-asbestos plant. Bulgarian cement-asbestos pipes are better than the expensive imported Mannessmann-type pipes because of their resistance to atmospheric variations and their solidity. They are fireproof, cold-resistant, are not permeated with water, and are very solid mechanically. On the other hand, they are light, and their electric conductivity is small.

The Cement-Asbestos Plant contributes to the creation of ever-improving healthful, hygienic, and cultural living conditions for the Bulgarian people.

A plant for the transformation of agriculture: The high buildings of the Vulkan Cement Plant may impress the traveler who approaches Dimitrovgrad by train from the west; but the interest of the traveler will increase a hundredfold and all travelers will be greatly impressed at the sight of the Stalin Chemical Combine which stretches over a wide area in the eastern part of the city. The train goes further on to the east toward Svilengrad or south toward Khaskovo, but one cannot tear his eyes from the complex metal buildings of the plant, from the high chimney which rises above a huge complexity of buildings, from the small yellow-green clouds over the chimney stretching like a long tail blown by the wind.

Planning of a plant for the production of chemical fertilizers for the purpose of increasing agricultural yields was spoken of immediately after 9 September 1944. The supply of nitrogen fertilizers was insufficient and expensive, and Bulgarian soil needed nitrogen fertilizers to increase the yield of crops. The construction of such a plant was a difficult task. Needed were large sums of money, the help of specialists, and the over-all efforts of thousands of workers,

constructors, planners, and engineers. The Bulgarian people did not give up in the face of difficulties. Youth took over the leading ranks on this gigantic construction site. Specialists came from the Soviet Union. Construction workers arrived from all parts of Bulgaria. The construction of the plant was started. The complex installation of the nitrogen chemical combine began to appear east of the Rakovski sector of the city at a place where only fields and vegetable gardens could be found previously. It was a whole labyrinth of canals, pipes, and buildings. The tall structures of the various shops rose, huge metal cylinders started shining under the sun, and the framework of dozens of incompleted buildings appeared. First rose the concrete towers and the 80-meter high chimney, which was built entirely by Lidiya Kudryavtseva, an 18-year-old Soviet girl. While the walls were being built, machines were being installed. On the platform small trains went here and there, tractors thundered, and the long steel frames of the cranes raised their powerful steel hands. Construction work was intensive here until the work was finally completed. Instead of being completed in 1953, the Stalin Chemical Combine began regular operations in 1951. It was completed ahead of schedule, thanks to the efforts of the entire Bulgarian nation and to the vital Bulgarian-Soveit friendship.

The basic raw materials important to the plant's operation are coal, water, and air. Special freight cars which are owned by the plant bring coal from the mines. Powerful pumps siphon water from a huge reservoir filled from a special canal on the Maritsa River. The Chemical Combine has a special railroad station from which freight cars depart 24 hours a day. All operations in the plant are mechanized.

The products which are manufactured in the plant are principally chemical nitrogen fertilizers, which are of five different kinds: ammonium saltpeter, sodium (Chile) saltpeter, ammonium sulfate, ammonium bisulfide, and carbamide. The annual production of chemical fertilizers (ammonium saltpeter) has long been over 70,000 t, and in 7 or 8 years this production will reach 400,000 to 500,000 t. In addition to chemical fertilizers, the plant also produces sulfuric and nitric acids, ammonium, sulfur, carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, liquid sulfur dioxide, oxygen, ice, and other items. Intensive work is being done to increase the chemical capacity of the combine. In addition, research is being carried out with a view to expanding the plant. A new plant for phosphate fertilizers will be built, the location of which has not yet been specified.

The external appearance of the Stalin Chemical Combine is not only imposing, but is beautiful. A wide paved road bordered on both sides by trees leads to the plant. At the entrance there is a large statue, a monument to the patron of the plant. Above the entrance there is an inscription in large letters which reads: "The Stalin Chemical Combine is a child of Bulgarian-Soviet friendship." On one side is the imposing administrative building which, with its attractive architecture, houses the administrative personnel, including the managers of the Chemical Combine. On the other side is the cultural building with its various halls. The workers of the Stalin Chemical Combine themselves live far from the plant in the Tolbukhin sector, which is built in terraces on the heights south of the Rakovski sector of the city.

The construction of the plant, as well as the operation of the chemical combine, is principally done by young workers who number about 80% of all the workers of the Combine.

Until recently Bulgaria needed such a combine as the Stalin Chemical Combine just as she needed the city itself. Today this chemical combine holds one of the prominent places in the Bulgarian heavy industry. Bulgarians may be justifiably proud of the Stalin Chemical Combine.

One more factory: All industrial enterprises in Dimitrovgrad are new. They are the fruits of Bulgarian socialist construction. Only one factory has been inherited from the past, and it has increased its variety of production. This is the vacuum-canning factory in the Rakovski sector of the city. This factory processes large quantities of vegetables and fruit grown in this rich region, which until recently was only agricultural. Various vegetables, pulps, preserves, and marmalades are canned and vegetables and fruits dried. The importance of this factory will increase even more, taking into consideration the winter needs of the population in this rapidly-developing city.

Construction work is in full swing. Dimitrovgrad has been planned in a way different from other cities. The characteristic type of city which has grown under capitalism has an imposing, rich, and well-planned center but poor outskirts. This "rule" has been violated in Dimitrovgrad. Its sectors are located at a considerable distance from one another, and all rules for an over-all satisfaction of the living, cultural, and aesthetic needs of the population have been observed. Here the various sectors are built separately, and each has all necessary conveniences; nevertheless,

the sectors are connected with each other to form one unified city. Here housing areas are clearly set apart from the industrial zones. There are centers for work and centers for living. There are squares for meetings and market places. There are calm places for relaxation and cultural occupations.

The entire city is encircled by Panorama Road. This road, similar to a horseshoe, begins from the Tolbukhin sector south of the railroad tracks leading to Svilengrad; skirts the Rakovski sector on the east; crosses the Maritsa River; goes west; passes the Mlada Gvardiya, Vasil Kolarov, and Vulkan sectors; and reaches Chernokonevo village. The central part of the city is the Rakovski sector in which have been and are still being built the most important city establishments, squares, and parks. From this sector begin the main streets leading to the surrounding sectors.

The Tolbukhin sector is located in the foothills of the afforested hills (a future park) south of the Sofia-Svilengrad railroad line. It begins at the furnace for the production of lime and at the newly built V. I. Lenin sports stadium. The Deveti Septemvri (Khaskovo Highway) Boulevard connects with the Rakovski sector. Its construction was started in 1947, which is considered to be the beginning year of the construction of Dimitrovgrad. Here workers of the Stalin Chemical Combine live in splendid residential units.

The "Vasil Kolarov" sector includes the former Mariyno village, which has been expanded, renewed, and changed to such a degree that it is unrecognizable. This sector is located near the Maritsa mines. The wide Vasil Kolarov Boulevard connects this

sector with the center, which is the Rakovski sector. The Vasil Kolarov sector is located between two smaller sectors: the Mlada Gvardiya sector is on its northeastern part, and the Vulkan sector is northwest of it. Stretching even further west beyond the Vulkan Cement Plant and along the Maritsa River is the former village, which is not the Chernokonevo sector. Over the Maritsa River three concrete bridges connect one part of Dimitrovgrad with the other.

Despite the fact that public and cultural houses, parks, playgrounds, schools, etc., are being built in every single center, construction in the central Rakovski sector is still being carried out on an old-city scale. The main boulevard in this sector is the Georgi Dimitrov Boulevard, 51 m wide and 500 m long. It will begin at a railroad station which is to be built. To the north the Georgi Dimitrov Boulevard will end with a large square in which there will be a high monument to Georgi Dimitrov. Around the square will be the Party House, the Mining Workers' House, the Central Post Office, the Trade Union House, a big hotel and shop; and from the north and coming to the Square facing the Boulevard will be the biggest building of all, the House of Soviets.

A continuation of the Georgi Dimitrov Boulevard north of the western part of the square will be the Peti Kongres Boulevard. This point will be the entrance to the public gardens. From the garden a wide road will lead to the Rest and Culture Park near the Maritsa River, which will be between the two bridges crossing the river. At this point there will be a large artificial lake, a swimming pool, and a beach; and in the western part of the Park a complex physical culture installation, which is now under construction. Its sports stadium will seat 20,000 people. This will be the center of all the working people from all the various sectors of the city.

Construction in Dimitrovgrad is advancing rapidly, but it is far from completed. Wherever one looks one sees intensive construction work. Everywhere one sees hundreds of men at work. New streets are being made, canals being dug, and electric wires being strung; huge public buildings and living premises are being constructed. The new city has already taken shape, but its inner architecture has yet to be completed.

Every day numerous newspaper correspondents, writers, scientists, and construction workers arrive here. The whole of Bulgaria feels that an important center of the country's industry is being built here. That is why Bulgaria considers Dimitrovgrad its pride, a symbol of her future. Having started with three small villages, today this city has over 40,000 inhabitants. It is no longer a dream, but reality. The individual sectors of the city are still separated from each other. But they grow with every passing day, and the time is not far away when they will merge into one grandiose whole, into one grandiose unit, into a city of the future -- Dimitrovgrad.

To the west and east of Dimitrovgrad the Maritsa River has formed a considerably wider flood terrace covered with fertile alluvial soils. Here irrigation is being done with the help of three pumping stations which belong to the first zone of the Kharmanli irrigation system. Brod village is located on the left bank of the river. It has a rich TKZS which grows early vegetables, strawberries, and the famous Brod watermelons. Nova Nadezhda village has a large ceramics factory which supplies the needs of the entire region and even sends shipments to other places. South of the Maritsa valley begins the hilly Khaskovo submountain terrace, and the vast Stara Zagora plain stretches to the north.

East of Nova Nadezhda village the Maritsa River enters a narrow pass which has steep rock sides. This pass continues up to Maritsa City. This is the first and most picturesque pass of the river in the upper Thracian lowlands. Here Maritsa has cut across the hills of the east Rhodope submountain terrace around Aleksandrovo village; the hills continue north of the river, reaching up to Musachevo village.

After crossing the pass following the left bank of the Maritsa River, one sees the first sector -- the Yordanovo sector -- of the newly shaped Maritsa City.

Maritsa City: This new city was created in 1948 through the merging of three settlements -- Simeonovgrad, the Zlatidol railroad station, and Yordanovo village. This unit was given the new name Maritsa City. Its over-all population was over 8,000. With its three large sectors or zones, this scattered city forms a complex settlement which covers an area on both sides of the Maritsa not far from the merging of the Sazliyka and the Maritsa Rivers. North of the Maritsa River along the left bank are the former Simeonovgrad (which forms the first sector of the city) and the former Yordanovo village (the third sector of the city). South of the Maritsa River, along its right bank, is the settlement of the Zlatidol railroad station (second sector).

The largest sector of the new city is the former Simeonovgrad. In the past, during the Turkish domination, it was an average-size village called Ayvali (Dyulevo) because of the numerous quince orchards around the city [("dyula" means quince in Bulgarian)]. Later on, because of its crossroad location, the population of this

settlement was entrusted with guarding the main roads leading from Edirne to Plovdiv and Stara Zagora. Because of this the settlement was given the name Seymen /"guardian" is Turkish/. In 1873, when the Baron Hirsh railroad line was built, a rail-line was built between the village of Seymen and the then-existing nearby Turnovo village. Thus the settlement was given the double name Turnovo Seymen, which later on was applied only to the small Turnovo Seymen city. In 1929 Turnovo Seymen city was renamed Simeonovgrad, while the railroad station remained known by its former name Zlatidol. Now the railroad station also bears the name Maritsa City.

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the local population was engaged mainly in fattening cattle through the summer season. However, in the nineteenth century crafts and commerce appeared in the settlement. The first small industrial enterprises appeared here only after the liberation and the development of Bulgarian capitalism. These were mainly mills and oil processing enterprises.

After 9 September 1944 the industrial enterprises, mills, and oil-processing enterprises were enlarged; and a cotton-spinning and canning factory were built here. Also established were craftsmen cooperatives which merged the small craftsmens' workshops. The most important of them is the ironsmith and cart-making cooperative enterprise "Vasil Kolarov." The first sector of the city has a well-organized slaughterhouse with refrigeration facilities. The raw materials used by the textile, canning, and meat industries come from the nearby villages whose production

gravitates toward Maritsa City. The fact that the city is the agricultural center of the fertile plain which surrounds the city, will help the city satisfy its food needs. In addition to grain, here are sown more and more rice and cotton and good-quality tobacco. The city includes two TKZS, one uniting the farmers of the first and third sectors, the second those of the second sector. Here the Farm Workers' Cooperatives cultivate vast areas of land, growing vegetables, vineyards, and fruit. Maritsa City is also developing a good transportation junction, from which stem three railroad lines leading to Plovdiv, Svilengrad, and Nova Zagora, as well as four main highways leading to the first three cities and to Stara Zagora. There is a great need for another railroad line which would pass through Topolovgrad, Elkhovo, and Grudovo, and on to Burgas. This track may be built in the near future.

Given the new socialist surroundings and the good economic possibilities now prevailing, Maritsa City will expand even further, helped by its central location and its rich agricultural region.

Beyond Maritsa City, the Maritsa River turns to the southeast. After it widens near the city (because of the estuary of the Sazliyka River) the valley of the Maritsa River again narrows. The Maritsa River then crosses its second pass north of Preslavets village, where the railroad line leading to Svilengrad has been built directly by the right bank of the river. At this point there is no room for a highway. The highway from Svilengrad through Kharmanli and through Maritsa City to Stara Zagora passes west of Preslavets village. This pass is not as beautiful as the

pass west of Maritsa City. South of Preslavets village there is another expansion of the valley around the estuary of the Kharmanliyska River. Kharmanli City is located at this point.

The Kharmanli plain has an altitude of about 80 m. It is bordered from the south and the west by a series of heights belonging to the east Rhodope submountain terrace, whose altitude is not more than 250 to 350 m. It is bounded on the north by the pass. On the left bank of the Maritsa River and at places almost immediately on its banks there are again hills and heights which have the same nature and altitude as the hills previously mentioned. These are the final foothills of Mount Brannitsa. Here the warm influence of the Aegean Sea climate is felt far more. There is a lack of precipitation, because of which irrigation is necessary. Despite this, the small and fertile plain is well cultivated. Here grow numerous crops which require heat, such as cotton, peanuts, sesame seed, anise seed, caraway seed, poppy seed, tobacco, almonds, and even figs. Wheat crops have been replaced by the more profitable industrial crops, by vegetable gardens (early vegetables, watermelon patches, rice fields, etc.). There are few other places in Bulgaria where so many varied crops are cultivated on such a small area. However, tobacco production and cocoon growing predominate. The tobacco grown here, which is of the Kharmanliyska yaka type, is famous for its high quality. The development of cocoon raising is stable because of the presence of mulberry orchards, which cover an area second only to the vegetable gardens, located more to the southeast in the direction of Lyubimets and Svilengrad. Kharmanli City is the main economic center of this plain and of the entire Kharmanli okoliya, as well as of many settlements outside this okoliya.

Kharmanli: This city is located on the Kharmanli River 2 1/2 km away from the Maritsa River. It is an important railroad station on the railroad line to Svilengrad, and is a crossroad for the highways to Khaskovo, to Maritsa City, Topolovgrad, Svilengrad, and to the south toward the Rhodope Mountains.

Kharmanli City arose during the sixteenth century as a travelers' settlement which serviced travelers along the old diagonal road leading toward Constantinople. A solid arched stone bridge was constructed in 1585 to facilitate transportation across the Kharmanliyska River. A large caravansary, a mosque, a bath, and other buildings -- all later destroyed -- were built soon after around the bridge. Khadzhi Kalfa passed across this city and described it as being an important economic and administrative center.

The liberation found Kharmanli a small city of 3,000 population and an Oriental appearance. After the liberation almost all of the Turks (constituting the majority of the population in the past) left; they were replaced by many Bulgarian immigrants coming from the Aegean Sea region. The city began growing gradually. In 1910 it had 4,711 people; in 1926 there were 7,130; in 1946, 9,240; and at present the city has a population of over 10,000. Kharmanli owes its upsurge mainly to its tobacco production and cocoon growing. It is second to Svilengrad as a cocoon growing center of Bulgaria. The city includes a large drying building for cocoons and a factory for silk fabrics and yarns. The city is a center for the production of silkworm eggs. The city has a silk-weaving school; it also has tobacco warehouses, factories for cotton fabrics and yarns, mills, and oil-making enterprises. Kharmanli has renewed itself with many new construction projects, e.g., streets, public establishments, schools, and houses. It is a very nice-looking city.

After the Maritsa River has entered its last pass southeast of Kharmanli City its valley expands considerably and continues to expand to Svilengrad. Its valley at Svilengrad becomes even lower in altitude (52 m) and warmer and has an even more strongly felt Mediterranean influence. Here the alluvial soils are very fertile and are easy to cultivate. The entire area along the right bank of the Maritsa (the Kharmanli plain and a large part of Biseri village and of the Lyubimets railroad station) is irrigated. Here is also located the other part of the Kharmanli irrigation system, which includes pumping stations which siphon water from the Maritsa River. This part of the plain has the same crops as the Kharmanli plain, but has more mulberry trees, vegetable gardens, vineyards, and fruit orchards. Northwest of the Svilengrad railroad station stretch wide meadows which are partially covered with swamps. This area could be easily drained off, which will give more cultivated area for agricultural purposes.

The most important settlements in this region are Biser, Lyubimets, and Svilengrad. Biser village is located on the Biserska River, south of the highway and railroad line leading to Svilengrad. It has a well-organized TKZS. Lyubimets is a large settlement (about 7,000) and an important railroad station. It is located on the right bank of the Maritsa River. Svilengrad is the last Bulgarian city along the reaches of the Maritsa, and Kapitan Andreevo village is the last Bulgarian village on the left bank of the Maritsa.

Svilengrad: This city is located mostly on the left bank of the Maritsa on the borderline between upper and lower (eastern) Thrace. Here the southern Rhodope branches meet the northern branches of Mount Brannitsa. At this important strategic location

there has been a settlement dating from ancient times. It started as a Thracian settlement located on the left bank of the Maritsa in the Khisarya area. Later on it became an important Roman fortress under the name Burdenis, which kept watch on the important Roman military road from Constantinople to Belgrade. This settlement was also a road station where horses of the mail coaches were changed. Later on, in the course of the barbarian attacks, the fortress was entirely destroyed. Another settlement, called Chernomen, was established near this place in the Middle Ages. This is the present-day Chermen village (Ormenion in Greek), located on the right bank of the Maritsa River because at that time the International Highway passed along that bank.

Today's Svilengrad arose at the beginning of the fifteenth century at the Maritsa River ford, at a time when travelers had to cross the river with boats. At first it was a small village mainly of fishermen and boatsmen. However, due to the importance of this fort, the Great Vizier, Kodzha Lala Mustafa Pasha, in 1510 ordered the famous Turkish constructor Sinan to build at this place a big stone bridge. This bridge has remained and is being used even today. It is 295 m long. It has 19 arches and has solid stone railings. In the center of the bridge its high railing bears an inscription giving details regarding the construction. The importance of this settlement increased. In this settlement Mustafa Pasha built a mosque and a caravansary with a lead roof which could house 700 horses and had bedrooms and storage facilities for travelers. The settlement was called Mustafa Pasha. It rapidly expanded along both banks of the river, favored by its important location and fertile land. In the seventeenth

century Evliya Chelebi found 700 houses and 7 mosques here. Around 1860 the Bulgarians who were settled here built a church and opened a reading room and a school in which Ivan Vazov taught. According to the Berlin Treaty the city remained in Turkish territory but near the Bulgarian border.

After the Balkan War in 1913 when it became known on the basis of the Bucharest Treaty that the city would become Bulgarian, the Turks razed it before leaving and carried away with them whatever they could. They even carried away the doors and windows of houses, in order to build a new Mustafa Pasha on Turkish territory. When the Bulgarians who had escaped came back they found their houses destroyed and the mulberry orchard around the city cut down. Soon a new city was built at the site of the destroyed Mustafa Pasha. The city was called Svilengrad. It was more beautiful than the former one, and the mulberry gardens were restored and expanded. A whole mulberry forest later appeared here. Svilengrad became the largest cocoon center in Bulgaria. A cocoon cooperative built a huge warehouse for cocoons with modern drying premises. Hundreds of thousands of kilograms of cocoons began being exported to foreign markets. A factory to weave silk fabrics was created here. Viticulture, fruit-growing, and tobacco-production developed. Vegetables which require more heat also grow here. The Aegean Sea influence provides this heat.

The city is located near the borders of Bulgaria, Greece, and Turkey. It is less than 2 km from the Greek border and about 4 to 5 km from the Turkish border. That is why the area round it is limited. In 1926 (the first census after the liberation of the

the city) Svilengrad numbered 8,423 people, and in 1934, 9,303. At present the city has about 10,000 people. New industrial enterprises are not being built in the city, nor is there any particularly extensive housing construction. At present Svilengrad remains mainly an agricultural city, a fact which is obvious from its external appearance.

In the Northern Parts of the Plovdiv Plain

The train leaves Filipovo railroad station and starts rolling through the flat plain north of Plovdiv. Everything here is verdent: orchard gardens are covered with fruit. Piles of wooden cases full of red tomatoes or large gold-yellow pears can be seen in the vegetable gardens. The vast rice fields north of Plovdiv between the Pyaschenik and Stryama Rivers resemble a huge thick green carpet. After passing the Graf Ignatievo railroad station, however, the view changes. More wheat, corn, and sunflowers can be seen. In general grain crops predominate in the northern parts of the Plovdiv plain. Here fruit gardens and vineyards are less widespread.

From the Kaloyanovo railroad station we travel east on the highway toward Ruzhevo Konare village. Its well-organized Georgi Dimitrov TKZS made this village famous all over Bulgaria and even abroad. Ruzhevo Konare is one of the large Bulgarian villages. Its population already numbers over 4,000. The village is located about 25 km north of Plovdiv on the left bank of the Stryama River.

The Farm Workers' Cooperative in Ruzhevo Konare village was founded in 1945. Today it encompasses almost the entire population of the village, which is enjoying its great achievements. The farm has a vast, flat, and very fertile land. There is an average

of 30 decares of cultivated land here per family, which shows that there is 2.5 times more land per capita here than there is in the Krichim plain. The TKZS cultivates this fertile land with modern methods, using tractors, cultivating machines, row cultivators, and other machines supplied mainly by the MTS in Kaloyanovo village. In addition, a thick network of irrigation canals crisscrosses the entire area around the village. This irrigation uses partially the waters of the Stryama River, and to a larger degree the abundant shallow subterranean waters. The area of Ruzhevo Konare village includes 155 pumps, 120 of which are electrically powered. They fill the irrigation canals from which the water quietly flows over sun-cracked land. This life-giving water is a real blessing on the flat plain. Over 17,000 decares of land are irrigated. They yield abundant crops regardless of the droughts which may come to Thrace. About 2,800 decares of this land produce two crops annually.

The land is abundantly fertilized by the Farm Workers' Cooperative of Ruzhevo Konare village. In 1954 alone 2,800 decares were fertilized with organic manure and vegetable ash. In addition, chemical fertilizers are used. An area of 11,000 decares of agricultural crops have been fertilized by 245 tons of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium fertilizers. Thanks to modern agrotechnical methods and the abundant fertilization and irrigation in the TKZS of Ruzhevo Konare village, high yields have been obtained from grain and industrial crops, vegetables, etc. Here the leading agricultural workers have been generously rewarded by the people's regime with medals, honors, prizes, etc.

The land of the farm is well-planned. The cultivated area is divided into blocks of 750 decares each, rectangularly-shaped. They can be seen clearly from afar. They are bordered by wind-breaks of Canadian and pyramid-shaped poplars, and ash trees. Oak trees can be seen in the northern parts of the fields. The trees develop well here and have already reached a height of 6 to 10 m. Near these trees roads have been built and the main irrigational canals dug. An agreeable freshness comes from these forest belts during the summer heat. In addition, they give a particular charm to the view. The forest belts include an over-all area of 480 decares. However, if this fertile area had been planted with fruit trees or with mulberry trees, it would have been much more profitable. It is true that the forest belts were planted to preserve the soil from the strong winter winds and to help the snow settle more evenly on the ground, to weaken the force of the summer winds, and to reduce the evaporation of water from the soil. But here in this quiet flat Thracian lowland there was no need for such measures. Thus, it is not recommended for other Farm Workers' Cooperatives in the Plovdiv plain to plant such forest belts, no matter how beautiful they may be.

The Stryama River flows across the area of Ruzhevo Konare village. In the past it has flooded and frequently changed its bed. Its old river bed, about 2.5 km long, was in the past only bare land or pastureland. Now it has been changed. Dikes have been erected in several places, beyond which artificial lakes shine under the sun. Fish have been stocked here. Waterfowl is being cultivated at these lakes. Here the young people from the village gather for sport and relaxation. Every year these artificial

lakes yield about 10 t of delicious fish. The production of the "Georgi Dimitrov" TKZS in Ruzhevo Konare village is varied and abundant. Grain crops cover half the cultivated area. Excellent wheat of the Okerman type is produced. It yields 150 to 200 kg of large-size grain per decare. Corn covers over 2,300 decares, and, being irrigated, it yields 240 kg of grain per decare. Grain crops here entirely satisfy the needs of the population, with an excess for export. In addition, the area grows rice. It covers an area of over 1,000 decares and yields a rich crop. In 1954 an average of 812 kg of nondecorticated rice was obtained per decare from an area of 175 decares.

Industrial crops constitute an important part in the economy of Ruzhevo Konare village. Entire fields have been planted with sunflowers, which grow very high when properly irrigated. Over 1,000 decares, mainly in the Chernozem-pitch soils, have been planted with cotton. In addition, the area also grows mint, tobacco (Virginia type), and sugar beets. Each of these crops covers over 500 decares each.

Vegetable growing plays an important role here. Vegetables cover an area of 1,660 decares. The Ruzhevo Konare people are specialists in the growing of early and medium early tomatoes, large and juicy peppers, early potatoes, etc. The vegetable gardens covered with a rich crop are a wonderful sight. Here in 1953 an area of 10 decares produced 4,600 kg of early tomatoes per decare — a record yield for the whole of Bulgaria.

There is an abundance of produce in the fertile area around Ruzhevo Konare. It produces grain crops, various industrial crops,

vegetables, strawberries, watermelons, cantaloupes, etc. But that is not all: orchard growing is rapidly developing here. The area covered by orchards is already over 1,000 decares. Long rows of apple, cherry, plum, and other trees embellish the flat plain and produce sweet fruit. Only viticulture is still poorly developed. However, in the near future the area now planted with vineyards (400 decares today) will be considerably increased.

Along with its intensive vegetable-growing, Ruzhevo Konare is now developing livestock raising. A large amount of grain food, such as alfalfa, fodder beets, and ensilaged fodder is produced for the needs of the livestock raising. Well-lighted, hygienic barns have been built by the village. They have been equipped in accordance with the most modern animal husbandry requirements. They are equipped with automatic watering devices, the fodder is mechanically supplied to the stables, etc. Cow raising is well developed. The farm has 133 milk-producing cows. In 1954 an average of 1,200 l of milk was produced per fodder-fed cow. Because of inadequate pastureland (only 850 decares) sheep-breeding is less well-developed. The farm has only 2,850 sheep, but they are very productive. There are 276 horses and 460 hogs.

In 1954 monetary income from vegetable growing and livestock raising was as follows: from industrial crops and grain crops, 46%; from vegetables and watermelons, 38%; from livestock raising, 10.5%; and from orchard and vineyard growing, 5.5%.

Early tomatoes and potatoes, the sweet strawberries, the large cherries and apples, the juicy peppers, and the other produce of Ruzhevo Konare village are very well known in the markets in Plovdiv,

Sofia, Kurdzhali, and other parts of Bulgaria. The Farm Workers' Cooperative in Ruzhevo Konare village is growing rapidly stronger. It is visited by many delegations from other TKZS of Bulgaria and from abroad. These visitors learn much from the experiences and the achievements of the Ruzhevo Konare people.

The village is changing and radically improving. It has been electrified and now has radios. It has a large square in the center of the city. Here the people's regime has built a new, modern, sunny health house. It has been built at the site of the former police station in which the fascists tortured the fighters for the people's freedom. Rising on the side of the square is a new cultural club, which is a real house of culture. It has been built by the local people's Soviet and by the TKZS with the help of the entire population. It has a good movie hall, a reading room, a library, a tea shop, etc.

The newly built nursery is an important achievement for the mothers of Ruzhevo Konare. It is a hygienically-clean building rising in the center of a large courtyard with fruit trees and with water flowing along the irrigation canal. Even during the hottest days of summer it is agreeably cool and fresh here. Here thriving under the care of well-trained personnel are the youngest citizens of the famous Ruzhevo Konare village, which, boldly and with assurance, is following the road of socialism.

The plain around the Ruzhevo Konare village is flat and wide. Wherever one looks the view is the same. It is a plain -- a vast plain! It is as if the plain, lush with verdure, were endless. Far to the south in the morning haze one can see the silhouette of

the powerful outline of the Rhodope Mountains. To the north along the horizon there is faintly visible the low chain of the Sredna Gora Mountains, beyond which can be seen the proud Balkan Mountains. It is very pleasant to travel on the plain on an early summer morning. The sweet songs of the birds echo everywhere. Sparkling dew covers rich wheat, large sunflowers, and corn. Here there are almost no pastures. The entire area is covered by fields, gardens, meadows, and vineyards.

We travel to the east of Ruzhevo Konare toward Momino village. This is one of the famous vegetable- and rice-growing settlements in the Plovdiv area. It has a population of 1,600. It produces large amounts of early tomatoes, potatoes, peppers, eggplants, etc. Not far from the rich vegetable gardens stretches the light green expanse of the rice fields which cover an area of 800 decares. Cooperative farmers can be seen walking rapidly about. Here orchard growing is rapidly developing. In the area of Momino there are over 200 decares of orchards, which yield high-quality fruits. Viticulture is less well developed. There is about half of a decare of vineyard per family.

We hurry to reach General Nikolaevo village. It is located far to the east of Momino village. Here too the plain is just as wide and monotoneus, so that even with a map it is difficult to find ones way. The footpaths and the roads between the villages turn around large blocks of cooperatively-owned land covered with wheat and corn and vineyards. On the plain one can see from afar the high belltower and the chimney of the brick factory in General Nikolaevo village. The village is located 26 km to the northeast

of Plovdiv by the highway to Brezovo village. General Nikolaevo village is among the largest villages in Thrace. It has a population of over 6,200 Bulgarian Roman Catholics. The neighboring Sekirovo and Parchevich villages are also Roman Catholic. General Nikolaevo is one of the oldest villages in the Plovdiv plain. It is believed that its population settled here after participating in the Chiprovo rebellion. Its old name was Kaluchli. During the war of liberation a battle took place in the neighborhood of this village. With the rank of captain in the Russian armies, the Bulgarian Danail Nikolaev participated in this battle. He was wounded by the Turks, but the brave population of Kaluchli saved him. After the liberation Danail Nikolaev became the first Bulgarian general. In 1934 the village was given his name. The population of the neighboring cities call this village "Generala."

General Nikolaev village has a large Farm Workers' Cooperative called "Purvi May." It includes over 80% of the farmers of the village and of the cultivated area of the village. Here the local population has a large amount of cultivated land. Families which are TKZS members have an average of about 30 decares of cultivated land apiece. Under capitalism production consisted mainly of grain crops and a small amount of industrial crops. Under the people's regime agriculture is being modernized and mechanized. Production has increased, and new crops such as rice, strawberries, and ramie have been introduced. The cultivation of vegetables increased, and more orchards and vineyards were planted. The wealth of the village is also growing.

The land around General Nikolaevo village is vast and fertile, but for many years drought destroyed a large percentage of the crops.

That is why in order to prevent the destruction of the drought and to increase even further agricultural yields, the cooperative farmers of the village decided to use the local water and enthusiastically built three small dams to collect a total of over 2,000,000 m^3 of water. There are three new lakes built by the people following the road toward socialism.

Near the village and the highway shine the waters of the two small lakes, which are very close to one another. A small acacia forest has been planted near the waters of these lakes, and near it has been built a modern poultry farm belonging to the TKZS. The third of the small General Nikolaevo dams is located about 8 km northeast of the village on a hilly site. Here in the Kavatsite is located the largest small dam of the Plovdiv plain. It holds over 1,000,000 m^3 of water. The wall of the dam is almost 400 m long, and its width at the bottom is 60 m. It is 12 m high. According to the plans, the wall of this dam will be raised another 3 to 4 m, and then the dam will hold over 2,000,000 m^3 of water. The economic importance of the small General Nikolaevo dams is considerable. They help the irrigation of over 3,000 decares of cultivated land, which has been forever saved from the destruction of droughts. In addition, there is fish in the lakes. The income which is obtained from the increased agricultural yields because of irrigation and from the fish will repay in only a few years all the funds which have been invested in the construction of the small dams. This increases the security of the cooperative farmers, ensures them with larger incomes, and inspires them to build more small dams in the vast area around their settlement.

Rice was planted for the first time in 1954 in General Nikolaevo village, and during the following year over 1,000 decares of rice were planted. A high yield may be obtained from rice when planted on the flat Chernozem-pitch soils. The planting of rice became possible only because of the small dams.

Irrigation expands vegetable growing. Already over 1,000 decares have been planted in vegetables. In addition to tomatoes, peppers, onions, beans, and other vegetables, large areas are planted with peas, a large part of which is sent to be processed in the canneries in Plovdiv and Krichim railroad station.

The growing of strawberries (over 800 decares), watermelons, and cantaloupes is of great importance to the Purvi May TKZS in General Nikolaevo village. In addition, here the growing of industrial crops, such as cotton (nearly 4,000 decares), sugar beets, sunflowers, and a little tobacco is well-developed. Orchard growing is rapidly developing here, as well. Under capitalism the village had only a few decares of orchards, while now there are over 800 decares of orchards which will soon begin producing abundant fruit. Plum trees constitute the largest orchard area. Viticulture is still poorly developed (there is an average of one decare per family); however, it will grow rapidly in the near future to cover an area of 10,000 decares.

In the neighboring villages, as well as here, livestock raising is less well-developed than is vegetable growing. The area planted in alfalfa is now being increased, which will help the development of livestock raising. In 1954 the income from livestock raising was only 14% of the total income obtained by the village from agricultural sources.

After 9 September 1944 a brick factory was built in General Nikolaevo village. This brick factory entirely supplies the needs of the local population, and the excess is supplied to the surrounding communities. Even in Madan and Rudozem there are many buildings built with bricks produced in General Nikolaevo village.

Traveling by train from Plovdiv to Chirpan, one can see this fertile land, so abundantly watered and carefully cultivated. Corn here grows 3 m high. Rice fields look like a sea of heavy sheaves. Vegetable gardens are prolific; fruit, sweet cantaloupes, and juicy watermelons ripen in the fields. The train runs across one of the biggest vegetable- and rice-growing areas in the Thracian lowlands -- Skugare, Rogosh, Manole, Belozem, and Orizovo. Further to the east, toward the foothills of the Chirpan Heights and near Cherna Gora village one can see the high chimneys of the Stomana plant, which produces bricks and tiles. This large and modern plant was constructed under the people's regime and completed in 1951. The plant is in a region which is very rich in clay and which also contains a small amount of fine sand. The plant has available enough raw materials near the plant to last for at least 100 years. Modern earth-moving equipment digs and loads earth into hand cars which run on a special narrow-gauge track to the plant. Over 300 m^3 of clay are processed here daily, and 15 t of coal are used in the process. The majority of the production processes here are mechanized. In this respect the plant is one of the best in Bulgaria. It has the second Bulgarian steam installation for drying bricks and tiles. These are baked in large, modern ring-like kilns.

The Stomana Plant in Cherna Gora village (Chirpan okoliya) produces some of the most solid bricks and tiles in Bulgaria. It has an annual production of over 3,000,000 tiles, and over 13,000,000 bricks, which satisfy a large percentage of the construction needs in the Thracian lowlands, the Rhodope Mountain region, and the Sofia region. In addition, a large part of the production is exported. For example, in 1955 over 1/2 of the tiles and 1/4 of the bricks were exported to Czechoslovakia.

This brick plant in Cherna Gora village is a large industrial enterprise which uses very profitably locally-found raw materials, gives work to about 250 to 300 of the local population, helps construction, and even contributes to Bulgarian exports.

In the Chirpan Hills

East of Cherna Gora village the railroad tracks enter the Chirpan Hills, which are the southernmost branches of the Sredna Gora Mountains, dividing the Plovdiv and Stara Zagora plains. Once the train enters this region the view suddenly changes. Here one sees the large fields of the farm workers' cooperatives planted with cotton and sunflower seeds, with long rows of sheaves. What strikes one most are the vast vineyards among which can be seen single orchard trees covered with fruit.

The economy in the Chirpan region is quite varied. The region produces a considerable amount of grain crops which entirely satisfy the needs of the local population. However, the most important crops are those of cotton growing and viticulture. These yield 2/3 of the income of the farm workers' cooperatives, which include over 85% of the farmers and cultivated land in the okoliya.

Cotton covers 10% of the cultivated land here and is widespread in the flatter or slightly hilly land which is covered with Chernozem-pitch soil containing many nutritive substances needed by cotton. The areas covered by cotton are extremely vast. In summer they represent an endless green area which, when the cotton blossoms, are colored by yellow-rose cotton blooms. And when in autumn the cotton bolls crack and the large soft balls of snow-white cotton fiber appear, the sight becomes even more pleasant. One is charmed by the songs of the cooperative farmers who hurry to harvest this white gold which brings them large incomes, supplies the industry with valuable raw material, and ensures the people clothing. In 1954, 1/3 of the income of the TKZS of the okoliya was obtained from cotton, and individual TKZS had an even larger percentage of their income from cotton growing.

Along with cotton growing, of great importance to the economy of this region is vineyard growing, for which natural conditions are favorable. The hilly topography facilitates the movement of the wind in the vineyards and helps prevent diseases. The southern exposure helps the grapes collect more sugar. The soils, with their small amount of lime, favor vineyard growing. In the Chirpan hills a traveler may walk kilometer after kilometer among nothing but vineyards. They cover an average of 10% of the cultivated area of the okoliya, but they are even more developed in the hillier parts of the region. The largest vineyard growing villages here are Izvorovo, Spasovo, Vedren, Stoyan Zaimovo, Sredno Gradishte, and Bragya Daskalovi. In this region about 20% of the cultivated areas, and even more in certain places, are covered by vineyards.

Viticulture has a great future in the Chirpan hills. More and more vineyards are being planted here. On the basis of future plans, the Chirpan okoliya alone will have over 100,000 decares of vineyards in 1960; while in 1954 the total area was only about 16,000. Thus the people's regime will make the Chirpan hills into a typical vineyard-growing and wine-producing region.

A large percentage of the income of the farmers in Chirpan okoliya comes from vineyards. According to 1954 data, 1/3 of the income of all the TKZS in the okoliya has been obtained from vineyards and orchard growing. However, taking into consideration that orchard growing is poorly developed here (the entire okoliya has only 6,500 decares of orchards), it is obvious that this income is due mainly to vineyard growing, which in this region holds second place after cotton. The other branches of agriculture are less important. For example, vegetable gardens, watermelons, and cantaloupes account for only 13% of the income, and tobacco in this region is of very little importance. It accounts for only 1% of the income obtained from vegetable growing. Here the soils required for the production of high-quality tobacco cannot be found.

Livestock raising is poorly developed. In 1954 the income from livestock raising in Chirpan was 5 times smaller than income obtained from vegetable growing. The growing of fodder is also inadequately developed.

Water made available through the construction of small dams is of great importance to the rural economy of this Bulgarian region. First attempts in this respect were very effective. The

waters of small dams built in the Rupki, Bratya Daskalovi, Partizanin, Merichleri, and other villages already help irrigate vegetable gardens, watermelon patches, alfalfa fields, vineyards, etc.

Chirpan: The train passes vineyards, cotton fields, and sunflower fields to reach this city, the largest market in the cultural and administrative center of this region. It is located south of the railroad tracks on a slight slope. A beautiful paved road connects it with the railroad station. Only the center of this settlement looks like a city. There streets have been paved or cobblestoned; a park, which is now being enlarged, has been built. The center of the city includes the main city shops, the okoliya administrative offices, etc. The larger part of Chirpan, however, resembles a large village. The houses are small with large courtyards and include a large number of rural-type homes.

Chirpan is an old settlement. Its first settlers probably settled around large cold water springs at the Tekira site, which is located in the lower part of the present city. According to archaeological data, during the Roman epoch a settlement existed here called Sherampol. During the Turkish enslavement there was a city here which was fortified with walls and towers. Its population was engaged mainly in crafts. Here hides were processed; shoes and fur garments were made. Also sewing, goldsmithing, and other crafts were developed. A large percentage of the produce was exported to the markets in Edirne and Uzundzhovo. Later on under the competition from industrially-produced goods, crafts in Chirpan declined; and the city gradually became a typical

agricultural settlement. That is why its population remained almost stable in the capitalist epoch. For example, in 1887 it numbered 11,000, and the census of 1935 was again the same. After 9 September 1944 the population of Chirpan began to grow rapidly: in 1946 Chirpan numbered 13,230.

Along with a well-developed agriculture, there is considerable industrial production in Chirpan. There at the location of the site of the former small workshop which manufactured small tools the people's regime built the Budeshtnost Machine-Building Plant. It is true that its premises are small and old, but it nevertheless produces modern seed-cleaning agricultural machinery, spare parts for harvesters and threshing machines, winnowing machines, and even large snow plows. That the agricultural machines which are manufactured here are of good quality is proved by the fact that at the Leipzig Fair the seed-cleaning machine from this plant was given an award.

Wine production is of great importance to Chirpan's industry. Chirpan is one of the largest wine centers of the Thracian lowlands. Here the Vinprom enterprise annually produces 8,000,000 to 9,000,000 l of various kinds of wine, liquers, Malaga-type wine, Damyat-type, standard-type wine, etc. In addition, substances are produced for the manufacturing of champagnes, wine distillates, wine spirits, calcium tartrate, etc. A large percentage of this wine is exported to the USSR and to the peoples' democracies.

The production of wine is also well developed in the large vineyard-growing villages in the okoliya where there are eight wine cellars, the largest of which are located in the villages

Spasovo (1.5 million l) and Vetren (1,000,000 l). In the Chirpan okoliya over 12,000,000 kg of grapes are processed into wine every year.

Chirpan's industrial development is poor. Chirpan does not have enough work for the local population; accordingly, part of its inhabitants work in the coal mines in Marbas and others in the tile plant in Cherna Gora village.

The basic livelihood of Chirpan's inhabitants is agriculture. Its cultivated area exceeds 46,000 decares. Viticulture and cotton growing are the most important agricultural pursuits. Vines cover 7,500 decares and are located mainly on the hillier northern and northeastern areas around the city. There are vast cooperative fields planted with cotton. With over 6,000 decares of land planted with cotton, Chirpan competes with the greatest cotton-producing centers of Bulgaria. Chirpan also produces grain crops, sunflower seeds, a small amount of sugar beets, etc.

Chirpan is important because it combines agricultural science and practical work. The Central Scientific and Research Cotton Institute is located near the city. Here an experimental agricultural station was established in 1925 to develop the cultivation of hard wheat. Later on this station was given the task of helping in the dissemination of knowledge regarding cotton growing. In 1953 it was reorganized and became the Central Scientific and Research Cotton Institute. This institute has created new and highly productive types of hard wheat (typical Zagariya), barley, corn, vetch, etc., which are of great value to the economy of the Bulgarian people. This institute created the cotton types Nos 38,

2,363, and 2,367. The two latter types have fibers 31 to 32 mm long. They are being disseminated more and more in the various regions of Bulgaria in which they can be successfully cultivated. In addition, valuable research is being conducted on agrotechnical methods for the cultivation of grain and industrial crops. The staff of scientific workers near Chirpan works quietly and effectively. They render valuable aid to the rural economy of Bulgaria.

Chirpan is the native city of the poet revolutioner P. K. Yavorov. His home has been made into a museum where visitors can become more familiar with the life and works of this Bulgarian poet who so aptly described the misery of the working peasants under capitalism. The museum contains, among other objects, the clothing worn by Yavorov when he was a rebel fighter in Macedonia.

In the Stara Zagora Plain

East of Chirpan the train enters a hilly region where the railroad line makes wide turns. At the Mikhaylovo railroad station, where a railroad track leading to Dimitrovgrad branches off, the train enters the famous Stara Zagora plain. The altitude of this plain is 150 to 180 m. It is flat and covered with fat chernozem soil, which is the most valuable asset of this plain. In size (nearly 1,600 km^2) the Stara Zagora plain is second largest in Bulgaria — only the Pazardzhik-Plovdiv plain being larger. It is larger than the Sofia plain. To the north and northwest the Stara Zagora plain is bordered by the Sredna Gora Mountains, and to the east it stretches as far as Mount Brannitsa, and to the Manastirski and Sveti Iliyski Heights, which can be seen dimly in the distance.

This flat and fertile plain has been crisscrossed by new irrigational canals through which flows the water of the Tundzha River, brought here by the work of the people who have boldly led the way toward socialism. The lifebringing water has banished forever the centuries-old drought which plagued most of the fertile Stara Zagora plain. Here crops which are bigger than capitalism could dream of, are already being obtained. The Stara Zagora is very beautiful in summer! The heavy stalks of wheat look like a real sea. The high cornstalks are colored dark blue. Large sunflowers bend their heads toward the earth. Cotton casts a green tint to the vast fields.

The Stara Zagora plain is the granary of Thrace. Grain crops cover about 60% of the cultivated area. This plain is famous all over Bulgaria for its production of Zagariya, a type of hard wheat which contains a large percentage of gluten and which serves in the production of high-quality dough. Corn growing is also well developed here. When corn is properly irrigated it grows over 3 m high and produces an excellent crop. In 1955 the Oblast Institute on Livestock-Breeding near Stara Zagora grew record crops of corn -- over 1,000 kg of grain per decare.

Vetch is a typical crop for the Stara Zagora plain. Vetch covers 7% of the cultivated area, is valuable fodder, and enriches the soil with nitrogen. The Stara Zagora plain is first in central and southern Bulgaria in the cultivation of vetch.

With the introduction of irrigation the areas covered by grain crops will gradually decrease, while the growing of industrial crops and rice will increase. Travelers in the flat Stara Zagora

plain cannot but admire the vast hills in which heavy sunflowers are bending their heads toward the soil. This crop covers nearly 10% of the plain, and even without irrigation its yield is good.

The Stara Zagora plain is a most important cotton-growing region. Here conditions for the growing of cotton are very good -- thick chernozem soils, a long period of high temperature, the farmers' experience in cotton-growing, etc. The socialist reconstruction of Bulgarian agriculture, the application of modern agricultural technological methods, and abundant fertilizing and irrigation will improve even further the naturally favorable conditions for cotton growing. At present cotton covers 10 to 15% of the cultivated area of the plain, but in the future it will be further expanded.

Viticulture is developed here, mainly in the peripheral parts of the plain, the foothills of the Sredna Gora Mountains. Orchard growing is less well developed, but the expansion of irrigation will permit its growth.

Stara Zagora is the second largest city in upper Thrace. It already has over 50,000 inhabitants and is one of the most beautiful of Bulgarian cities. It is located in the southern foothills of the Surnena Gora Mountains and extends down the valley of the Bedechka River and into the plain itself. The city offers a wonderful view. It can be seen from afar, lush with verdure and surrounded with vineyards, among which grow orchard trees. The view becomes even more attractive at night when one travels on the highway from Dimitrovgrad to Stara Zagora. From afar the city resembles a cluster of thousands of stars, among which one can see

straight lines of light crisscrossing at right angles. Such a view cannot be seen anywhere else in Bulgaria. It is due to the peculiar location of the city and to its straight streets which are perpendicular to one another.

Located on the sunny slopes of the Surnena Gora Mountains, Stara Zagora enjoys a mild continental climate. The Stara Planina and Sredna Gora mountain chains protect the city from the cold northern winds. Here the agreeable breath of the south can be felt. Winter is mild and quite sunny. Snow remains on the ground for only a few days at a time. Fog and bad weather are unknown here. Summer is long, hot and comparatively dry.

Under the influence of this climate southern vegetation grows successfully, and it creates a striking impression on visitors to Stara Zagora, for it gives the city a peculiar charm. One can see in the courtyards and parks eternally-green, sharp-pointed cypress trees, which have dug their long roots into the rocky soil. Also widely spread are figs, almond trees, pomegranates, and even strawberry trees.

To enjoy the beauty of the city and the most beautiful southern Mediterranean vegetation in Thrace one must visit Lenin Park, which was called in the past Ayazmoto Park. It is on a large rocky hill with southern exposure which is thickly afforested mainly with Mediterranean vegetation. Among the bare slopes of the Sredna Gora Mountains it resembles a big green bouquet above Stara Zagora. It is very pleasant to walk in Lenin Park. Lean cypress trees border the paths, together with large and widely branched cedar trees. Here one sees small forests of almond trees,

and bushes which have thick, shiny, eternally-green leaves. When almonds blossom in early spring the countryside is particularly nice to look at. And in summer when intense heat covers the city it is agreeably cool in Lenin Park. This place is a favorite promenade for the Stara Zagora people.

Stara Zagora has behind her a history of over 2,000 years. It was one of the earliest settlements in upper Thrace. It rose during the epoch of the Thracians. The Romans improved and fortified the city (this was the famous Avgusta Trayana fortress). Frequent battles took place there. The city knew the glory of success, as well as defeat and destruction. In the Middle Ages it was called Beroe, Boruy, or Vereya. When the Turks conquered it the city was destroyed but later restored. At this point the Turks built their Eskizara fortress, which, translated into Bulgarian, is "Stara Zagora." During the Turkish enslavement the city again became an important strategic, economic, and administrative center. At this point the then-important roads from Plovdiv to Yambol and from northern Bulgaria to Edirne crossed. Stara Zagora remained the most important economic center in the plain which surrounds it. During the Turkish enslavement many Bulgarians settled in this city. A large percentage of them dealt in crafts and trade.

During the nineteenth century Stara Zagora became an important center both of Slavic culture and of the revolutionary struggle. It became a regional revolutionary center. In September 1875 the Stara Zagora rebellion began here. It was led by the noted craftsman Kolyu Ganchev. Today a village near the city has been

named after him, as has one of the central streets of Stara Zagora. The Stara Zagora people have glorious revolutionary traditions behind them. They actively participated in the September 1923 rebellion, and later on in the struggle against fascism, as well.

During the 1877 war of liberation the flourishing craftsman and merchant center of Stara Zagora was plundered, destroyed, and burned by the Turks. A large part of the Bulgarian population was killed. After the liberation the city was built anew with long straight streets which were located at right angles to one another.

Under capitalism Stara Zagora failed to become a large industrial center, but some industries, including milling; the production of canned vegetables, cigarettes, wine, copperas; the manufacturing of beds, etc., did develop. Only the center of the city was partially planned, while the outskirts of the city continued to be covered with dust in summer and mud in winter.

After 9 September the city began to rapidly change its appearance. The old industrial enterprises were nationalized, expanded, and modernized. The city has large mills and oil extracting factories, which service a large area. The manufacture of beds and other furniture increased. This has helped to improve the cultural and living conditions of the working people throughout the Thracian lowlands, in the Rhodope Mountain region, and elsewhere. The production of canned vegetables, cigarettes, wine, spirits, etc., increased. Metal processing was also greatly developed. Under the people's regime the production of agricultural machinery, tools, and spare parts of machinery was undertaken. The

big sunny buildings of the new modern plant for rough processing of cotton produced in the Stara Zagora plain has been built near the city. This plant has been equipped with a modern hydraulic press for baling the cotton.

The construction of the "Stara Zagora" VETs has been of great importance to the development of the city's industry and for the even further improvement of the living conditions of the Stara Zagora people. It produces hydro-electricity with the Tundzha River waters, which flow through canals across the Sredna Gora Mountains.

Stara Zagora is an important transportation center. It is a crossroads for the railroad lines Plovdiv, Burgas, and Ruse Podkova. The city is connected by highway with Chirpan, Dimitrovgrad, Maritsa City, Topolovgrad, Nova Zagora, and Kazanluk. In addition, there is a large airport near the city which provides air-transportation facilities for the people of Stara Zagora.

The city is not only an important industrial and transportation center; it is also of great importance as a cultural and administrative center. Stara Zagora is an okrug center. It is famous for its well-organized state opera and theater, state symphonic orchestra, and art museum. It has a radio-broadcasting station.

Under the people's regime the city is being continuously improved. A large part of the city has already been paved. The park areas have been greatly increased. A large number of houses and public buildings have been built. By the end of 1955 a large modern aqueduct, the need for which had long been felt, was

completed. Earlier the city suffered from lack of water. However, thanks to the concern of the people's regime for the living conditions of the population, the construction of the second largest Bulgarian aqueduct was undertaken in 1953. This aqueduct is over 50 km long and supplies the city with water from the foothills of the Stara Planina Mountains. The aqueduct passes under the Tundzha Riverbed, crosses the Sredna Gora Mountains, and only then reaches Stara Zagora. The great importance of this aqueduct was stressed by Comrade G. Chankov, who said at the opening of the aqueduct: "For several scores of years the Stara Zagora population wished for an adequate amount of good water for its living and cultural needs. This justifiable dream of the Stara Zagora citizens was not only well understood, but also implemented by the Bulgarian Communist Party and the people's regime, who have no other interests, no other dreams and desires, but those of the toiling population."

In the East Rhodope Submountain Terrace

The view changes radically when the east Rhodope submountain terrace is reached. The traveler will then see extremely varied scenery. The topography is quite rugged to the south and southeast with complicated branches of hills in the central and northwestern part of the area. However, this land is covered with fertile soils, a large part of which are the thick chernozem-pitch soils so highly valued by the population. The east Rhodope submountain terrace is famous for the many crops it raises. The wheat fields of this region seem endless. The fields are covered with wheat, rye, and barley. By the end of June they glimmer under the rays of the sun with a golden yellow-green color. Light-colored, large-stalked,

they await the rich harvest. Here cooperative-owned land covers huge areas; it goes up the hills and then goes down toward the low river valleys. The corn and sunflower crops grow fast and cover the dark cultivated land, their dark green leaves growing very tall. In the low places along the river terraces one sees the vegetable gardens in which tomatoes, peppers, onions, cucumbers, potatoes, and other vegetables are grown. Watermelons also grow here. The production of vegetables and watermelons helps satisfy the local needs, and enough is left for shipments to Khaskovo, the Khaskovo mineral baths, and to the lead and zinc mines located nearby. The sugar beets grown here go to Plovdiv.

The east Rhodope submountain terrace also grows other crops. This is the land of "white gold" -- cotton. Tobacco is also grown among the hills. Cotton was grown here even in the time of the Turkish domination, but the area devoted to cotton increased considerably under socialism. The area planted with tobacco in the entire submountain terrace covered 20% of the cultivated land in 1953, and cotton production in the Khaskovo okoliya amounts to about 3,000,000 [measure not specified]. Cotton yields increase year after year. Farmers in Voyvodovo village (Khaskovo okoliya) have already harvested 313 kg of cotton per decare, while in the Purvomay okoliya up to 350 kg per decare have been harvested. The widest areas sown with cotton are the cooperative-owned fields in Uzundzhovo village. Wherever one looks the view remains unchanged. Only cotton grows there. The cotton area dominates all other crops. With the opening in autumn of the green bolls which grow so abundantly on the stems of the cotton plant, a new charm is given the dark green

land. More and more fluffy snow-white balls appear from each open boll. The plain becomes white. Then hundreds of cotton pickers enter the cooperative-owned field, and the first cotton-picking combines start to work.

The area devoted to cotton growing is larger than that devoted to tobacco. To the north it reaches the lowlands of the Maritsa River, and to the south it includes the largest part of the terrace.

Tobacco covers the entire submountain and hilly region outside of the cotton region. Its quality is only average, not as good as the Rhodope Mountain tobacco. Tobacco covers 7% of the over-all cultivated area, and only in the tobacco region does the area devoted to tobacco rise to 20%. The average yield is 60 kg per decare, but up to 120 kg have been obtained.

In addition to the production of cotton and tobacco, in the future the cultivation of new agricultural products will be undertaken, e.g., viticulture and orchard growing. The vast hilly regions, with their limey soil and good exposure to the winds, have been planted with vineyards which grow grapes for dessert and for wine. In many places orchard trees grow among the vineyards. The view of the Khaskovo vineyards is particularly pleasant. These vineyards are located on the limey hill south of the city. It looks like a strange sort of a rest park in which grapes and fruit grow abundantly. The thick branches of many walnut trees can be seen among the vineyards, together with almonds, apricot and cherry trees. The soil and climatic conditions in the entire submountain terrace are very favorable for the growing of

vineyards and orchards. In the forthcoming years the cultivation of vineyards and orchards will be well represented here along with the cultivation of cotton and tobacco.

More and more varieties of crops are being grown in this region. Highly productive livestock raising has been expanded by the establishment of a solid fodder base. In many TKZS fish ponds have been stocked, and beehives have been built in the submountain villages.

Here the most important problem is irrigation. But this problem will soon be solved. The dam at Studen Kladenets village on the Arda River will be completed by the end of the second five-year plan, and some 10 years from now more dams will be built on the Kharmanliyska River at Karamantsi and Trakiets villages. The waters of other small rivers will also be dammed. Already the construction of small dams has been completed at Knizhovnik, Gorski Izvor, and Konush villages. Many wells have been drilled, and pumping stations have been constructed in Bolyarovo Voyvodovo, Uzundzhovo, Chernogorovo, Krum, Ivanovo, Dolno Cherkovishte, and other villages. The area under irrigation at present covers 20,000 decares. After the new irrigational works are completed, all of this region will have a sufficient amount of water. It will produce even more cotton, anise, tobacco, grapes, and fruit. In the valleys the areas covered by vegetable gardens and watermelon patches will be increased. Rice, as well as strawberries, will be grown.

Khaskovo: seen from the heights north or south of the city, Khaskovo looks like a big settlement stretching over a vast area

on both sides of the Khaskovska River. The narrow river valley here can no longer contain this expanded city. That is why the houses have spread high up the side of the hills. To the south they have crossed a low hill and have filled the small, narrow, beautiful Akbunar valley, where a splendid park has been built. They have reached even higher along the southern bordering height directly under the level of the vineyards. The city is also growing to the west, along the highway to the Khaskovo mineral baths, and even more to the east toward the railroad station and around the railroad tracks to Kurdzhali. As a matter of fact, this entire area is already full of new houses, hospitals, and industrial enterprises. Since the site on which the city is located is quite hilly, the altitude differs in the various parts of the city, ranging between 130 to 230 m.

Khaskovo began growing particularly after Bulgaria's liberation from the Turks, when the old commercial center of Uzundzhovo declined. The growth of Khaskovo was helped mainly by its central location in the vast and fertile region of the Khaskovo submountain terrace, the Maritsa valley to the north, and the huge area south toward the Rhodope Mountains. At that time Dimitrovgrad did not yet exist, while Kurdzhali was just a small settlement. The expansion of the city was aided by the "yellow gold" — the best quality Rhodope tobacco which was shipped from the Khaskovo and Rhodope regions to be processed in the huge warehouses of Khaskovo. All kinds of valuable industrial crops grow in the Khaskovo region. This fact also contributed to a greater or lesser extent to the rapid development of this comparatively young city, which was just a village during the Turkish domination. At first

Khaskovo appeared as a purely Turkish village near the river and was called Khaskyoy (from "Khas" -- land which was given to the people related to the Sultan, and from "kyoy" -- village). Khadzhi Kalfa described this city during the seventeenth century as being owned by a pasha and housing a court and a marketing center for the region. Gradually the Turkish soldiers moved from the plain into a permanent settlement in this city. Then its external appearance began to change, and it became a small Oriental city with a well-planned central park, market, and beautiful houses. However, its streets remained narrow and twisting -- dirty, dusty, and filthy -- and the odor of rot came from the river. The outskirts of the city were particularly pitiful. There small, poor shacks nestled in the midst of large courtyards and rich gardens shaded by trees.

The Bulgarians began settling here when the city began to grow. Skillful craftsmen came from the Rhodope Mountains, and wealthy farmers came from the plain, and merchants also arrived. In 1845 the Bulgarians opened a school here and built churches, and in 1856 they started a cultural club. During the time of the liberation the city already had 13,000 inhabitants. As the Turkish population left the city the number of Bulgarians increased, and in 1910 Khaskovo had a population of 15,067. Particularly large numbers of settlers came here after 1912 from Thrace and Macedonia. In 1926 the population of Khaskovo was 26,256. Prior to 9 September 1944 the population remained almost stationary, numbering 27,394. In 1955 it was over 30,000. Even today many Turks, Gypsies, and people of other nationalities live in Khaskovo. They enjoy full citizenship rights under the people's regime.

The city owes its capitalist development mainly to its tobacco. Even now in the midst of the houses one can see huge tobacco warehouses in which the tobacco is processed. In the past this work gave jobs to thousands who were mercilessly exploited by the rich tobacco merchants, wholesalers, and owners of the warehouses. Nowhere else in Bulgaria was exploitation so merciless, cruel, and predatory. Working in the poisonous atmosphere of the warehouses, in moist and stinking air, the workers carried out their tobacco manipulation work. Their lungs were burned by the bitter tobacco dust, which caused them to fall ill with tuberculosis; their eyes hurt unbearably. Here thousands of the poorest people of the city and of the villages were destined to become slowly poisoned. Included were many small children. Their young lungs were burned day by day, and the tobacco dust finally sent them prematurely to their graves. The tobacco tycoons siphoned out the last living forces of children and women and of the hurriedly collected "tramps," as well as of the workers, who were not class conscious and organized. However, the misery and exploitation created also a resistance and a decision to fight. Heroic strikes took place in Khaskovo, and underground fighting was determinedly waged. Many victims fell. Many of the leaders of the heroic workers' class perished in the dark solitary cells of the Khaskovo prison and in the buildings of the public "security" organs. Here many people were tortured and killed and were shot on the Khaskovo streets, or thrown out of windows. Not only adults, but also youngsters, school pupils, and even infants. However, hundreds of new reserves appeared in their place ready, as their predecessors, to die for the liberation of their relatives and for their class. Today the walls of many buildings and many streets carry commemorative inscriptions to the victims of this cruel terrorism.

The bourgeois became wealthy from the blood of the workers. New warehouses were built, together with factories for silk and cotton yarns, forges, mills, and oil-extraction factories. When the Rhodope railroad line was built it facilitated the transportation of tobacco from the Rhodope Mountains, food from the plain, and the industrial production of the region.

Khaskovo changed, as well. The city lost its Oriental look. City sectors began to be differentiated. There was a rich center of the city which differed sharply from the poor outskirts. New offices were built to facilitate the complex mechanism of running the city.

After the victory of 9 September 1944 radical changes took place in Khaskovo. The workers became masters of the factories and tobacco warehouses. Production activities were reorganized; local industry was organized and developed. Construction commenced on a wide scale. The center of the city was renewed, and the outskirts of the city improved. Streets were paved, bridges and parks were built, and more areas were planted with trees. Modern housing projects for the workers and excellent schools were built, and were educational and economic institutes. The city now has many varieties of new schools: general-educational schools, teachers' training schools, professional schools, evening technical schools, school institutes, a school for nurses, and various schools for the minorities. The People's Theater is located in the center of the city facing the main street. It has been reconstructed inside and out. One can see from afar the big new post office on the bouleverd by the river.

A water supply, with wells as the source, is being built to supply Khaskovo's needs. The city has a radio service with loudspeakers. Many new shops, cooperatives, restaurants, and canteens have been opened. A new hotel -- the Republika -- was constructed. The number of children's homes has increased; clubs were opened; playgrounds and movie halls were built. Clinics and hospitals were established. There is a cemetery, an epidemiological center, and an antituberculosis dispensary. The city hospital is particularly striking. It is a five-story building covered with white marble and shines like crystal. Now a new plant for the baking of bread has replaced the work of dozens of bakeries and facilitates the rapid supplying of bread to the city.

Many booths have been built around the city marketplace. In them the TKZS regularly offers to the citizens various types of fresh agricultural produce -- vegetables, fruit, watermelons, grapes, milk, etc. A greenhouse has been built for the raising of early vegetables. A well-equipped livestock-breeding farm and a machine-tractor station are located near the city.

Many parks have been built in Khaskovo and its surroundings. One of them which is particularly beautiful is the city public garden, where the working people can gather on Sundays for relaxation and rest under the shade of the trees. A park has also recently been built in the center of the city at Liberty Square. Many other public gardens have been built in the various parks of the city. In the neighborhood of the city and north of it there are splendid locations for trips and for rest. One of the

favorite places of the Khaskovo people is the Kenana site, which is a natural forest with green meadows and is very popular on holidays. From Khaskovo hikers go on climbing expeditions to the Mechkovets (Aida) Peak, which is located nearby, or go along the valley of the Arda River and into the eastern Rhodope Mountains.

From Khaskovo a beautiful highway leads to the west, toward the Khaskovo mineral baths. There are daily bus trips to the baths. There are abundant warm springs in the foothills of the Golyamo Gradishte Peak in the Rhodope Mountains. These springs have great curative properties. Here, particularly in autumn, many people from the villages and the city come to use the mud-baths and the warm sulfur water to relieve rheumatism. The baths are in new buildings, modern, well-equipped, and with all comforts. A splendid park with cottages and rest homes has been built here for the working people. The waters of the baths also are used in the growing of early vegetables in big greenhouses. Tomatoes here ripen as early as January. The Khaskovo mineral baths are being constantly improved, and the settlement around the baths is expanding. These baths are becoming more and more important to all the people in the neighboring okoliyas.

In the heart of the cotton-growing region: Traveling along the railroad line from Dimitrovgrad to Khaskovo, the train stops about midway at a pretty small railroad station, not far from which is Uzundzhovo village. The village can also be reached by following a beautiful road from Khaskovo to Nova Nedèzhda on the Maritsa River. This road turns off the main road at the point where the Kharmanli Highway starts.

Uzundzhovo is rarely visited except by those who want to enter the heart of the cotton-growing region. In the past, however, and particularly during the time of the Uzundzhovo Fair, all roads which led to Uzundzhovo were filled with men and carts. But the past glory of Uzundzhovo is returning again today, not because of its fairs, but because of its successes in agriculture, the good organization of its TKZS, and its cotton growing. According to legend, Uzundzhovo was founded by Sinan Pasha, who, admiring this beautiful land, sent here from Konya 40 Turkish families. The Bulgarian population began settling in this village later, by the end of the eighteenth century, and worked as farm hands or servants of the Turkish farmers. In order to immortalize his deeds, the pasha built a splendid mosque, a caravansary, a bath, and a minaret. He also started the big annual fair which later became famous. Gradually the fair acquired great fame. It began to be visited by people from all corners of the huge Ottoman Empire and also from other countries. In the first half of the nineteenth century it was the best fair in the Balkans and was internationally famous. This fame was brought about by many conditions: the fertile plain, the central location of the settlement, and in general the then-existing feudal economy. The fair took place in September and continued for 50 days. Here came thousands of people of varied backgrounds — Bulgarians, Turks, Greeks, Jews, Russians, Romanians, Persians, and Europeans from different countries. Goods arrived from Constantinople and Vienna, from Bucharest and Brugge, from Marseilles and Genoa, from Trieste and Venice, from Alexandria and Naples. M. Blanki described in 1848 the long caravans of carts which arrived

at the fair harnessed to water buffaloes, horses, and camels. The visitors usually camped in the open. Only the commercial firms had their established places where they marketed their products. This was located east of the mosque and stretched up to the river. Here one could sell wheat and rice from Thrace, wool from the Karnobat region, rough woolen material and cloth woven in Balkan cities, cotton and silk fabrics, Bulgarian and foreign rugs, foreign groceries, iron goods, ropes, and various other objects. However, after the Baron Hirsh railroad was built along the valley of the Maritsa the patterns of commerce changed, and the fair began to decline. Nevertheless, it continued almost until the liberation of Bulgaria, and the last fair was held in 1876. The glory of Uzundzhovo of that time was lost forever. Only for a limited time did the memories of the city remain alive, reflected in the songs which were sung of this city. After the liberation the Turks left the village, and its population decreased. At Uzundzhovo's expense Khaskovo began to grow rapidly. Today Uzundzhovo is still one of the large villages in the Khaskovo okoliya and numbers over 2,400 in population.

The large old mosque which has been turned into a church still stands in the plain near the village and is a mute witness of the past and present history of the village. The rich land is no longer scratched by wooden plows. The vast lands are now being plowed by tractors, combines collect the rich wheat harvest, and the most modern agricultural machinery has been brought here for the cultivation of cotton. Pumps, deep wells, and small water reservoirs help irrigate vast areas of land. The cooperative

farm has a membership of 70% of the local population. The Uzundzhovo TKZS is one of the best organized in the country. Here many of the young agricultural students come to learn through practice. The past glory of the former feudal village is coming back to it because of its cotton work under the period of reconstruction of socialism.

One of the largest small dams in Bulgaria: Knizhovnik village is located about 15 km to the southeast of Khaskovo. It can also be reached by train on the railroad line from Khaskovo to Kurdzhali. The topography around the village is varied, and the soil is fertile. The heights are covered mostly with forest and pastureland, and the valleys of the Knizhovnishka and Karamandere Rivers, which include the richest land in the vicinity, are covered with fields and gardens. The fertility of this region would have been much greater had there been an adequate amount of water. In winter and spring water is plentiful, but in summer when the soil is thirsty for moisture water is scarce and is quite insufficient to irrigate even the vegetable gardens. Occasionally, in the case of abundant precipitation or rapid melting of the snow, the Karamandere River fills with a huge mass of water which rapidly collects from the wide semimountain Rhodope region, which includes Mandra, Golemantsi, and Kozlets villages. Then the river becomes dangerous and threatening. It has caused serious losses to the population, not only in the area of Knizhovnik village, but even further down at Malevo village, where it flows into the Kharmanliyska River. The flooding of this capricious river has sad memories which have already turned into legends. More than once this water has carried away the golden wheat sheaves, destroyed the blossoming cotton, covered with silt the fields of watermelons and tobacco and sunflower, and destroyed the vegetable gardens. Then the impoverished people's laments -- the despair and the curses for the bourgeois regime -- could be heard all over the plain.

Now, under socialism, the memories remain; but they will bespeak the fight of the working people against this stubborn river, of the victory of the people over the river, of the abundancy of agricultural production, and of the new life which must come with the construction of the Knizhovnik Dam.

The entire dam is of earth. This dam was scheduled to be completed in the summer of 1955. However, in January of that year a stormy flood of the river filled the basin of the dam with water, which pierced the lowest part of the unfinished dam. The uncontrolled river in a short while not only destroyed the wall of the dam which had not yet been completed, but also entirely destroyed the solid right bank of the river. More effort and labor were again devoted to this project. Thousands of cubic meters of earth were dug and transported. Hundreds of people with carts and two Soviet scrapers dug and transported night and day hundreds of cubic meters of earth.

Now the wall is entirely completed. It is 220 m long. It is 60 m wide at the foundation, and 5 m wide at the top. It is 11 m high. The safety canal has already been completed. The danger of destruction of the wall in the case of a new flood has been removed. The safety canal is 35 m wide, as wide as a normal river bed. It is bordered with concrete and stone blocks for a stretch 20 m long. A safety wall, 80 m long and 2.75 m high, has also been erected. The safety canal has been dug into solid earth, and it will take care of the excess water which may accumulate behind the dam.

The lake created by the dam is already being filled with water and is gradually becoming bigger and bigger. Meadows, fields, and trees are being covered with water. When the full amount of water enters the lake, its area will cover 660 decares, and it will contain 2,200,000 m^3 of water. This water will help irrigate an area of 7,500 decares. This area will include all the land which can be irrigated in the Knizhovnik village area, the area which is not yet irrigated in Malevo village (outside of the valley of the Kharmanliyska River), and part of the lands of Zhulti Bryag village. The irrigation will be done by the gravitational method without the use of pumps. The water will be released through the main releasing canal which will be equipped with solid gates to control the water. This canal is also already completed. The main canal is completed, and the irrigational network will be finished in 1956. The lands destined for irrigation will be irrigated as of the summer of 1956. From that date the dam will begin regular operations.

The Knizhovnik cooperative farmers will derive another economic advantage from the dam. The lake formed by the dam has already been stocked with 10,000 1-year-old carps, and 120,000 other small fishes. The income of the cooperative farmers from the fish will amount annually to many thousands of leva. Farms for waterfowl will be built near the shores of the lake. The lake will be stocked with 2,000 ducks.

The dam will be of great importance to the nearby villages and to Khaskovo as a place for rest and entertainment and as an excellent site for trips and relaxation during the holidays. Its

southeastern shore rises high above the mirror-like surface of the lake, beautiful and charming. It is entirely covered by vineyards with huge walnut shade trees, cherry trees, and other orchard trees. Up around the Sveti Iliya chapel the hills are covered with dark green forests or clover and meadow grass. These shores will be made even more solid in the future. They will be covered with coniferous trees, acacias, and orchard trees. Directly on the shore will be built an attractive restaurant in the beautiful park. It will be a place for relaxation, pleasure, and rest. Summer resorts and camps will be built here. Here children, students, and hard-working cooperative farmers will spend their holidays.

The Knizhovnik Dam is one of the largest projects in Bulgaria, built almost entirely by the labor and funds of the Farm Workers' Cooperative in Knizhovnik village.

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