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“MINKOVA MAHALA” FARM (1880–1944)

(Summary)

“Minkova Mahala” farm was located in the northwestern Bulgaria near Boychinovtsi. The landed estate was formed during the Ottoman domination and was owned by a prominent Turk who obtained it for services to the Ottoman Empire. After the Russo-Turkish War, in 1880, the estate became property of Bulgarians. With its area of more than 5 hectares the landed estate was considered a large farm at least for Bulgarian standards. In the early twentieth century Haritovi brothers, who were engineers graduated from Polytechnic University in Munich, became owners and managers of the farm. Inspired by the land management in Germany, they went to enormous efforts to create a modern farm that in the period between the two world wars developed production of grain and forage crops, vines, fruits, vegetables, flowers; created good standards of animal husbandry. Dairy production was organized in the farm, too. Haritovi brothers built a modern mill, mini hydro, Decauville railway, irrigation and drainage facilities. The land on the farm was tilled with machines; the owners used hired labour and sold their products on domestic and foreign market. The achievements of “Minkova Mahala” made it subject of interest for agronomists and a wide range of people engaged in agriculture. Business operations of the farm, however, suffered from systematic underfunding and in March 1944 its asset was transferred to the Ministry of Agriculture. Despite the difficulties Haritovi brothers were able to show that in Bulgaria it was possible to create a large capitalist farm that cultivated farming of European type.