

Story 1127 (1966 Tape 6) Narrator: Bozkurt Güvenç, retired military officer, now Secretary of Hacettepe University

Location: Ankara

Date: Summer 1966

When Tractors Came to Bursa

About ten years ago--I think it was in 1954 or 1955--there held in a village near Bursa a demonstration of how a tractor works. This was held on a government farm. All of the ağas¹ and farm workers in all of the surrounding villages were invited to attend this demonstration. Many of these rural people were seeing a European tractor for the first time.²

tractor was exhibited doing different kinds of work. One the demonstrations showed how it could pull seven or eight

¹ An ağa (English, agha) is a rural landowner, sometimes wealthy, often powerful. The word does not indicate an official title but describes an economic status. They are often the principal employers of farm workers, and they are often viewed by their employees as harsh, driving, and abusive. The term ağa is also used in a complimentary way, as an honorific, for a distinguished or just older person than the one using the term. Thus an older brother is called ağa bey by his younger siblings. Ağa bey may used as a deferential term to one older or more prestigious than the speaker. A taxi driver may refer to his passenger as ağa bey; a salesman speaking to a male customer may call him ağa bey.

² Although this may have been the first time that these particular villagers saw a tractor in operation, this was by no means the first such demonstration in Turkey. Atatürk personally gave such demonstrations before he died (1938).

Story 1127

(plows) at the same time, each plow digging a furrow at least six centimeters deep.

The villagers were very excited by what they saw, but they did not wish to make their excitement too apparent. I asked one of them, "What do you think about this tractor?"

"Who made it?" he asked.

"People in Europe," I said.

"You mean by infidels?"

"You might say so

"Well, whether or not they were infidels, those who made this should go to heaven. Whether or not they are Moslem, I believe that Allah will make an exception for them!"