

ITEM No. 10363/56

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XI-1986 /B/

POLAND

Ethnic Minorities /1106/
Description of the Country /3802/

GREEK COMMUNITY IN ZGORZELEC

SOURCE ATHENS: Greek repatriate from a Polish old-age home, formerly a porter.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Until October 1956.

EVALUATION COMMENT: This is one of numerous reports on the Greek community in ZGORZELEC. It appears that many Greeks have changed their attitude toward Communism and wish to return to their home country. The Greek political leader in Poland was known to us as /fnu/ ZACHARIAS /and not ZACHARIADES./ /fnu/ FILAKTOS was never reported before. The fact of "window-dressing" for the benefit of foreign visitors was previously reported on such occasions as the WARSAW Youth Festival and the POZNAN International Fair. To what extent the postal censorship still exists in Poland, is difficult to ascertain. At any rate, letters for abroad now do not have to be presented first at the post-office unsealed but can be posted direct from a post-box.

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The little town of ZGORZELEC is actually the eastern part of the East German town of GORLITZ, the dividing line being the Odra river. It consists mostly of barracks and some factories. The Polish authorities resettled there Poles driven from their homes when the Russians annexed Polish territory. They also settled here nearly 3,000 abducted Greeks and Greek guerrillas. They housed them in converted barracks and added more.

When the Russian Army entered the town, they took with them upon their departure all the machinery from the most important factories. The Polish authorities changed these empty factories into workshops for carpenters, etc. and stores.

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Greeks Classified According to Work Capabilities

The Polish authorities classified the Greek adults according to their work capabilities as follows:

- a. Persons capable of working in any of the factories.
- b. Invalids of the guerrilla army capable of performing light work, especially in factories manufacturing handbags, gloves, and other leather articles, who were to be paid according to the norm.
- c. Persons completely incapacitated, or capable only of performing very light tasks, such as working in vegetable gardens, watering vegetables, etc., who were to be fed from a common mess, receive food and clothing without charge, and a monthly sum of 20 zloty to cover minor expenses.
- d. The aged, 65 years of age and over, who were to be housed in two old age homes /for details see XI-1986-A./

"Akcja Szpitalna" Special Service

Source estimates that approximately 1,000 Greeks are incapable of working and that approximately 450 to 500 were inmates of the old age homes. For these people, the Polish authorities maintained a special service, presently known as "Akcja Szpitalna."

Wages

From August 1950 when source was settled in ZGORZELEC until 1955, he was engaged as a porter in the provisions and material storehouse. He was paid 350 zloty monthly, but received only 100 zloty after the various deductions, such as payment for the common mess, etc.

Source said that two months ago it was announced that a decision had been made to fix the lowest salaries at 500 zloty. This decision had not been fulfilled up to the time of source's departure on October 1 1956.

Workshop for Greek Invalids

There is a workshop in the town of ZGORZELEC which is known under the letter "D", where handbags of leather and straw are made as well as gloves, small children's toys, etc.

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Only Greeks invalided during the guerrilla warfare are employed there. The workshop employs approximately 150 persons at a salary of 700 zloty.

While the invalids had all been Communists formerly, according to source, only 30 per cent assert that they are still Communists. All the others say that they have repented, and many registered in 1954 with the Red Cross and asked to be repatriated to Greece. They have been in disfavor with the Party since and suffer various hardships. "It is a great thing -- real heroism," source said, "for one to declare that he has stopped being a Communist." However, half of the Communists have left the Party.

Destalinization

According to source, important changes took place after destalinization. It was time for the ZACHARIADES opponents to undertake the posts. Now the president of the Communist committee is /fnu/ FILAKTOS, who represents himself as a doctor. Those who knew him insisted that he was only a medical orderly.

Also after destalinization the Greeks were not called to any meetings at which propaganda speeches were made. The Greek Communists met privately, but it was no secret that they did not get on well and have been disappointed. They have also been influenced by the attitude and behavior of the Poles, who consider them enemies of the regime. According to source, all the Greeks except for those who have committed crimes want to return to Greece, because their life in Poland is terrible.

Greeks Sent to Make Barren Land Inhabitable

In 1952-53, according to source, two thousand Greeks were sent to the area along the Russian-Polish frontier, which had been uninhabited for many years. The Greeks were sent there to establish farms and raise cattle. Some of the Greeks were put to work cutting trees and opening pits in the oil fields. After five to six months most of them left, as it was impossible to work, and scattered throughout Poland. Only 500 Greeks remained and are still working there. Source could not name the location or give any further details.

Frontier Well Guarded

According to source, the frontier between Poland and East Germany is strictly watched. On the Polish side of the Odra river there are two series of wired net over two meters high. Between the two series there is a sandy section, which betrays the footprints of those who dare to pass. Many Polish

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soldiers with skilled watchdogs are on guard there. The East German side is guarded by Russians. Sometime ago, source said, a Russian came to ZGORZELEC and assured the inhabitants that even the Russian Polish frontiers are guarded in the same strict way.

Outside of ZGORZELEC there are Russian forces, including tanks, but the Russians do not come into contact with the Poles. People are not permitted to approach the barracks. Whenever the Russian soldiers go into ZGORZELEC, they travel in twos or threes, and scarcely approach the Poles.

There are many formalities to go through in order to obtain permission to move from Poland to East Germany. In the very rare cases where permission is given, it takes two or three months for all the documents to be issued.

Provisions Lacking

Provisions in ZGORZELEC are lacking, source said. Meat is sold only twice a week and in small quantity. However, there is a black-market in meat, and the villagers from the kolkhozes also come to the market to sell their produce. According to source, the Poles sacrifice everything, even their food, in order to dress a little better. For this reason, they do not have enough to eat.

The people stand in long queues outside the State shops asking from the stern employee a little meat /which is sold only twice a week/ and bread. Only in the stores selling clothing, shoes, furniture, etc. is there no queue, and the employees wait in vain for customers. The people of Poland do not have money to buy anything except food.

Source said there are no woolen clothes available in ZGORZELEC. The clothes are made of synthetic fibers made from wood. Wool material is sold at 20 zloty per meter, and sometimes the price is even higher.

Foreigners Hoodwinked

When foreigners are about to pass through ZGORZELEC a rapid transformation takes place. The Polish authorities put into the State shops meat, chickens, fruit, beverages, etc. in order to make a good impression on them. As soon as the foreigners pass on, all this produce is removed in turn to all the towns along the foreigners' itinerary by a most competent staff. Three such shipments are prepared. After the visitors pass the first town, the shipment is sent to the fourth town on their route; the shipment in the second town goes onto the

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fifth, etc. Thus they influence the foreigners into believing that Poland is a land of plenty.

In the spring 70 cyclists, participants in a bicycle race through many countries, passed through ZGORZELEC on their way to East Germany. ZGORZELEC was stocked with provisions on the day on which they were to pass, and the food, etc. was removed as soon as they departed.

Something similar takes place in GDYNIA. There are some well built and furnished houses full of goods which satisfy the appetite and the sense -- things which no Poles can see anywhere. When foreign officials or seamen visit the port of GDYNIA, they are promptly led to these houses. Source says "Everything is a mask in Poland. The Communists work slyly, and it is especially difficult for foreigners to learn the truth."

Miscellaneous Information

According to source, there is postal censorship in ZGORZELEC. There are no taxis, but only cars belonging to the various enterprises.

The price of the dollar has been fixed at four zloty. On the black-market there are persons who offer 100 zloty for one dollar. Source even heard that occasionally as much as 150 zloty were offered for one dollar.

Two years ago in Poland there was a great need for doctors. Recently many have graduated from the University, but the people have no faith in them, source heard the Poles say. The Poles preferred to go to three Greek doctors for treatment, but now all three have been repatriated. In the towns near ZGORZELEC the inhabitants preferred the German doctors who had remained in Poland.

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