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BULGARIA

DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY /3800/
Villages /3803/

"VILLAGE OF THE KULAKS."

SOURCE TRIESTE: A 17-year-old Bulgarian refugee from GORNO ZEROVENE in MIHAJLOVGRAD.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: June 1955.

EVALUATION COMMENT: This report illustrates well the political struggles which take place in Bulgarian villages in general. The work of the CP basic organization there is also dealt with in this report.

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The village of GORNO ZEROVENE in MIHAJLOVGRAD Province is located nine kilometers southwest of the city of MIHAJLOVGRAD in the valley of the Varenish hills /varenishko bardo./ The population of 2,000 is living in 500 houses; the principal occupations are farming, working the vineyards and cattle breeding. The village has 80,000 "dekari" of land under cultivation, most of it set aside for vineyards.

During 1942 the new planning project went into effect in the village; new classrooms were added to the secondary school, a State hospital was built along with a new town hall and other public buildings.

The Communists call GORNO ZEROVENE the "village of kulaks" because the peasants refuse to set up a kolkhoz although this village is more suited for a successful kolkhoz what with the fertility of the land and the number of peasants to work it. On many occasions the Communist Party of GORNO ZEROVENE has tried to set up a kolkhoz, but the initiatives were not even supported by the members of the Party, who are only 25 strong. Many times the provincial committee of the Communist Party of MIHAJLOVGRAD has sent some of its crack members to try to convince the peasants of this village of the advantages of tilling the land collectively, but the peasants have always resisted this pressure.

The class struggle in GORNO ZEROVENE is bitterly carried on by the few local Communists, reinforced by about ten Communists from other localities, on the one hand, and

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the free peasants, on the other. In this fight the peasants are united. Besides this comparatively new ideological battle an old one is still being fought between the villages of GORNO ZEROVENE and ZHIVOVTSI over contested lands and the seat of the town hall /as it was called in the past/ or rural people's council /at present./ In the past the town hall was alternately located in two villages. At present it is located in GORNO ZEROVENE, but most of the people's councillors are Communists from ZHIVOVTSI who do not live in GORNO ZEROVENE and never even spend the night there. The dividing line between the two villages is marked off by barbed wire.

The president of the People's Council of GORNO ZEROVENE is the Communist Nicola Ivanov VALKOV, a native of DOLNA VARENITZA, who was not elected either by the peasants of this village or those of ZHIVOVTSI. He was appointed by the city people's council of MIHAJLOVGRAD to act as referee in the "war" between the two villages. The men who actually run the village, however, are the Communists Ivan Petrov ELENKOV and Tzeko ANTOV, who from September 9 1944 onwards mistreated the peasants and carried on blackmail and plunder. Tzeko ANTOV, for example, extorted large sums of money from the peasants by threatening them with arrest and delivery to the "people's tribunals." In 1953, he extorted money from the peasants Georgi STEFANOV and Slavejko GEORGIEV, threatening them that he would report them to the Darzhavna Sigurnost for alleged contacts with persons who entered Bulgaria clandestinely. In the spring of 1954 ANTOV tried to rape Kiro ZENKIN's wife while the poor woman was working in her vineyard. Her husband arrived just in time and attacked ANTOV with a knife. ZENKIN spent three years in prison for this act.

The Communist Party in the village is run by an administrative secretary and a technical one. The former is the illiterate Communist Jordan PENCHEV, who is a favorite of the Party provincial committee for his merits in the "class struggle;" the latter is Nikola ZENFIROV, an intelligent person who has often openly expressed his indignation over the misdeeds of his political comrades. ZENFIROV had been a political prisoner in the past, having been sentenced for trying to leave the country illegally in order to go to Spain to fight with the Spanish republicans during the Civil War. Although he is a Communist he is respected by his fellow villagers because of his modesty and goodness of character.

With very few exceptions the youths of the village are members of the DSNM /Dimitrov's Youth Union./ Those who are not enrolled in this youth organization are branded "enemies of the Socialist community" and are persecuted by the militia of the village. These "enemies" cannot go to the

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cinema, parties, taverns, cafés and sweet shops. Nor can they walk through the village at night or leave the village without permission.

With regard to his village in particular, source does not believe there has been any change whatever in the Communist Regime during the past few years. He is of the opinion that the Communists have strengthened the Regime and will continue to do so.

End.