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Political and economic pressure

The Kolkhoz in GULOVO, District YAMBOLSOURCE ISTANBUL: A 46-year-old Bulgarian Escapee from GULOVO.DATE OF OBSERVATION: 1946 to 29 October 1951.

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The propaganda campaign for the formation of a kolkhoz in the village of GULOVO, consisting of 430 houses, started as early as 1946. At daily propaganda speeches the peasants were promised a five-day week, free tuition for their children, medical care, modern farm equipment and housing. Some 180 peasants, mainly small landowners, decided for the kolkhoz, and signed a "contract" with the government authorities according to which they would work for three years, and in case of their being unsatisfied after three years, they could resign from the kolkhoz and take all their equipment with them.

The 180 willing adherents of the kolkhoz soon realized the great error they had made and at the end of their contract decided to leave the kolkhoz. They had a secret meeting after which they decided to take back their agricultural tools. The kolkhoz administration called militia from YAMBOL, and the dissenters were all arrested. After a few hours, the militiamen drove back to YAMBOL with 20 persons who were tried. As a result of the trial, NIKOLOV Dimitir and KASHLENSKI Dimo were sentenced to one year of prison each. After these two were released all the inmates of the kolkhoz filled an application in which they brought up the clause in their first contract and asked permission to withdraw from the collective farm. The government administration however, forced them to sign another contract for five years and had TOYACHIEV Ivan Petrov, KASHLENSKI Dimov Dinju and CHAMOV Ivan Jordanov, the recognized heads of the opposition, arrested and sent to the BELENE concentration camp in September 1949.

In September 1948, DINEV Peter was the village president. This 38-year-old married farmer turned Communist after 1944, and to prove his loyalty to the Party, he started to terrorize his

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neighbors. During one of his propaganda speeches in favor of the continuation of the kolkhoz, DINEV announced that at least 50 persons in the village would have to be "liquidated" to bring peace to the village. At this YORGOV retorted that they had joined the kolkhoz on their free will with the promise that after three years they could peacefully withdraw if they wanted to, and nobody could stop them from acting according to their wish. DINEV called in the two village militiamen, RAYCHEV Kosta and SOTIROV Mitu Dimitrov, and YORGOV was beaten in front of the assembled villagers. Afterwards many other villagers underwent the same treatment, and were sent to YAMBOL to serve prison terms ranging from one to three years. STOYANOV Gospodin Kolev, the richest man of the village, was beaten to unconsciousness, but refused to join the collective farm. MINCHEV Iliya Kosevm YORDANOV Stoil and his brother YORDANOV Ivan, were locked up in solitary confinement for more than 10 days at the YAMBOL jail, but had to be released after their stubborn refusal to sign the kolkhoz contract. The villagers of GULOVO decided to continue their fight against the kolkhoz and the kolkhoz administrators, so the reign of terror in the village had more and more victims every day. In early 1950, STAYKOV Dimitir, KOLCHEV Ivan Yordanov and GARPACHEV Peter were arrested for not delivering the additional "nared" they had to pay as a fine for not joining the kolkhoz. Some of the peasants, seeing that fighting against the Government was useless, decided to sign the contract, and STOYANOV, together with GARBACHEV Pavel, joined the kolkhoz. They received five decares of land and five sheep each. By June 1950, only 17 families continued their fight against the slavery of the kolkhoz; all the others were forced to join in one way or the other. In October 1950, two officials from YAMBOL, GERGEV Mitju and DANEV Prodan, arrived at GULOVO and together with the village militiaman RAYCHEV they visited house after house and handed out the new delivery norms which showed an increase of roughly 30 per cent. By this time the deliveries asked for were so exaggerated that not a single person in or out of the kolkhoz could hand in his "nared." As a result of this all the hogs in the village were confiscated without paying the peasants a Leva. The Communist terror continued until 29 October 1951, but then, due to the general mobilization, many of the kolkhoz inmates were recruited to serve in the armed forces. Some 106 men left the village and the military authorities confiscated 130 horses, 65 mules and 50 carts from the kolkhoz. With this the activity of the GULOVO kolkhoz practically ceased, and production dropped to a very low level.

EVAL. COMMENT: Such events are of general occurrence all over Bulgaria. The cited case and the persons are UNCONFIRMED!