

EH  
April 28  
XI/1814(A)

HUNGARY

DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY (3800)  
Villages (3803)

FOREIGN RELATIONS (1500)  
Emigrants (1501)

GREEK COMMUNIST COMMUNITY.

SOURCE ATHENS: A 40-year-old Greek repatriate.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Up to mid-March 1956.

EVALUATION COMMENT: This is the first detailed report on the life in the village BELOYANNIS which forms a part of IVANCSA, a Transdanubian Hungarian village.

The majority of the Greek emigrants living in Hungary were concentrated in this village. It appears from the report that the living conditions of the Greek Communists are not better than those prevailing in an average Hungarian village.

All names given are UNCONFIRMED here.

+ + +

About midway along the BUDAPEST-SZTALINVAROS railway line, on a slight elevation which dominates the surrounding flat country, lies BELOYANNIS, a village inhabited by Greek Communist exguerrillas and the people they abducted when they were driven out of Greece by the government forces. It was built by the Greeks in 1950 and 1951 and named for the Red "hero and martyr" who was tried and shot in ATHENS several years ago as a spy and traitor.

BELOYANNIS, a cooperatively structured community comprising 450 Greek families (some 1,500 inhabitants) and a few Hungarians, will be busy renaming its loose-gravel main street which bore the name of ZACHARIADES, Greek Communist leader recently purged. Leading into BELOYANNIS from the neighboring village of IVANCSA, Zachariades Street terminates at a central square formed by its intersection with Rakosi Street, the only other road in the village boasting a gravel surface.

(over)

Other streets are dirty, muddy in winter, dusty in summer.

Travelers and goods coming from BUDAPEST, 50 km to the north, usually arrive by train at the little station halfway between BELOYANNIS and IVANCSA. BELOYANNIS is accessible to motor traffic via a secondary road turning off from Danubieside main highway about 20 km away; this mode of transport is little used as the trains are frequent and more convenient.

Just about where Zachariades Street enters the village there is a 15-meter high fire-watcher's tower overlooking the fields of the Szinatelep State Farm in the valley below and commanding the entire area for miles around, including IVANCSA. Manned only at harvesting time, it serves for spotting possible blazes among the crops.

The community has a kolkhoz of its own and a textile and tailoring cooperative. The majority of cooperative workers are women, jobs going preferably to those who enjoy the village Party leaders' favor. The workshops, which include shoe-making, tailoring, glove-making, and weaving departments, are housed in three of the village's standard single-storey six-room buildings. According to a recently repatriated Greek who lived there up to mid-March 1956, a large new concrete single storey-building covering an area approximately 75 by 15 meters is currently under construction, which, when finished will house the various departments of the cooperative. Due to frequently recurring shortages of building materials, work progresses in fits and starts, and the building will not be completed before 1957. Source worked on this construction for six months before his departure, earning between 650 and 900 forint a month, depending on whether the supply of materials permitted full norms and whether his specific job was heavy (toting concrete) or light. Often there was no money for wages and the workers, both Greeks and Hungarians, would complain bitterly, on one occasion even addressing a written appeal to the Prime Minister.

"Privileged" Had Comfortable Homes.

With the exception of the Communist Party headquarters, all the buildings in BELOYANNIS are single storey brick houses, mostly oblong structures consisting of six single-room homes in a row, each with its separate entrance, two small cubby holes for storage, and a partitioned off kitchen. There was no built-in sanitary or washing facilities; water had to be brought from a communal faucet, and sanitation was served by not too clean communal latrines. The rent was 40 forint a month; for 70 forint a family could rent a two-room house built in pairs as a single building.

(over)

Source lived in one of the single room homes with his wife and six children. Like the other houses, it faced on the street and had a backyard where he cultivated a little produce; this, however, was an arduous undertaking because there was no rubber hose available and he had to carry water in buckets from an appreciable distance away.

Inside, source's home contained two rickety beds, two chairs, a plain wooden table and a cupboard. That was the furniture that came with the house, and source was too poor to buy anything extra. Cooking was done on a coal and wood stove. "It was terribly damp in winter," source said, "and in the summer, when you stamped on the plank floor a cloud of dust would arise." The floor was built about two cm above the ground, he said.

The homes of the "privileged" -- Party and commune officeholders and those of the citizens whose relations with the Reds earned them better incomes -- were much more comfortably furnished, had sanitary facilities and special sanitary garbage bins, dish racks in the kitchen, and even garden hoses to make cultivation of their private plots easier.

#### No Charge For Orphans.

BELOYANNIS received three-phase 220-volt electric current through a small relay installation nearby. Each home had its own meter, often erratic in operation. Thus, whereas source's monthly electricity bill was between 15 and 25 forint for a single 25-watt bulb and a radio, some householders who used only a bulb of the same power were charged as much as 30 forint. To their protests the Commune was completely indifferent.

Householders who consumed more than five kilowatts a month paid one and a half times the regular charge for the extra current.

The cobbled main square at the intersection of Zachariades and Rakosi streets was the site of the two-storey stone Party building, the L-shaped schoolhouse, the Commune building, and the "kultura" (recreation center and refectory.)

Party headquarters had its own "kultura" restaurant cum club room for members, which was also used for meetings. It had a library containing a selection of Communist literature; the books could only be bought, not borrowed. Nobody did.

A number of working parents sent their children to the

(over)



"kultura" refectory for meals. Orphans of Communist guerrillas killed in the war against the Greek Government ate free; children of large families paid between 40 and 90 forint a month for breakfast, lunch and dinner; children of small families paid 280. Breakfast was tea and bread, lunch was potatoes or paste cooked into a soup like substance, and so was dinner. Three times a week there was a thin slice of meat floating in the soup. On Saturdays sometimes there was a dessert. "They gave the kids sweets when there wasn't enough food, to make them forget they were hungry," source said.

#### General Store.

Once a week or once a fortnight, a movie was shown in the "kultura." Tickets were two forint for adults, one for children. Though the films were generally Soviet propaganda documentaries, sometimes there was an Italian or French movie. Since there was no other form of entertainment in BELOYANNIS, most of the young people went to these shows. Paying six or seven forint, they stay on for the dance which usually follows the movie. Sometimes there is a Greek band and they dance Greek dances, but more often the band is Hungarian, and the dances conventional -- foxtrots, waltzes and so on. The Communists present at these functions are quick to pounce on any young person showing too much exuberance.

Behind the Party building, on a second smaller square is the general store. Run by the State, it sells everything from motorcycles to groceries. It is the only shop in the village, with attractive display windows; according to source, it is "richer looking and better stocked" than similar stores in other villages; this he attributes to reasons of propaganda and prestige building among the alien inhabitants.

Residents of BELOYANNIS have nowhere to go in their leisure time except the beer parlor on Zachariades Street. As a concession to the Greek taste for cafés, this establishment has chairs and tables rather than the bar and stools customary in Hungary. Clients have a choice between beer, wine made from corn ("very sharp and spirituous") and "palinka," the local plum brandy. Source said wine made from grapes can only be bought in bottles and is very expensive.

The L-shaped schoolhouse on the main square comprised five classrooms and a couple of offices for the principal and the teachers. Its curriculum was mostly in Hungarian, contained no physical culture. The few Greek teachers were Party appointees, who gave out propaganda rather than learning. Because of the limited space, the eight grades of the school

(over)

(children between eight and 16) attended in two shifts: first to fourth in the afternoon and fifth to eighth in the morning. Schoolchildren bought their own books -- an outlay of 30 forint a year -- and their own stationery. Because of the chronic fuel shortage which plagued the village, the school would close for at least a month every winter.

### Soccer only Sport.

BELOYANNIS has a rough racer field where the village team or a mixed team of Greeks from BELOYANNIS and from the industrial town of SZTALINVAROS would play visiting teams from nearby villages and factories. This was the only sport available.

After finishing their village school in BELOYANNIS, only the "privileged" children could continue. To enter the university, they had to take another two years at a gymnasium. Less politically suitable pupils could if they wished, go to a trade school. "Which means they worked for nothing for two years so they could become ordinary workers earning 800 forint a month," source commented.

There was a day nursery for the children of working parents, a two or three room brick building with a play yard enclosed by a wire fence. Cots were provided, and the charges got three meals a day. Though they were given milk regularly, the diet, according to source, was inadequate. As a result of this and improper heating, many of the kids caught cold, some developed TB and all were sickly in one way or another. The establishment was run by a Hungarian woman with two Greek girls helping, and usually there were about 25 children there.

To meet the residents' medical needs, there is a consultation room staffed by a doctor (a young medical school graduate who sleeps on the premises) and a nurse, a Greek-speaking Hungarian woman. There is a small dispensary and a couch for the patient to be examined on. Cases needing hospitalization are sent elsewhere.

Other public buildings include the Commune offices (on the main square,) the post office, the bakery, the fuel warehouse, and a 15 meter high concrete water tower at the end of Rakosi Street.

About 110 persons, mostly women, were employed in the cooperative which manufactured workers' two-piece suits of denim. Eight or nine shoemakers worked making and repairing shoes. And the cooperative included a barber who did business in a partitioned off room in one of the cooperative buildings.

(over)

Prices High for Wage-Earners.

A separate cooperative was a weaving and glovemaking establishment. Here, working at looms of various types, women produced rough floor mats, towelling and denim, and wove gloves by hand.

The average wage was 20 forint, but some workers who managed to exceed the norm made as much as 30 forint a day.

Some 70 or 80 Greeks belonged to the village kolkhoz "Irimi" (Greek for peace,) which produced corn, wheat, rye, heliotropes, beets and a few dairy products. Kolkhoz workers' top income was 800 forint a month. They were worse off than those who had jobs as industrial workers.

A number of BELOYANNIS Greeks worked in factories in BUDAPEST, but mostly in Budafok, an outlying suburb of the capital where there is a corn wine distillery, a lumber mill, a chinaware factory, a paper mill (where source worked for a while,) and a sandpaper factory. It was fairly convenient for the Greek to commute by train to Budafok, paying 75 forint for a monthly season ticket. Commuting into BUDAPEST took longer, cost 90 forint a month.

Others worked in State factories in SZTALINVAROS, a new industrial town about 40 km south from IVANCSA, coming to visit their families in BELOYANNIS only over the weekend. Some lived in SZTALINVAROS with their families.

Prices in BELOYANNIS are the same as in other villages, i.e. uncomfortably high for the average wage-earner.

Fuel for cooking and heating is, of course, one of the big problems in BELOYANNIS as it is all over the country. For 60 forint a householder could buy 100 kg of coal and 20 kg of wood (there was a big stock of wood in the warehouse, but it was several years' supply for the entire district; buyers were allowed only 20 per cent wood when they purchased fuel.) There was a lower grade of coal, too, which source described as 50 per cent rocks and rock dust, costing between 17 and 27 forint per 100 kg. Householdors were obliged to take both kinds of coal.

Red Hooligans Beat Up Teenager.

Fuel was sold as per Commune directive whenever it was available; it was never sufficient to meet the heating requirements imposed by the severe Hungarian winter. Violent quarrels between Commune officials and householdors waiting at the

(over)



warehouse for their fuel ration were not uncommon, source said.

When a repatriated Greek seaman from BELOYANNIS recently (December 1955 or January 1956) broadcast from a Greek radio station describing the suffering of the Greek exiles in Hungary and laying particular stress on the lack of fuel, which he blamed on the Hungarian and Greek Communist authorities, the BELOYANNIS commune hastily distributed an emergency ration of the lower grade coal, 500 kilos per family. Source said people welcomed the extra 250 kilos (the other 250 were rock,) but the bonanza did not last long. When it was used up, there was no more forthcoming for a long time. It had been merely a counter-propaganda measure: a lump issue of the quantity which would otherwise have been distributed over a more extended period.

On May 21 1954, a bunch of village Reds beat up 18-year-old John BIZOS, who had been abducted by the guerrillas from his village in Espirus, Greece, at the age of 12. The Reds in BELOYANNIS were peeved because BIZOS was agitating for repatriation inciting Greek families to apply, and helping them with the written formalities. As he came out of a house in the village the group, which was waiting for him, set upon him and beat him with blows and kicks, smashing several of his teeth, reducing his face to an unrecognizable pulp, until he was left unconscious on the ground. Source heard he was subsequently put on a train to SZTALINVAROS, where he was hospitalized for several weeks.

#### Citizens Protest.

Ringleader of the thugs was Serafim CONSTANTINIDIS, a stocky young man in his late twenties. CONSTANTINIDIS had been engaged in 1949 to a Greek (Slavo-Macedonian) girl. When he came to Hungary, she was sent to Czechoslovakia. During her absence, her betrothed had a more or less overt affair with a Hungarian girl who worked in the weaving cooperative, of which he was in charge. Finally he dropped his mistress and married his old fiancée who came to BELOYANNIS from Czechoslovakia.

Athanassios SAMARAS, another of the boy beaters, was a 30-year-old kolkhoz worker. SAMARAS was married once, but after the rout of the guerrillas in Greece his wife went to the Soviet Union.

Also in the group were George PETSIS, 60, a pensioner, described by source as an "old goat-thief;" Athanassios CHRISTOU; and Andreas STEFANOU. Both CHRISTOU and STEFANOU were invalids of the guerrilla war. STEFANOU, 26, had a glass eye and was undergoing treatment for a fallen lung; he lived in a pension

(over)

which was recently cut down from 300 to 180 forint a month. He had a Hungarian wife who worked as a "kultura" employee at 600 forint a month, and two small daughters. CHRISTOU had been wounded in the leg. It was 10 cm shorter than the other. He worked as a shower room attendant in a sugar factory 12 km from BELOYANNIS.

After the beating of BIZOS, the citizens of BELOYANNIS protested to the Hungarian authorities, demanding protection from such attacks. For a while thereafter a police patrol came to the village daily, now its visits are only occasional.

In general, though, source said, the residents of BELOYANNIS have been much less subdued and cowed since STALIN's death than they were before it. They took courage partly from an incident which occurred at that time. A 65-year-old man named Nicholas DINIS made the following comment to a village Communist about the passing of the Soviet dictator: "Good riddance to the dirty dog." A mass meeting of the village was duly summoned to pass judgement on the offender; it failed to take any action, and DINIS remained unmolested. Since then the citizens are more outspoken.

#### Woman is Commune President.

Secretary of the BELOYANNIS Party committee is one Costas HADJIS, 30, an ill-tempered product of one of the Hungarian Regime's "Party schools." A fiddler by trade, HADJIS is married to a woman from Epirus whose brother Vangelis MAKARIOS was murdered with an axe in 1952 by his jealous wife when she came to join him in Hungary after spending a couple of years in Rumania and found him keeping house with another Greek woman. After her deed she hanged herself.

Another Party committee member is Ilias ALEXANDRIES, 27. He has a stiff leg as a result of a wound received in the guerrilla war, and works as accountant at the kolkhoz, at a salary of about 1,000 forint a month.

Of the village Commune officials source mentioned Harilaos VAYAS, 55, a former mason. VAYAS has two daughters studying at a university. He is the Commune secretary. Assistant president of the Commune is LAZOGIORGIOS (fnu,) 30 married. He speaks Hungarian fluently.

Ruling the BELOYANNIS roost like a female cock is the Commune president, a 40-year-old woman known as Katu (LNU,) or more commonly "Magyara" (the Hungarian woman.) She is married to a Hungarian Communist who fills the job of Commune

(over)



rent-collector. He used to be a terrorist, source said, but he was eventually badly beaten up by the enraged residents of some village, has thereafter been a stoop-backed cripple.

Kati, according to source, has shared her bed with many of the Greek Communists in BELOYANNIS.

The functions of the BELOYANNIS Commune were chiefly fiscal, collecting rents and electricity bills, taxes and so forth. One time a "communal levy" was imposed, allegedly for public works, but no one knows what happened to the money collected. It was a discriminatory tax assessed not against all the citizens but principally against those who had expressed the desire for repatriation. Another levy was the so-called "honor contribution" the proceeds of which were needed, the Communists said, to help "our brothers who are being persecuted in Greece and suffering in the monarcho-Fascist prisons." Source said everyone knew the funds were used to finance Communist agents operating subversively in Greece. The citizens' resistance to this particular levy was intense; it was finally stopped when the Reds became disheartened over the news that the Greek security forces were arresting all their agents.

Secondary functions of the Commune included a file index of residents and the issuing of permits to citizens desiring to move to different localities for reasons of work.

Party and Commune functionaries drew State salaries, the lowest of which was 800 forint a month. According to source, these functionaries in BELOYANNIS are all ZACHARIADES men. He predicted that after the Greek Communist leader's fall, they will all be scratched.

End