

AH
23 Dec
VI/2979BULGARIAPRISONS & CAMPSLocation
Inmates
ConditionsBELENE Concentration Camp.

SOURCE ROME: A 50-year-old former industrialist who left Bulgaria on 1 November 1952. His information about BELEN comes from a friend of his, who spent two years at the camp. "The man is about 40 years old, but he looks 55. His hair has turned completely white. He is only bones and skin."

DATE OF OBSERVATION: current period

EVAL. COMMENT: The concentration camp BELENE is one of the biggest ones, and the treatment of its inmates is more severe than at all other existing camps in Bulgaria. The information on camp BELENE given in this report is correct but by far insufficient to give a true picture concerning:

- 1) classification of the inmates according to the reason of the imprisonment, and from what social class they originate;
- 2) food;
- 3) clothing;
- 4) housing;
- 5) sanitary conditions;
- 6) political indoctrination;
- 7) personnel and guards;
- 8) treatment of inmates, atrocities etc.

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There are over 10,000 inmates at the BELYANE TVC (Labor Corrective Community.)

The inmates of the camp are put to the following forced labor:

1. working on the flood prevention project (Digala) on the Danube river;
2. loading and unloading of freight cars;
3. as farm hands in TKZSs (Labor Cooperative Agricultural Enterprises.)

The time of work is not specified. It ranges from 12 to 13 hours a day.

Complete - 24 Dec.

Often the inmates have to walk up to 20 kilometers daily to get to their place of work and back.

The slightest sign of disobedience to the severe camp discipline is punished by solitary confinement,) where the inmates are subjected to a starvation diet: bread and water or water only.

The inmates are completely isolated from the outside world. Their mail is censored.

The inmates are allowed to receive one food package a month not exceeding five kilos in weight.

Upon release, the inmates are expelled from their former place of residence. Released inmates have no civil rights. If they are caught describing conditions existing in the camps they are sent back to slave labor.