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18 January 1952  
A (VII-101)BULGARIAPRISONS & CAMPS

Personnel and guards

Inmates

Locations

Security measures and conditions

SOURCE MUNICH: A Bulgarian escapee, formerly with a Trudovak regiment in BLAGOEVGRAD (GORNA DZHUMAYA,) furnished the following information.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Spring 1951

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The departmental prison in BLAGOEVGRAD is primarily for criminal cases; political prisoners are generally detained only a short time while awaiting transfer to other prisons. The building accommodates up to 275 prisoners and is under the internal administration of a warden, director and six guards. Ten or twelve soldiers from the Division of Prison Defenses in the Ministry of Interior are responsible for exterior defenses. These soldiers wear army or army-type uniforms, with red shoulder tabs and cap bands, and are armed with machine guns and pistols.

Except for the trustees, employed as clerks in the warden's office or as laborers on the three farms belonging to the prison (see below,) the lot of the prisoners is extremely hard. Only three five-minute periods of outdoor exercise are allowed and the diet (beans, greens and nettles, and 200 to 250 grams of bread per day) is totally lacking in necessary meats or fats. When not in solitary confinement or undergoing other special treatment in one of the prison's several mysterious small rooms, the prisoners are locked in two large cells (75 to 85 prisoners) and three smaller ones. (25 to 35.)

Besides the trustees, about 130 additional prisoners live and work on the three prison farms. Many of these serving short sentenced only and are lightly guarded by a handful of soldiers and trustees at each farm. The farms include a small tobacco farm near the STRUMSKI CHIFLIK railroad stop, a truck gardening farm south of the city on the river, and a fruit farm about a mile and a half south of the tobacco farm.

EVAL: COMMENT: Generally accurate.