

SN
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BULGARIA

DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY /3800/
Towns /3802/

THE TOWN OF SLIVEN

SOURCE ATHENS: A housewife, visitor to Greece, of Greek origin.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Until September 1956.

EVALUATION COMMENT: The physical description of the town of SLIVEN corresponds to reality. The construction of a huge textile plant in the town has been reported by the Communist press. However, the details furnished cannot be confirmed owing to lack of pertinent material.

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The town of SLIVEN is an important railroad center with a population of nearly 40,000 inhabitants, said source. The main streets of the town are asphalted, and the houses are mainly of two to four stories. Nearly all the two-story houses are surrounded by beautiful gardens, said source, and are well furnished and, on the whole, clean and neat, for despite their poverty the Bulgarians attempt to keep up appearances.

"Private houses are not being built in SLIVEN," said source. "People cannot afford even to advance a small sum of money. I had heard that the State Bank will lend money, repayable in installments, to those wanting to build a house, but I have not seen one being undertaken in SLIVEN."

Source stated that there were two mixed gymnasiums, a commercial school, many elementary schools and a school for textile workers in the town. She said that this school was reported to be unique in the Balkans and that students from the other captive countries came there to study. Unfortunately, she did not know much about this school. She had heard that the course was of five years and that to be accepted a student must be a graduate of a lower technical school. She said there were many

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sections in the school where students were taught various aspects of the textile trade from spinning to dyeing and even sketching. Married women sometimes attended the school, said source, but were placed in a separate section. She knew that all the students hoped to get good jobs when they graduated, but she told RFE she has heard from a neighbor, whose son has finished this course, that he had been placed in a weaving mill in SOFIA and complained he was paid only 600 leva monthly.

Weaving mills, blacksmiths' shops and a porcelain factory which competed with Czechoslovak production were all located a little out of the town, said source, but the Bulgarians now intended to concentrate all the small weaving mills into one large mill and had begun to construct a tremendous building to house all these looms. She said she didn't know of any particular name for the place where the new mill was to be located, but as one entered SLIVEN by rail from PLEVEN, the construction work could be seen on the west side of the track. The mill is to be ready sometime next year, said the Communists.

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