

CLASSIFICATION **RESTRICTED**
 SECURITY INFORMATION
 CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
 INFORMATION FROM
 FOREIGN DOCUMENTS OR RADIO BROADCASTS

REPORT

STAT

COUNTRY Bulgaria
 SUBJECT Political - Concentration camps
 HOW PUBLISHED Monthly periodical
 WHERE PUBLISHED New York
 DATE PUBLISHED Oct 1951
 LANGUAGE Bulgarian

CD NO.
 DATE OF INFORMATION 1951
 DATE DIST. 10 Mar 1952
 NO. OF PAGES 3
 SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.

THIS DOCUMENT CONTAINS INFORMATION AFFECTING THE NATIONAL DEFENSE OF THE UNITED STATES WITHIN THE MEANING OF ESPIONAGE ACT 50 U. S. C. 31 AND 32, AS AMENDED. ITS TRANSMISSION OR THE REVELATION OF ITS CONTENTS IN ANY MANNER TO AN UNAUTHORIZED PERSON IS PROHIBITED BY LAW. REPRODUCTION OF THIS FORM IS PROHIBITED.

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

SOURCE Bulgarski Pregled.

THE BELENE CONCENTRATION CAMP IN BULGARIA

On 15 September 1951, a Bulgarian who recently escaped from Bulgaria wrote that Bulgarian prisons and concentration camps are filled with fighters for the liberation of Bulgaria. He also stated that as of 1 April 1951, over 2,300 families were evacuated from Kula, Vidin, and Belogradchik okoliyas and moved like cattle to the Dobrudzha and Stalin regions.

Another Bulgarian, who spent 6 months in the Belene concentration camp and later succeeded in escaping from Bulgaria, gives the following information on that camp:

The Belene concentration camp is made up of four compounds, Belene No 1, 2, 3, and 4.

The first two compounds are located on an island in the Danube, just opposite Belene, 12 kilometers west of Shvishtov and 15 kilometers east of Nikopol. The island is about 12 - 13 kilometers long and from 20 to 1,000 meters wide. The source was first interned in compound No 1.

Compounds No 3 and 4 are located on the Danube 5 and 10 kilometers re-spectively from Belene, in the direction of Nikopol. There may be other camp compounds at the same location but the source has no knowledge of their existence and location.

From 700 to 1,000 male prisoners are interned in the two compounds on the island. The food is very poor; for breakfast, every prisoner receives 400 grams of bread and tea, and for lunch and supper, a very thin soup containing almost no fat. A tablespoonful of marmalade is distributed among 25 prisoners. Once a week, a small amount of macaroni is put into the soup. The internees receive meat once every few months and try to supplement their diet with whatever raw vegetables and fruit they can find in the vegetable gardens where they work.

CLASSIFICATION **RESTRICTED**

STATE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NAVY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NSRB																		
ARMY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AIR	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FBI																		

RESTRICTED
RESTRICTED

STAT

The prisoners cultivate fields. They have to get up at 0400 hours and must be ready to go to work at 0600 hours. Many of them have to walk from 5 to 7 kilometers from the camp to their place of work. They are lined up in the morning, separated into groups of 20 each, and marched to work by three armed militiamen.

The Belene concentration camp is used for the more active political prisoners. Criminal prisoners are not sent there. Some of the internees have been in the island camp since 1949. Others are kept there several weeks and are then sent elsewhere. The prisoners believe that the policy of the authorities is to keep shifting internees from one camp to another.

Every prisoner arrives at camp with his file, which contains detailed data about his private life, his identity, his political convictions, his political activity, etc. For a period of time the administration of the camp used to separate members of the same party into different groups.

In compound No 1, beatings are not performed publicly. The prisoner who is to be punished is taken to the administration building at night, and there he is beaten and tortured.

At the beginning of 1950, the function of guarding the camp compound was taken away from the militia and turned over to the so-called border troops.

Old age and poor physical condition of a prisoner are of no concern to the camp administration. All prisoners are treated equally. Only those who have received very serious bruises during the beatings are given less strenuous work or are sent to the hospital to get well.

Many Bulgarian politicians and public figures were interned in compound No 1. Among them was Tsveti Ivanov, former editor of the newspaper Svobodni Narod (Free People), organ of the opposition Social Democratic Party. He was beaten, and during the beatings contracted tetanus. He was already dying when the camp administration decided to send him to the hospital. Ivanov died in compound No 1.

A prisoner is thoroughly searched upon arrival at camp. He is stripped naked and everything that he has on his person, such as money and documents, is taken away from him. He is then given coupons equal in value to the amount of money he has with him. These coupons can be used only in the camp canteen. The prisoner is given an old and worn-out police, military, or prisoner's uniform to wear in camp.

During 1950, compound No 3 was used by the so-called "Trudova Mobilizatsiya" (Labor Mobilization). The barracks of this compound are now occupied by camp internees. There are also seven large tents for internees, a brick building for the administration, barracks for the militiamen, a kitchen, and a warehouse for storing food. The entire camp [compound?] is surrounded by a barbed-wire fence. A painted white line, 10 meters from the fence, marks the death zone. If a prisoner crosses that line, the guards shoot to kill without warning.

There is no hospital at compound No 3. Internees who are seriously ill are taken to a small tent used by the doctor. The doctor is also a prisoner and is not allowed to issue any kind of certificate about the working ability of a patient.

Compound No 3 is located 5-6 kilometers from Belene, in the direction of Nikopol, and about 5 kilometers south of the Danube. At this compound, the guards are numerous and very well armed. The only road between Belene and the compound is an old country road connecting Belene with Oresh. Behind the compound, the internees have constructed an irrigation canal 4-5 meters wide and 1.5 meters deep. The area surrounding the compound is crossed by similar canals which have been dug by internees.

- 2 -

RESTRICTED**RESTRICTED**

RESTRICTEDRESTRICTED

STAT

Once in the Belene camp, a prisoner loses all contact with the outside world. He may not have any contact with the inhabitants of the nearby villages.

The internees are followed and spied on constantly by agents of the State Security Police, who are here called "instructors." These instructors are assisted by the so-called "cultural and educational committees" composed of camp internees who volunteer as informers in return for small favors and privileges. The head of the cultural and educational committee in the Belene camp is Grozdanov, an old army general. Other members of the committee are Dr Khristo Kunchev, Lt Nikola Ninchev, Levcho Ignatov, and Evstati Popov. These informers are called "antennas" by the internees. Every new internee who is twice called to the administration building is suspected by the other prisoners of being an antenna until he gives proof to the contrary.

During 1950, the commanding officer of the camp was Major Kurtev of the border troops. He was dismissed because of accusations that he displayed weakness toward the camp internees. The most ruthless members of the camp staff are instructor Donevski, superintendent Pesh, and militiaman Marin. These men are real sadists.

In compound No 1, the following Bulgarian politicians and public figures are interned:

Stoycho Moshanov, former cabinet minister, 50 years old, member of the former Democratic Party; Dr Khralambi Oroshakov, former mayor of Sofia, 60 years old, member of the former Democratic Party; and Mikhayl Ganchev, 65 years old, member of the former Democratic Party. The following had been active members of the Bulgarian National Agrarian Union: Nedko Botev, Petur Surbinski, Kiril Popov, Sergi Zlatanov, Engineer Bozhkov, Dr Gochev, Asen Payantov, Slavi Popignatov, Kocho Bonev, Vangel Gorov, and Eftim Arsov.

Also interned are Atanas Moskov, a well-known leader of the former Social Democratic Party; Gen Ivan Velkov, an army career officer; Georgi Dimchev, a former Macedonian leader; Gen Gocho Gochev, Col Petko Ignatov, and Col Encho Mateev, all former partisan officers; Dancho Smilov a member of the former Democratic Party; a group of anarchists; about 20 well-known Bulgarian Communists, (sympathizers of Traycho Kostov); and three orthodox priests and five protestant ministers, most of them over 70 years old.

The internees are permitted to send out and to receive only two postcards a month, after these have passed the camp censorship. Relatives are allowed to visit internees only on 1 January, 1 May, and 9 September. Militiamen search all visitors and are present at their meetings with internees.

The commanding officer of compound No 3 is Captain Andreev, a brutal person who shows much bestiality in beating the internees. Prisoners of this compound dig canals in parts of the Danube region. They are marched to work in groups of 20 to 200 and are guarded by armed militiamen. Work starts at 0600 hours and continues all day. Each internee is expected to dig 3.5 to 5 cubic meters of earth a day. Those who have received disciplinary punishments are assigned double quotas of work.

There is a special "disciplinary detachment" in compound No 3. The internees assigned to this detachment are treated in the most cruel way imaginable. When a new prisoner arrives, the State Security Police decides whether he should or should not be put in the disciplinary detachment. The commanding officer of the detachment at compound No 3 is David Vidov, a former chief of the State Security Police at Berkovitsa. He is cruel and terroristic. The plight of all internees is tragic, but despite hardships and tribulations, all of them live in the hope of an impending liberation.

- E N D -

- 3 -

RESTRICTED**RESTRICTED**