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TO : Chief, FIP 27, 15-16
FROM : [Chief of Station, Athens, Greece]
SUBJECT: ~~SECRET~~ - Operational
 Spas Fedorev RAIKIN
 Ref: [FOIA]-5-12 (Kapok 618)

DATE 15 January 1953

Attached herewith subject's story of his part in the escape of the seven bodies mentioned in reference. Report prepared by REISER.

Lloyd E. Desmond

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Spas Todorov RAIKIN GL

1. Subject was born 26 October 1922 in the village of Zelenikovo, Plovdiv, Bulgaria. He was educated in a seminary in Sofia and later taught at the seminary in Sofia. From 5 May to 22 December 1950 he served as a Trudovak in Bezmer, Jambol district; from 22 December 1950 to 5 March 1951 he was on leave in Zelenikovo; from 5 March until 6 May 1951 he again served as a Trudovak at the new airport in Balcik. On 6 May he deserted his unit and escaped to Greece. On 21 June 1951 he surrendered to the Greek authorities. At the present time he is in a religious institute in Athens.
2. Informant as a theologian had difficulties with the communist regime in Bulgaria. Since 1949 he had been trying to find a way to escape from Bulgaria, and while in Bezmer as a Trudovak, he became acquainted with a fellow Trudovak, Zdravko DAMJANOV, who was seeking an opportunity to escape to Turkey. Several other Trudovaks had tried to escape to Turkey but were caught. In March, when RAIKIN was transferred to Balcik, he was befriended by another Trudovak, Stefan PELTEKOV, who was planning to escape to Greece with the assistance of one Vasil LAZAROV, a NCO in the 9 Regiment in Plovdiv. Since RAIKIN was unable to organize the flight to Turkey he decided to join Stefan PELTEKOV for Greece. Zdravko DAMJANOV also joined this group.
3. Toward the end of April 1951, Stefan PELTEKOV received a letter from Vasil LAZAROV, who told Stefan that he had found a guide for Greece and advised him to be in Plovdiv by 7 May. Stefan received a suit of clothes from LAZAROV'S wife, Maria, sister of Stefan, and from his Uncle Boris 4-5000 leva for the flight.
4. RAIKIN, DAMJANOV and PELTEKOV tried to desert on 2 May but could not make it. They succeeded in escaping on 6 May, walked to Varna, forty-four kilometers, boarded a train in Varna and arrived without incident in Plovdiv on 7 May where LAZAROV and his wife, Maria, waited for Stefan. LAZAROV took the group to a little forest near the village of Belastica and left them with the promise they would be contacted the following night by one of his confidants with food and weapons, who would take further care of them. A signal (whistling a certain song) was arranged, but the contact, Peter NIKOLOV, misunderstood the signal and the Trudovaks did not meet him.
6. The following morning the Trudovaks went to Plovdiv in search of LAZAROV. They found LAZAROV and also Boris PELTEKOV, Stefan's uncle. The group left immediately for the village of Markovo to find LAZAROV'S confidant, Peter NIKOLOV. Walking in separate groups, Boris PELTEKOV and Zdravko DAMJANOV lost contact with the others and proceeded along toward the village of Branipala where they were later located by Angel KRISTOV. Enroute to Markovo, LAZAROV, his wife, Maria, and Stefan PELTEKOV, met Peter NIKOLOV.

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The misunderstanding was cleared up and Petur NIKOLOV took the Trudovaks to a hideout near Markovo, gave them food, three rifles and some ammunition. Here they were joined by Zdravko DAMJANOV, escorted by Angel HUSTOZEV.

7. On 9 May the Trudovaks were visited by one Ivan Todorov STOJANOV, who explained the use of the weapons they had received. The same evening the Trudovaks were taken to Gola Mogila about twenty kilometers south of Markovo. Vasil LAZAROV and his wife awaited them. Petur NIKOLOV left the group and returned to his village of Markovo.
8. LAZAROV and his wife spent the whole day of 10 May with the Trudovaks trying to persuade them not to go to Greece, but instead to join the Gerjani rebels for whom he was planning to organize a new group in the Plovdiv area. LAZAROV explained to the Trudovaks that he was unable to find a guide for Greece. The Trudovaks refused to join the Gerjani and insisted that LAZAROV keep his promise and help them in their escape. LAZAROV promised again that he would look for a guide and left the Trudovaks in Gola Mogila.
9. During 11, 12 and 13 May the Trudovaks saw no one. They lost faith in LAZAROV and decided to go to Markovo and send a message to Stefan's father, Petur FELTEKOV, to meet them the next day in Plovdiv. Boris FELTEKOV went to Plovdiv on 14 May and ordered the Trudovaks to return to Gola Mogila where he would bring them food.
10. On 16 May Ivan NIKOLOV, with one Iliev GIUROV, who formerly maintained liaison between the village underground organizations and the Gerjani rebels, went to Gola Mogila. GIUROV offered to take the Trudovaks the next day to a Gerjani group if they decided to join them. At this point the Trudovaks having lost all hope for escape to Greece, and since they could not remain indefinitely in Gola Mogila, they agreed to join the Gerjani rebels. The Trudovaks waited for GIUROV for two days and later learned that GIUROV had been arrested. On 18 May the Trudovaks went to Markovo where they spent the night in the home of one of DAMJANOV'S relatives.
11. On 19 May RAYKIN went back to Gola Mogila, while DAMJANOV and FELTEKOV went to Plovdiv to find LAZAROV. This time LAZAROV promised he would surely find them a guide.
12. On 20 and 21 May the Trudovaks spent in Gola Mogila, and 22 May Petur FELTEKOV arrived at Gola Mogila with the news that Vasil LAZAROV had been arrested on 19 May. On 23, 24 and 25 May the Trudovaks remained in Gola Mogila without any contact.
13. On 26 May Petur FELTEKOV returned to Gola Mogila and told the Trudovaks

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that LAZAROV'S wife had been arrested on 22 May. He also told them that a lawyer from Sofia, Stefan STEFANOV, a friend of his, planned to join the Trudovaks in their flight to Greece, but since his friend's house was under police surveillance, Petur did not dare contact him in Plovdiv. Petur promised the Trudovaks to find a guide either for Greece or for the Gorjanis, but under no circumstances should the Trudovaks leave Gola Mogila until he or his brother had found a guide.

14. From 26 May to 6 June the Trudovaks remained in Gola Mogila or its immediate vicinity. The liaison with friends and relatives was maintained through a signal (whistling) which was changed for every day by the person who brought the food. The villagers in the area learned of the presence of the deserters and the police were alerted. Boris PELTEKOV and Petur NIKOLOV had planned to hide the Trudovaks in Ivan NIKOLOV'S home in Markovo in order to facilitate feeding the deserters until a guide had been found for them.
15. On 7 June Boris PELTEKOV brought food and advised the Trudovaks to go the following night to Markovo. Upon arrival there they learned that Petur NIKOLOV was arrested and released after two days on condition that he would work for the police and hand over the Trudovaks to the Militia. The Trudovaks were advised to return to Gola Mogila where they would be joined the following day by the brothers NIKOLOV and PELTEKOV.
16. On 8 June Ivan and Petur NIKOLOV joined the Trudovaks on Gola Mogila, and on 9 June Boris PELTEKOV came with food and the news that his brother, Petur, did not consider the situation too serious. Stefan PELTEKOV decided to find his father in Franipole and persuade him to join the flight, but because of the Militia patrol he could not reach him. However, on 10 June Boris and Petur PELTEKOV returned to Gola Mogila.
17. On 11 June the group started toward Greece. The border was crossed on 19 June and on 21 June they surrendered to the Greek authorities.
18. Informant gives the following information on Vasil LAZAROV: He saw LAZAROV for the first time upon arrival in Plovdiv on 7 May 1951. Informant considers LAZAROV insincere, changeable and without energy. Informant later learned from Stefan PELTEKOV that LAZAROV had been a legionnaire in the past. After the war he joined the Communist Youth Organization and was secretary for Culture and Propaganda. Later he joined the Bulgarian army and with the help of some relative was promoted to NCO. While LAZAROV'S comrades in the army had been commissioned as officers, LAZAROV was told that he must first accomplish something for the Communist Party. Stefan PELTEKOV expressed the opinion that they, the Trudovaks, might be the price asked of LAZAROV for the promotion. LAZAROV reportedly had already ordered his officer's uniform.

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According to Stefan, LAZAROV played his role as agent provocateur. Also, Petur and Boris PELIENOV said they doubted LAZAROV'S integrity and that they would kill him if he returned to Bulgaria.

19. Regarding the brothers NIKOLOV, informant states that learned to know them upon arrival in the Floridiv area. He regards the brothers as honest, patriotic and energetic. He refutes the possibility of collaboration between the police and the NIKOLOV brothers. They could very easily have turned the Trudovaks over to the State Security.
20. Informant is convinced that Petur and Boris PELIENOV are strong nationalists and anti-Communists. However, Petur exaggerates in his talking and is apt to even tell lies. Both brothers TALKED against LAZAROV up until the interrogation at Drama, at which point they started to defend him. Petur said that LAZAROV had appropriated some funds given to him to be used for the flight.
21. Informant had heard a lot about the Gerjani, but never saw them. Boris PELIENOV told him about the Gerjani attack against the village of Ferdinandovo on 22 May 1951. Informant states he saw a plane cruising in the area for several hours, but from Gula Mogila he could not hear any shooting because of the distance.

Comments

Subject's statements coincide completely with those given by Edrako DANJANOV. The two of them had planned the escape together and since the desertion have spent all their time together.

Informant is of no operational use, since his only desire is to leave Greece. In Greece he has been taken care of by an Athens religious institution. He has applied for U.S. emigration and has already received the necessary affidavit, sponsored by the Orthodox Church in the U.S.

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