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HUNGARY

FOREIGN RELATIONS /1500/
Emigrants /1501/

EXPERIENCES OF A COMMUNIST SEAMAN.

SOURCE ATHENS: A 41-year-old Greek repatriate seaman.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Until September 1956.

EVALUATION COMMENT: In line with similar life stories of Greek emigrants.

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Source was a seaman in the Greek merchant marine and a Communist of long standing. In the summer of 1949, while in America on board a Greek cargo, he decided to join the guerrilla army in Greece and left for Holland. From there, with the help of the O.E.N.O., the Greek seamen's Communist association, he was sent to MARSEILLES and thence to PARIS. From PARIS he was sent with ten other Greek seamen to PRAGUE, where the Greek Communists had a recruiting center.

In August 1949 he was sent to Hungary for a three-month period of military training, but that month the guerrilla front in Greece collapsed, and source was sent to work on a sovkhos at BABOLNAPUSZTA. There he understood, as he said, what Communism really was and began to repent for his actions. He worked on the sovkhos until May 1950 and was then sent by the Greek Communist organization in Hungary to BUDAPEST to work in a factory manufacturing electric motors, styled "Villamos és Forgó Gépgyár."

As he began to speak openly against Communism, he was arrested on August 20 1951, and was sent, together with another 25 repentant Greeks, to the deserted steppes of Hortobágy in the district of DEBRECEN, where seven or eight political prisoners' camps had been established.

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Source was taken to the camp at ARKUS TANYA. The Hortobágy district, which was formerly used only for the grazing of cattle in the summer and the hunting of wild boars in the winter, was being cultivated by about 6,000 prisoners, among whom were many farmers who had refused to join the kolkhozes. In ARKUS TANYA there were about 700 Hungarian political exiles, all of whom were set free following the amnesty granted by Imre NAGY in July 1953. He was instructed to go to the town of STALINVAROS /DUNAPENTELE/ where he was given a job in a workshop belonging to the "Stalin Vasmű" group of factories.

From July 1953 until his repatriation in September 1956, source lived in STALINVAROS with his wife and two children, one of whom was born in STALINVAROS. He earned about 1,200 forint per month and lived with his family in a room of an unfinished three-story apartment house erected for the workers of the "Sztalin Vasmű" group of factories. He was given some basic furniture by the factory, as well as fuel for a stove. He paid a rent of 64 forint a month for the room, which still lacked flooring and had unfinished walls.

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