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22

CLASSIFICATION

TO : Chief, FDP 27, 15-16
FROM : [Chief of Station, Athens]
SUBJECT: GENERAL - Operational

DATE: 11 FEBRUARY 1952

REF. NO. - Peter NIKOLOV
Reference- ²²[PMA]-A-5213; 5265; 6065; ²²[ATTN]-7629

W.E.

Attached herewith is subject's story of his part in the escape of the seven bodies mentioned in the first reference. The report was prepared by REISER.

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KPB:jt

Lloyd K. Desmond

Attachment - as described above.

- 2 - WASH
- 1 - Ex A
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- 1 - Chron

FORM 88
MAY 1949 51-28A

CLASSIFICATION

Escape Story of Peter NIKOLOV

1. On 21 June 1951 Peter NIKOLOV escaped from Bulgaria to Greece with his brother, Ivan NIKOLOV, Petur and Boris PELTEKOV, and three Trudovaks, Stefan PELTEKOV, Zdravko DAMJANOV, and Spas RAKIN. In Greece he was interrogated by GARAGISCAN, GALATEA, DIC, REISER, GASP, and GASP/8.
2. On the urging of Angel HRISTOZOV, the leader of the underground group in Markovo, Peter NIKOLOV joined the underground organization in the Plovdiv area in March 1951. Leading members of the organization were Angel CKAROV of Plovdiv, Second Lieutenant Nikola MILENKOV of Plovdiv, and Angel HRISTOZOV and Nikola TODOROV of Markovo. Vasil LAZAROV, a non-commissioned officer in Plovdiv, had an important role in the organization.
3. NIKOLOV knew about the existence of the Gorjani resistance group in the Rhodopi and Balkan Mountains. Besides its general anti-Communist activities, the underground organization in the Plovdiv area had the task of aiding the Gorjani by supplying them with food, weapons, and ammunition. Informant never saw the Gorjani, but one of his duties was to collect arms and ammunition for the Gorjani and deliver them to Angel Hristosov who had contact with the Gorjani and delivered armament to them.
4. Similar underground organizations have been organized in the villages of Belashtica, Ferdinandovo, Sv. Spas, Iavor, Kozatovo, all of which are in the Plovdiv area.
5. On 7 May 1951 NIKOLOV received orders from Angel CKAROV to take care of three deserted Trudovaks, Spas RAKIN, Zdravko DAMJANOV, and Stefan PELTEKOV. None of them were known to NIKOLOV. NIKOLOV was given the recognition signal (whistling) and was told that the three Trudovaks had been inducted into the organization by Vasil LAZAROV, a person whom NIKOLOV could trust and cooperate with. He was told that the Trudovaks should be fed and armed until a guide came to take them to the Gorjani. NIKOLOV was told that he would find the Trudovaks in a wooded area near Belashtica. NIKOLOV was not able to contact the Trudovaks that night.
6. The next day, 8 May, NIKOLOV with Vasil LAZAROV, contacted Spas RAKIN and Stefan PELTEKOV. NIKOLOV took over the Trudovaks and hid them in the vicinity of Markovo. The third Trudovak, Zdravko DAMJANOV, was missing, and he was located the same night by Angel HRISTOZOV in Branipole. HRISTOZOV conducted DAMJANOV to the hiding place of the other two Trudovaks. NIKOLOV gave the Trudovaks food, three old Turkish rifles with ammunition, and a hand grenade.
7. On 9 May the Trudovaks were visited at their hiding place by Ivan Todorov STOJANOV who showed the Trudovaks how to operate the weapons they had received.

*3rd Hand?
From him?*

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- 2 -

8. During the night of 9-10 May NIKOLOV, on orders of Vasil LAZAROV, took the Trudovaks to a hiding place in Gola Mogila, which is 20 kilometers south of Markovo. When LAZAROV and the Trudovaks arrived there they found Vasil LAZAROV and his wife Maria waiting for them. NIKOLOV left them, and LAZAROV and his wife remained with them all the next day, 10 May 1951. Maria LAZAROV is a sister of Stefan PELTEKOV.
9. According to Peter NIKOLOV, HRISTOZOV ordered Peter's brother, Ivan NIKOLOV, to provide the Trudovaks with food. Ivan carried food several times to Gola Mogila, but after being questioned about it by the police he ceased to do so. Later the food was supposed to have been taken by Boris PELTEKOV, uncle of one of the three Trudovaks.
10. NIKOLOV saw the Trudovaks in Plovdiv and Markovo on 14 May and he gave them food and a blanket.
11. On 15 or 16 May Ivan NIKOLOV brought Iliev GIUROV to Gola Mogila. GIUROV was to guide the Trudovaks to the Gorjani because there was no guide available to take them to Greece. The following day GIUROV was arrested and there was no one else to take them to the Gorjani.
12. Following the arrest of Vasil LAZAROV every precaution was taken to prevent the police from locating the Trudovaks. Their location was changed several times.
13. On 5 June Peter NIKOLOV was arrested by State Security. He was interrogated and beaten by the Security agents in an effort to make him admit his connection with the Trudovaks. NIKOLOV refused to admit anything until he was shown a statement signed by Vasil LAZAROV to the effect that Peter had cooperated with LAZAROV in hiding the Trudovaks. He saw that LAZAROV had given away the entire organization so he decided to talk. NIKOLOV told about everybody but Lieutenant MILANOV of Plovdiv. Following his confession Peter was forced to sign a statement that he was joining State Security under the name of "Hristo" and that he would obtain from his brother Ivan the recognition signals for contacting the Trudovaks. On 7 June NIKOLOV was released to contact his brother. He was told to report back to the police by 1700 the same day. When NIKOLOV went back to the police he told them that he was not able to find his brother and that he would try again the next day. Actually Peter had met his brother Ivan on the Markovo-Plovdiv road, and he had explained the situation to him and told him to warn Angel HRISTOZOV and others who might be compromised by LAZAROV's and his own confessions. Peter suggested that everyone who was in danger go the next day to Gola Mogila, from where they would leave for Greece.

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14. The police authorities told Peter NIKOLOV to work his usual night shift (7-8 June) at the factory in Plovdiv where he was employed. After work he was taken by the police to Markovo and was ordered to obtain the recognition signals. He was also ordered to bring the Trudovaks the next day to a coffee shop between Plovdiv and Markovo, and he was instructed as to how he should behave upon entering the shop if the Trudovaks were armed, unarmed, or did not come. He was then allowed to go home.
15. When NIKOLOV arrived at home after being released by the police, he found his brother there. Ivan told him that he had carried out Peter's orders, but that Angel HRISTOZOV and the others did not want to leave because they felt sure that they would be able to place all the guilt on the NIKOLOV brothers who were escaping.
16. Early in the morning of 6 June Peter and Ivan NIKOLOV left their home and headed toward Gola Mogila, where they joined the Trudovaks. No policemen were seen in the area. At Gola Mogila they waited for Boris and Peter PELTEKOV until 10 June, and then all of them started toward the Greek border which they crossed without incident on 19 June. They surrendered to the Greek authorities on 21 June.
17. Peter had known Vasil LAZAROV as a child, but he had not seen him for six years until the time of the Trudovak affair. He knows that LAZAROV was chairman of the Communist youth organization in Belashtica. NIKOLOV thinks that LAZAROV may have been a double agent, but if he had really wanted to betray the group he had ample opportunity to do so. In any case NIKOLOV feels that LAZAROV did not act in good faith because he promised the Trudovaks a guide to Greece while he actually intended to send them to the Gorjani. NIKOLOV did not know the Trudovaks, but he had heard of Peter and Boris PELTEKOV, and he considers them to be nationalists even though he had some misunderstandings with them during the flight to Greece. Among the Trudovaks he likes Spas RAIKIN best.
18. After being left alone at the Lavrion Camp for a considerable time, Peter and Ivan NIKOLOV applied for immigration to Brazil. In the beginning they were willing to stay in Greece and fight Communism in Bulgaria. They expressed to REISER their willingness to go missions into Bulgaria, but REISER made no commitments. Since no action was taken, both left for Brazil 17 November 1951.
19. Comment. The operational value of the brothers was not very high, especially after the arrest of some members of the underground organization in the Plovdiv area. Nevertheless, they are willing and able to try something. In the future more rapid action should be taken in order to prevent prospective agents from becoming discouraged and leaving.

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