

## MY HOME VILLAGE – YASTREBOVO 50 YEARS AGO, AT PRESENT AND IN THE FUTURE /RESEARCH ESSAY/

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**ABSTRACT:** LIKE ALL VILLAGES IN BULGARIA YASTREBOVO MADE HIS PROGRESS DURING THE PERIOD 1960 - 1989, THE PERIOD IN THE SO-CALLED. "SOCIALISM". THIS IS ASSOCIATED WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF COOPERATIVE FARMS - COOPERATIVE, WHICH GIVE PEOPLE LIVELIHOODS AND SUSTAINABLE LIVING. TODAY, DEMOCRATIC POLITICAL SYSTEM CAN NOT ENSURE THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VILLAGE AND ITS PEOPLE. THEREFORE TRENDS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE VILLAGE ARE NOT ENCOURAGING, HIGHLIGHTED WITH SADNESS BY THE AUTHOR OF THE ESSAY.

**KEY WORDS:** SOCIALISM, COOPERATION / COOPERATIVE / SHINING PEOPLE, WORK, DEMOCRACY, FEAR OF EXISTENCE, ANXIETY, LACK OF A BRIGHT FUTURE

**I**F I have to look at my village's existence and development fifty years back, I will have to start my review from 1960s. The period in the history of the whole country as well as for my home village was marked by the typical upsurge of the Bulgarian village. The life of the villagers sharply changed. They welcomed the victory of socialism over fascism with great happiness as they were shaken by the miseries and torment from the old fascist regime and the royal government. Villagers supported the new authority and actively took part in the national initiatives and joined in the ranks of the free citizens in a free country.

**T**HE biggest victory of socialism in my home village was the establishment and stabilization of TKZS (Cooperative Agrarian Farm). The mass participation of people in the newly created cooperation brought them joy, their life changed and there was enough work for everyone. Their incomes increased, their children studied and developed. The level of life and culture of villagers increased with every year. At that time villagers felt like new people with bigger faith in the new system, and they forgot the hunger, exploitation and misery from the past.

**A**N essential moment throughout these peaceful and laborious years was the rehabilitation of my village. The newly created TKZS rendered an important help to its members with the building of new houses. It helped them financially and materially. Quickly new spacious brick houses were built on the place of the old tumble-down ones. New and wider streets were made. The muddy and dusty streets were asphalted. Children's playground and sports ground were built, parks and small gardens, too.

**A** very big asset during these years was the electrification of my home village.

**THE** electricity illuminated the half-lit rooms that were previously lit up with oil lamps. People beamed.

**THE** chores of the village housewives were eased to a great extent with the introduction of the electric washing machine and the electric iron. News and joyful music were listened to via the new radio sets. The TV became a modern and luxurious acquisition.

**IN** those years the economic and social conditions were favourable and everyone had a job. The people of the new life welcomed and solved their current needs. They started saving money and even considered buying a new apartment in the regional town as well as driving a new car and this became a trend.

**THROUGHOUT** these memorable years another vital acquisition became a constant companion in the life of the villagers. The water from the village wells was not used anymore. It started flowing from faucets built to cater to the needs of people and animals. In a few years the village faucets that used to be built in the village squares entered the homes of the population which facilitated their lives even more.

**THOUGHT** was given to the village youngsters and a new, modern and spacious primary school was built. The youngest kids were not forgotten either. A full-day kindergarten was built for them.

**THE** faith of the people in the national authority increased and they repaid that faith with further care for the population. A big public building rose high in the centre of the village – a house of culture with commercial premises, a library, a cinema hall, etc.

**MY** fellow-villagers enjoyed new bus station, a railway station and a tailoring establishment.

**THERE** was built a new modern bakery for the population. A new daily bus drove them to and from the bigger town. Education at that time was obligatory and every student who had graduated primary school continued to study in secondary school and then at the university.

**TEACHERS**, nurses, economists, drivers, mechanics, etc. came from this small village with no more than 500 residents.

**IF** we have to sum up this historical period, we should note: the period of full revival of the village and the start of a new life for its population. It was a period which marked a new attitude to labour and a period of new relations among people.

**THE** new system required new people. It formed and used them for progress and authority.

**AND** what is today's condition of the village and its residents?

**WE** all are witnesses to an attempt from the ruling class to lead us to a more democratic system. Of course, the transition from old to new is not like the change of seasons in a year, however, we are already far too long in the so-called "transition". Our difficult Balkan temper is plainly visible; nowadays, democracy is a synonym of destruction; destruction of everything old. The current condition of my village is like the one of the whole country and community.

**ALL** memories of the good past are taken away.

**ALL** TKZs which were established were now closed up. With the eradication of socialism, the cooperative buildings were demolished, too. The people involved in the TKZs

got unemployed and were left without incomes. Now we witness a kind of a “wild” privatization – clandestine sales, illegal deals, etc.

**WE** brought down the old system of socialism in order to create a more democratic one.

**AND** what did we achieve?

**EVERYTHING** which was accomplished with a lot of work collapsed.

**WHAT** did the villagers lose?

**THE** villagers lost their jobs, their savings and the image of a loyal community citizen.

**WHAT** did we gain from democracy up to now?

**INSTEAD** of a better life, we received the opposite. We live in fear for our subsistence and in anxiety for the day to come. The battle for superiority and thirst for control messed up people’s heads entirely.

**UNEMPLOYMENT**, low salaries, and neglectful behavior towards people made them leave the country in order to use their mind and labour abroad.

**NOW** my fellow-villager Kurtovski cultivates the field, an inheritance from his grandfather, in order to make both ends meet and to ensure a bright future for his children.

**HOW** do I see the future of my village?

**IN** the first place I would like to express my doubts whether it will still exist like a populated place.

**THE** constant unemployment of 300 residents, the lack of a school and kindergarten, the village could even vanish, melt down, and be done with.

**THROUGHOUT** the years of democracy the number of marriages substantially decreased, there is low birth-rate.

I don’t want to be a bad prophet of the destiny of my fellow-villagers but I don’t see a good and bright future.

**DESPITE** my bad prediction for the future, I turn towards all those who survived and to the future generations – live well and in better times; with burning favor not to forget their home village, not to leave the traditions and the habits of the home village.

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