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BULGARIA

INDUSTRY (1700)
Mining (1706)

Geological Research In The Borough Of NOVA ZAGORA

SOURCE ISTANBUL : 28-year-old secondary school educated Bulgarian, spent three-and-a-half years in prison in early 1940's for murdering his school teacher. Released as a political prisoner, he joined the Communist Party in 1947. As a corporal he served in the Bulgarian air force. After his demobilization he became assistant accountant at the cooperative of his native village NOVOSELTSI. In 1948, he was accused of helping an underground organization, and was sentenced to a prison term which he served at STARA ZAGORA jail, then at RUSE and finally at the PIRGOVO labor camp. Returning to NOVOSELTSI in June 1950 he worked for a geological company exploiting a gypsum mine. In April 1951 he went into hiding, because the underground organization he worked for had been discovered. Circumstances forced him to surrender on condition that he would not be persecuted. In June 1951 he returned to his job at the cooperative, on 1 January 1952 he was promoted chief accountant. Nine months later he was dismissed for anti-state activities and from then on he worked as a common field laborer at the village kolkhoz until his escape on 25 June 1953.

DATE OF OBSERVATION : 1949-1952.

EVALUATION COMMENT : The only exploitable gypsum layers, known until 1944, were those in the NOVA ZAGORA and HAS-KOVO areas.

Since 1944, Soviet guided Bulgarian geological commissions have been touring the country making studies in order to determine the quantity and quality of Bulgarian sub-soil deposits, as is the case with the NOVA ZAGORA gypsum layers.

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In 1949 a group of geologists from the "Geominpro" (Geologicheska Mina Promishlenost, Geological Mining Industry) headquarters at SOFIA, arrived in the village of NOVOSELETS, borough of NOVA ZAGORA, and began a systematic search for gypsum deposits reported to be located in the area between the villages of NOVOSELETS, KOVACHEVO and GLEDACHEVO.

Exploratory pits for gypsum were started towards the end of 1949 and as many as 120 workers were hired from the surrounding villages. Pits were opened at distances of 25 meters from one another and were often lowered 25 to 30 meters. Samples of earth brought up from every pit were placed in separate bags and forwarded to SOFIA for analysing. The pits were opened in parallel lines and covered the whole area between the above-named villages.

In the spring of 1950 a delegation of geologists arrived from SOFIA and after long discussions with the technicians in charge of the pits, decided that wider shafts had to be opened for further sampling. Shafts often 45 meters deep were opened at distances of 200 meters from each other along two diagonal lines. Men were lowered into these shafts, which were much wider in diameter than the sounding pits, and they dug galleries parallel to the earth's surface. Larger quantities of earth were brought to the surface and the gypsum content in excavated cubic meters of earth was calculated.

Source, who worked at the pits as a technician, was unable to find out the results of the sampling because he claims these were kept secret. He also stated that the geologists were assisted in their duties by topographers who drew careful maps of the entire region. It is source's personal opinion that the search may have been for more valuable minerals as he does not understand why "Geominpro" should undertake such meticulous and costly research for gypsum, which can be found in other parts of Bulgaria as well.

Source left NOVOSELETS, headquarters of the research group, in early 1950, but later learned that the search was still on in 1952, although on a much smaller scale. In 1950 the operations around NOVOSELETS WERE under the direction of geologist KOJUNAROV Iubomir.