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BULGARIA

INDUSTRY (1700)
Mining (1706)

LABOR (1900)
Working Conditions (1910)

Further Short News on the Uranium Mines in
BUHOVO and ZLATOGRAD.

SOURCE TRIESTE: A Bulgarian emigrant.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Beginning of 1953.

EVALUATION COMMENT: The Evaluator doubts whether many of the most responsible personalities of the Soviet State and CP know the origin of the uranium of their atomic bombs, and still less the Bulgarian workers of the BUHOVO mines. The rumors contained in this report may be intentionally spread by the Soviet management of the uranium mines in BUHOVO in order to underline the great importance of the latter before the workers -- Communist Party members, whom they force to fulfill ever increasing production norms.

The reported data on the mines in BUHOVO is in agreement with information available in our files. For more details see RFE Item No. 6769/53. Information is available here on the discovery of rich uranium deposits also in the vicinity of the BACHKOVO monastery (see RFE Item No. 6156/53,) and near the village of YENINA, county KAZANLIK (see RFE Item No. 717/54.)

The uranium mines near ZLATOGRAD, as well as the reported details about the work and working conditions there are not known here.

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According to information supplied our source by an old school-mate, a carpenter (NU), who worked in the uranium mines in BUHOVO until the end of 1952, the first Soviet atomic bomb was made with uranium from the Czech mines in JACHIMOVO, and the second one with

(Over)

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uranium from the mines in BUHOVO.

The abovementioned mines are said to employ from 4,000 to 5,000 workers, all tried Communists and well paid.

Many new houses were built near BUHOVO and almost form a village apart. Only Soviet officials and specialists live there. It is said that the Soviets plan to enlarge the BUHOVO uranium mines in the same dimensions as the famous PERNIK coal pits. Moreover, new uranium layers are said to have been discovered in the BUHOVO region.

Moreover, the GORUBSO Soviet mining company is also said to be exploiting a second uranium mine near ZLATOGRAĐ, between MADAN and ZLATOGRAĐ in the KARDJALI region where there are lead and zinc mines too, and where recently also asbestos depots were discovered.

The direction of the work for asbestos and uranium excavations is said to have been entrusted to a German (NU) from East Germany who already reserved some perimeters to himself before the last war.

The uranium obtained in the ZLATOGRAĐ region is transported to the station of PODKOVA by truck. It is said that from 250 to 300 such trucks are on continual daily service between the mines and PODKOVA. The uranium is then shipped to the Soviet Union in a raw state.

It is reckoned that said mines are no smaller or less important than those of BUHOVO. The number of workers engaged there is not known but it is assumed that it is very high. The salaries of the workers, who are also all Communists, are high; for example, a specialized worker attached to a "shachteur" (compressor) draws a monthly salary of about 2,500 Leva (according to information received by our source from a friend who worked there) which is a very high pay in comparison with those of other industrial or ordinary workers. Normally, an ordinary worker at the same mines draws about 1,500 Leva a month which is also very much more than another ordinary worker is paid.

Our source heard from another friend that the ATZ (azototorovzavod) fertilizer factory in DIMITROVGRAD is producing less and less chemical fertilizer and is giving priority to the production of explosives and other war material. It is a fact, so our source adds, that Bulgaria needs large quantities of fertilizer and that it is not only not being distributed to the peasants, but that it cannot even be found at all.

End.