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## RUMANIA

<u>INDUSTRY</u>	(1700)
Mining Industry	(1706)
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Soviet Exploitation	(1711)
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Work Safety	(1925)
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### ACCIDENT AT THE BEICA URANIUM MINE.

SOURCE MUNICH : Confidential

DATE OF OBSERVATION : Up to May 1954.

EVALUATION COMMENT : This highly interesting although UNCONFIRMED report supplies detailed information about a disaster in an uranium mining center in Transylvania. The report does not supply pertinent details of the exploitation and the technical installations of the mine and the nearby railway stations. Please see in this connection TRIESTE RFE Item No. 12908/53 on the search for uranium in the GALATI and TURNU SEVERIN areas. See also ROME RFE Item Nos. 14925/52, 5862/52 and VIENNA RFE Item Nos. 9020/53, and 4661/53. On August 19 1954, in the course of a press conference for foreign journalists, a Rumanian Foreign Office spokesman remarked that "Our country has great riches -- forests, oil, coal and every kind of rare metals."

"La Nation Roumaine" (a Rumanian exile paper published in PARIS) reported in its February 1 1954 issue that, according to refugees from Rumania, there are uranium mines in the north-west of Transylvania (Bais Mare Region) where about 600 miners are employed (isolated political labor camps inmates). Taken from "Donauschwaebische Rundschau.")

An entire shift of some 500 miners was buried under debris and earth at the uranium mine near the village of BEICA 10 km south-east of REGHIN in Transylvania on the 28th. of April 1954 this year when a nine-ringed prop construction suddenly broke down over the main gallery where most of the men were at work at the time.

Some of the workers could free themselves and move about; they helped those of the others who were still alive but caught. There was, however, no hope of escaping, with the only entry to the gallery blocked by solid masses of rocks, stones and earth.

Neither the telephone wires nor the air conduct pipe had been affected so that those alive could continue to exist and maintain contact with the world outside. After more than 35 hours of strenuous efforts an opening was forced into the gallery and the men were liberated.

Less than seventy of the fivehundred miners were still alive and some of them had lost their senses and gone mad. They had to be transported to an asylum. When one of the Russian guards shot one of the mental cases who had tried to break away the crowds of relatives waiting outside for hours on end to hear of the fate of the men broke through and attacked the guards. There were serious disorders which finally forced the Russians to fire into the crowds. Seven persons, including a woman and two children were killed; many more were seriously injured and had to be taken to hospital. The Russians also had two casualties.

Operations in this mine were started in 1949 under Russian management and control. The premises and the territory surrounding the mine were turned into a Russian Military Zone. The directors and most of the mining engineers are Russians; and all of the mined ore is shipped to the Soviet Union. But Rumania has to supply the miners; and Russia expects that only the best men available, who are experienced and at the same time politically reliable, are picked. Most of the men were enlisted in the Valea Ziului mining district of Rumania and ordered to go to BEICA. Their files, containing their personal particulars and political records, etc. etc. were handed over to the Russian security forces. Their families were settled in nearby villages and in barracks near the mine.

All the guards at the mine are soldiers

(Over)

supplied by the Red Army units stationed in the Timisoara district. There is also a large MVD detachment in charge of security. No Rumanian soldiers or militia men are allowed on the premises or in the surrounding area.

Work in the mine is very strenuous; and miners are given short holidays every four to five months in order to rest and get fit again.

Barracks have been erected on the premises to serve as recreation centers during off-hours. There are also barracks and buildings housing the administrative offices and serving as quarters for the Red Army men guarding the mine. A first aid station has now been converted into a small hospital following a series of accidents. Even the medical staff is Russian and no Rumanian doctors have been employed.

There has already been a serious accident involving the loss of many lives in the autumn of 1952; and ever since there have been minor accidents. The Rumanian miners accuse the laxity of security measures and assert that the Russians, though they want all the ore, will not do anything for the safety of the Rumanian workers. "A Rumanian life means nothing to them as long as they can get hold of the Rumanian ore." But no-one dares speak out loud because there are so many cases in which miners have disappeared, with their families left starving. And there are many agents of the Russians all over the place to listen in and to report.

The extracted ore is packed in boxes and shipped by trucks to the railway station from where it goes by special trains under guard to the Soviet Union. "Not a single grain remains in Rumania." And no one has ever heard whether it is paid for or whether Russia is delivering other goods for it to Rumania. Rumours among the population have it that the ore is simply taken away.

The ore is ash-grey and when crumbling small bits of bright crystal appear.

End.