

ITEM No. 10264/54

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BULGARIA

INDUSTRY (1700)
Mining

THE URANIUM MINE AT BUHOVO.

SOURCE TRIESTE : A 26-year-old refugee who fled from his country in July 1953.

DATE OF OBSERVATION : Up to July 1953.

EVALUATION COMMENT : This report is a sequel to TRIESTE RFE Item No. 830/54, and FEPS-NEW YORK RFE Item Nos. 11101/52 and 2303, 2910/53. The output of 1,100 tons daily, marks a considerable increase (almost ten-fold) when compared to 1952, -- if the reported figures which are not confirmed in our files are correct.

The Evaluator is of the opinion that sub-source is well acquainted with the matter and that the reported figures may be considered reliable.

Attention: Economic Editors.

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Number of Workers Employed.

The active exploitation of the uranium mine of BUHOVO started in the spring of 1948 with 180 workers; in 1949 the number was increased to 360, plus 680 men of the Labor Corps. Around the end of July 1953, 649 workers were employed at the BUHOVO mine plus 2,200 soldiers of the Labor Corps (trudovatzi).

Location of the Mine.

The uranium mine of BUHOVO is in the neighborhood of the villages of BUHOVO, ZHERAVINO,

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VRAH MURGASH, YABLENITZA, SESLAVTZI, KREMIKOV TZI and GARA YANA. Most of the land owned by the peasants of the above-mentioned villages was confiscated for the enlargement of the mines.

BUHOVO includes the following uranium mines: "Porcha," "Goten," "Seslavitzi," "Barvi Maj," "Seslavski Monastir" and "Kremikovtzi." All these mines are owned by the Bulgarian-Soviet Concern GORUBSO.

Management.

General Director of the BUHOVO mines was the Soviet engineer Alexandr TROFIMOV; the directors of the single mines were the Soviet engineers: (FNU) PRIGVOZHEN, (FNU) APATOV, (fnu) OMAMANTOV and others whom source cannot remember.

A geology laboratory is attached to these mines. The chief engineer is Sergej RUDNEV, a Soviet geologist.

Security Measures.

Each mine is guarded by a company (rota) of soldiers belonging to the Internal Security army (vatreshna sigurnost.) 80 Soviet soldiers, under Captain (fnu) NIAMZLIEV are stationed there for this purpose.

The workers enter the mines on presentation of a special identity card which each worker receives from GORUBSO when hired. Outsiders (newspapermen, professional activists, etc.) may only enter the mining area by special permit from the management of GORUBSO. People who are found in this region without the permit, are held responsible. The guarding of the mines at the unfenced points is done by bloc points, secret points and night patrols.

Wherever it can be done the underground mines have underground communications with each other, to facilitate the transportation of the minerals and the handling of ore.

Exploitation of the Mines.

The exploitation of the minerals
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is done through galleries and where higher quality uranium is found, enlargements are made. In most of the BUHOVO mines, uranium is found in different concentrations in six different layers of earth with an inclination of from 5 to 80 degrees. In this way, each mine has from five to six horizontal levels. The actual mining is done on the highest level, from where the mineral is lowered by special plated tubing to the lower ones and from here moved outside.

On each level there is a horizontal gallery called "shtolna" which is used for the transportation of the mineral to the tubing that will carry it lower down. The transportation through these inclined galleries is done by small trucks (haspeli,) rotating bands and flow tubes.

In many places the layers of uranium are near the surface and in these cases the mining is done from the outside (deveta shtolna and "Seslavski monastir.")

The digging of the mineral is done with the help of compressors and explosives.

The mineral has a different aspect and color according to the mine. In the GORTEN mine for example, it is a greenish colored rocky matter with small crystals of green and purple color. In the "Seslavski monastir" mine the ore is of very hard earth with shades of green and orange.

The excavated mineral is divided in the mine into three different qualities by a specialist, a geologist named GEMBIZ. Outside the mine, it is unloaded by quality in three large bunkers of reinforced concrete, and from here is it loaded onto trucks covered by waterproof cloth (brizent). The first quality is taken straight to the railroad station YANA (GARA YANA) and from here it is forwarded to the Soviet Union, while the two other qualities, the second and third, are taken to the flotation plant for working. According to our source, in addition to the washing process which is carried out in large wooden receptacles, the mineral undergoes a chemical process (unknown to source.) The final product is also shipped to the Soviet Union. A second division in the quality of the mineral is often made outside the mine. It often happens that the first

quality of uranium already taken to the YANA railroad station returned to the mines by the Soviet general comptroller because it is considered to be of secondary quality.

The transportation of the mineral from BUHOVO to the YANA station and from the flotation to the same railroad station, is done by 300 "ZIS 50" trucks with Soviet and Bulgarian drivers, all trusted Communists. The drivers are not permitted to give a lift anyone during their working hours.

Production.

There are three shifts in the mines, of which the first has the largest number of workers and therefore is the most productive:

- 1 shift from 0800 to 1600 hours
- 2 shift from 1600 to 2400 hours
- 3 shift from 2400 to 0800 hours.

The total uranium production of the first shift (total for the whole mine) is 380 to 440 tons; the other two shifts produce from 340 to 380 tons, so that the total daily production is around 1,100 tons.

End.