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INDUSTRY

Whereas "Sovrom-Lenin" deals with the exploitation of Rumanian woods and of the Rumanian timber industry in favor of the Soviet Union, the "Comleam" was founded under the Communist regime for the purpose of selling and distributing timber residues or other lumber discarded by Sovrom-Lenin. The "Comleam" is administrated by the Ministry for Internal Commerce.

The offices of "Comleam" are situated in BUCHAREST at Splaiul Unirii Street 1, in the building of the former Rumanian Insurance Company "Adriatica and Agricola."

Director of "Comleam" is a certain MARON Paol, a Rumanian citizen from Transylvania. He receives a monthly salary of 42,000 Lei. He is an intellectual, has good technical preparation and is capable and honest. Because of his middle class origin, he was purged by the Communist Party in 1950, but has been retained in his position owing to protection by Minister of Small-Commerce Mrs. MALINSKI (fmu).

Assistant director of the company is BREKENFELD Ladislav from Transylvania, an old Communist. He is in charge of the commercial branch of the company and receives a monthly salary of 38,000 Lei, although very severe towards his employees he is correct.

GOLDSTEIN Saul, is the second assistant director. He is a Party member but seemingly is not very convinced of the stability and durability of the regime, inasmuch as he personally congratulated certain Italian citizens who had obtained their repatriation papers and were leaving for Italy. He is also in charge of the control inspectors, and receives a monthly salary of 32,000 Lei.

The Personnel Division, as in Communist enrolled enterprises, is the most important branch, selecting personnel according to severe political criteria and keeping the personal history sheets up to date. This division cooperates closely with the secret police (Securitatea,) with

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Secret Information Service (S.S.I.) and with the basic organizations of the Communist Party.

Three trusted Communists have been in charge of the Personnel Division between 1949 and 1951. The first was STROE Barbu, a Party member, who on the occasion of the "general verification" of Party members in 1950, was expelled from the Party and removed from his post. He was later on acting as simple employee for state enterprise "Centrocontextil."

The second person in charge of Personnel Division until January 1951 was Mrs. ZIMBREA (fma) a Party member.

CHIRAN Jon is the present director of the Personnel Division. He too, is a Party member and comes from the working class. He is illiterate and a fanatic Communist applying to the letter all instructions of Party and police.

SEGAL Chaim, a former merchant and a fanatic Party member, is chairman of the internal committee of the "Comlemn."

KATZ Amalia is secretary of the "Working Youth Union" of the enterprise. She is an ardent Communist who had been deported during the ANTONESCU regime.

"Working Youth Union" is an organization by means of which the Party prepares the new Communist generation and selects suitable individuals to replace old members of the administration. It is organized on the pattern of the Russian "Comsomol," and is of extreme importance. Hence the position of a secretary of this union is very important, Miss KATZ is fit on account of her energy, her excellent Marxist education and because she is a ruthless enemy of all adversaries of the regime. She is a terror to employees and executive personnel.

The former laborer UNGUREANU Jon is secretary of the basic organization of the Party. He is a fanatic Communist and ruthless in his fight against the undecided and non-Party members.

The Communist MAUTENEA Beno is in charge of the Propaganda Section of the basic organization of the Party. He is cruel and dangerous and has sent many employees to forced labor camps because he suspected them of sentiments

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against the regime.

MEYER Zaharia, since 1949, has been in charge of the special sale stores in BUCHAREST. He is a cruel Communist and persecutes his employees.

All above named persons, who do not participate in production, receive a special "Production Premium" amounting to 6 - 10,000 Lei, which together with overtime payment amounts to about 25 per cent of their salary.

The central offices of "Comlemn" have some 400 employees.

"Comlemn" further has some 24 sale stores in Rumania. Such stores are situated in BUCHAREST, PITESTI, ARAD, DEVA, SATU MARE, ORADEA MARE, ILFOV-TELEKOMAN, COSTANTA, CRAIOVA, TIMISOARA, GALATI, BACAU, JASI, BOTOSANI, BRASOV, SIBIU, CAMPU, -LUNGU-BUCOVINA, CLUJ, TARGU-MURES, SP. NTU GHEORGHE, BLAJ, SIGHISOARA and LUGOJ.

These sales stores administer the 248 timber depots existing all over Rumania and particularly in major centers.

"Comlemn" also takes care of furniture stores and distributes construction material to civilians employed in production.

Allotment of construction material depends on evidence of being employed in the "Productive field." Farmers can also purchase material or furniture, but they have to produce a political certificate issued by local Popular Council (Soviet) Ministries and other state enterprises may obtain timber in accordance with state projects, upon special approval of the State Planning Commission. They may draw timber supplies directly from factory or from Special Depot No. 124, situated in Galesa Rahova 260, BUCHAREST.

Sale of timber to employees of farmers is limited. They generally get a maximum of half a cubic meter of boards of a very low quality, nor considering whether this amount is sufficient or not for their requirements.

Timber of first, second, third, and fourth quality is directly withdrawn from production places by the "Sovromlemn" and shipped to Soviet Russia or other countries. Therefore, only residue timber of fifth, sixth, or seventh quality remains for use in the country.

Boards of the seventh category, so-called "pudritune," cost some 3,240 Lei per cubic meter, somewhat better boards of the sixth category are some 3,650 Lei per cubic meter.

and fifth category boards, usually used for flooring are offered for 3,970 Lei per cubic meter, but only to proteges.

The 18 sale stores of BUCHAREST receive some 200 cubic meters of timber per quarter. Stores in the province get less, and often are out of stock. In such a case farmers must purchase in BUCHAREST all lumber required for urgent repair work.

In spite of timber shortage "Sovorm-Lemn" withdraws huge quantities of first class lumber for shipment to Soviet Russia according to articles 22 and 23 of the Peace Treaty. It has further been ascertained that some 30 carloads of lumber, supplied free of charge daily cross the Soviet border at UNGHIEN and GALATZI-LARGA. In accordance with the "Rumanian Russian Trade Agreement, there are 20 more carloads of lumber shipped daily to Soviet Russia, charged to "compensations." Other large quantities are shipped to Soviet Russia via port of CONSTANTA. The total export to Soviet Russia is handled through "Exportlemn," depending directly on the Ministry for Foreign Trade.

The "Comlemn" also has a monopoly for distribution of other construction material, such as cement, lime, plaster, tiles, fire-proof and common bricks, etc.

Cement of poor quality is supplied to "Comlemn" only by two factories, namely the "Fieni" and Titan" of BUCHAREST. All other cement factories of Rumania work exclusively for the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry for National Defense, or for export to Russia and other countries.

Cement is sold to civilians only upon a certificate stating that they are employed in the "productive field" and subject to approval by local Soviets. It costs some 7,90 Lei per kilo. Before issuing such an approval, one of the Soviet inspectors checks the necessity of such requirements. Regardless of individual requirements, a maximum quantity of two bags of cement, i.e. 100 kilo, is issued to private persons.

It should be noted that construction or repair work of buildings, workshops, etc. requires a special authorization from local Soviets, issued upon payment of a regular fee of 8,000 Lei per month.

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Any quantity of plaster, lime, quick-lime, tiles and canes may be purchased, but prices are far above the financial possibilities of the population. One kilo of solid plaster costs 6 Lei, one cubic meter of plaster paste 3,136 Lei, quick-lime 9 Lei per kilo, and tiles cost 13,40 Lei each.

Managers of sales stores have strict instructions to sell boards required for construction only when the purchaser agrees to buy also a certain quantity of small wood, such as the ends of boards having a length of 1 to 1,75 meters, at a cost of 3,360 Lei per cubic meter.

Besides the said stores "Comlemn" also controls and operates so-called "collecting centers for various material required by the population, such as vine poles sticks, baskets, wicker furniture, wooden toys, etc. This operation has been considered in the State Plan and is called "Improvement of the Local Resources." It studies and exploits requirements, inasmuch as the enterprise purchases, for example, vine poles at a price of 2 Lei a piece, and resells them for 13,50 Lei a piece.

As already mentioned, "Comlemn" has the monopoly of the sale of furniture. Furniture is manufactured by the artisan cooperatives, of material supplied for this purpose directly by "Comlemn." There are four types of furniture on sale, namely a) "Popular furniture" consisting of three pieces: a wardrobe without mirror, a night table and a bed. This costs 32,000 Lei, payable in 10 to 12 monthly instalments after an advance payment of 40 per cent of the total; b) furniture of the "General Confederation of Labor" type, destined for the working class, consisting of a wardrobe without mirror, a single bed, a night table, a table and two chairs, costing some 25,000 Lei, equalling wages for four months of an average worker. The wood is of very poor quality and still green, so that furniture soon falls to pieces; c) furniture of so-called "superior" quality, but likewise made of low quality wood, consisting of the same pieces as b; it costs 48,000 Lei. d) so-called "luxury" furniture, made of walnut, costing from 150,000 to 200,000 Lei.

Free artisans, i.e. those joining a cooperative, do not receive wood for making articles required by private clients.

The central offices, depots and sale stores of "Sovormlemn" are under control of the Police; nevertheless, employees and workers are engaging in passive resistance, causing trouble and delays, so that "Comlemn" always has deficits.

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Timber Production Centers

The Rumanian-Soviet company "Sovorm-Lemn" has its own exploitation centers for wood on Rumanian territory. Such centers are situated at: FIETRA NEAMITZ, ROSNOV-NEAMTZ, BACAU, COMANESTI, DARMANESTI, TARGU-OCNA, FALTICENI, CAMPU-LUNG-BUCOVINA, PLORENI-BUCOVINA, FUNDUL MOLDOVEI-BUCOVINA, VATRA DORNEI-BUCOVINA, VATRA MOLDOVITZEI-BUCOVINA, MOLDAVITZA PERASTRAU-BUCOVINA, POJORATA-BUCOVINA. All these places are in East-Rumania to enable the Russians to export the material easily to Soviet Russia.

The State Enterprise "Comlemn" receives timber supplies through sub-sections of the "Ministry of Forestry." Such sub-sections are known by the abbreviation I.P.E.I.L. (Industries for the Exploitation and Industrialization of Timber.) The I.P.E.I.L. are divided into six groups, namely Trust No 1 in BUCHAREST, Trust No. 2 in TARGU MURES, Trust No. 3 in CAMPU LUNG BUCOVINA, Trust No. 4 in BRASOV, Trust No. 5 in PITESTI and Trust No. 6 in CLUJ. Each trust administers a certain zone, composed of several I.P.E.I.L. sub-units.

As already mentioned, the export of timber from "Sovorm-Lemn" is handled by "Exportlemn." In order to facilitate transportation, this company disposes of the following embarkation bases: URADIA MARE and SATO MARE for export to Hungary; SIGHET for export to Czechoslovakia; RADAUTZI, GALATZI and CONSTANTA for export to the Soviet Union. The port of CONSTANTA is also used for export of timber to Great Britain, Israel, Argentine and Egypt, as foreseen in the various trade agreements.

The cutting of wood has been speeded up and is done without consideration for the future. Forests existing for centuries were completely destroyed and mountains in Northern Moldavia are already bald.

The very members of the Communist Party and the employees realize the consequences of such ruthless exploitation. Besides opposing passive resistance they attempt to take personal advantage of this situation, and cases of theft, swindle etc. jeopardize the exploitation machinery.

SARBU Jon, a former shepherd, who for political merits had been appointed chief of the Ripartition Department of Construction Material, was arrested in March 1951 and imprisoned in VACARESTI. He had forged the signature of Minister MARIN Gaston, to obtain large quantity of construction material for speculation on the blackmarket. He had a monthly salary of 24,000 Lei.

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VALSAMACHE Spiridon was secretary of the localization base of "Exportlemn" and stole some 180,000 Lei from the safe of his office in January 1949. He was sentenced to two years of prison.

MOCANU Jon, commander of a voluntary labor brigade, engaged in wood-cutting in the DARMANESTI region, in 1950 stole some 25,000 Lei from the funds of "Comlemn." He was sentenced to six months of prison; at present he is employed by the railway workshops in BUCHAREST.

Hostility of the Rumanian population often results in acts of sabotage in the depots of the "Soyromlemn." A great fire was set in the forest of PIETRA NEAMTZ in summer 1950. In 1951 a fire was set in a big depot of boards ready for export to Russia at CAMPINA, in the former "ADULESCU" depot.

DATE OF OBSERVATION:

current period

EVAL. COMMENT:

Source : usually reliable
Information: partly confirmed
by other sources.