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Nov 27
XI-1976/A

BULGARIA

INDUSTRY

Mining, Coal

/1700/
/1706/

LABOR

Wages and Working Conditions

/1900/
/1910/

DIMITROVO COAL MINES

SOURCE ATHENS: A 21-year-old Bulgarian refugee student.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Until end May 1956.

EVALUATION COMMENT: This sequel to RFE ATHENS Item No. 1702/56, is valuable for the study of organization, working and living conditions at the DIMITROVO coal mines.

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Source, a native of the village of TSAR PETROVO /23 kilometers from the river Dounav, District VRATSA/ worked in the DIMITROVO coal mines from 1954 until the day of his departure in May 1956. A graduate of the high school of VIDIN, he was unable to join the DSNM Dimitrov's Youth Union and thereby continue his studies because his father was a well-known anti-Communist. In 1952 he was arrested in KOTEL for "speaking against the regime, the Soviet Union and STALIN." Prior to his escape he had made two unsuccessful attempts to escape to Yugoslavia.

The town of DIMITROVO has 40,000 inhabitants, mostly mine workers. The coal mines there comprise twelve different mines, each one with its own name. Source remembers the following:

Teva /where source worked/
Republika I
Republika II
Republika III

These four are surface mines.

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7th September /Koutsian,/ mostly a surface mine with only a small part below ground.

Beli Breg, on the outskirts of the town.
Temelko Nenkov, also on the outskirts of the town.
Tsazeva Kroucha.

Brigadier

Dimitar Blagoev I

Dimitar Blagoev II

Gheorgi Dimitrov. This is a "chahta", meaning that the shaft is vertical.

Tolbuhin I

Tolbuhin II, This is a "Chahta" but is not yet coal producing.

Each mine is divided into "rudniks" or work fronts. Each "rudnik" is split into "pole" /plural "poleta"/ or "utchastak" -- fields -- usually six or seven, and each designated by a number, and each field into work faces.

Each mine has an administrative director and a technical director, both of whom are invariably Communists and members of the Party in good standing.

Each "rudnik" has its own administration quite distinct from the overall mine direction. The chief of "rudnik" generally has no technical education but is a member of the Party. Under him are a chief engineer, deputy chief engineer, two assistant engineers, various heads of sections, a chief mechanic with his assistants and a chief electrician with his assistants.

Each "pole" has a section supervisor called "Natsalnik Utchastak."

The chiefs are never to be seen on the night shifts, only their assistants. The engineers visit the "rudnik" once daily to check records and issue directives.

Each mine has the following services which are represented in every field: Management, Accounts Department, Personnel, Norm Service, Planning and Production Service, Technical Safety Service, Foremen, Capital Investment Service, Party Organization and DSNM.

In the Teva mine in which he worked, source recalled that the administrative director was /fnu/ DOITCHEV, a former tailor; technical director was /fnu/ ROUSEV, an engineer; chief of "rudnik," /fnu/ BOFIANOV; chief engineer, /fnu/ VULEV. In the Tolbuhin I mine he recalled that the chief of a "rudnik" was

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/fnu/ AVRAMOV, and the chief engineer was /fnu/ ARNAUDOV.

Source stated he worked only in the Teva mine and, therefore, did not have first-hand experience of underground conditions, but was able to give the opinions of friends who worked in Tolbuhin II. From them he learned that the underground workers were better paid because the working conditions were very bad. Only strong men could work there, and even they, after five or six years, had to be given surface work. The mines are often flooded, he said, and the miners worked constantly with their feet in the water and mud. Clouds of heavy dust from the compressors filled the miners' lungs causing frequent fainting spells.

Accidents and Security Measures.

Source said that the main reasons for the accidents were gas explosions, collapsing of galleries owing to insufficient supports /to achieve the norm the workers have to neglect elementary safety measures./ Only the main galleries are lit by electricity. In other shafts the miners have German-made electric headlamps which often broke down, whereupon a miner would be forced to continue working by the lights of his comrades' lamps, because if he went up to repair his own or obtain a second issue he would be unable to fulfill the norm. Source said that the miners were often issued a caustic type lamp to suspend from their belts. These were poor in quality, and the caustic liquid would cause serious body burns. He said that six out of ten patients in the hospital suffered from such burns.

To diminish the danger of accidents, the management took the following precautions:

1./ Prospective miners are shown by veterans how the work is done in the galleries and are told of the dangers they incur and of how to avoid them; they are also instructed in emergency measures in case of accident. This course of instruction lasts for ten days.

2./ Before descending to the adits, all miners are searched for cigarets, matches and lighters. Supervision is constantly maintained to prevent them from smoking.

3./ Before each shift descends, a specialist in gases "grizoutsia" inspects the shafts and work faces and analyzes the proportion of gas in the air. If there should be more than he considered safe, he would order a special ventilation of the shaft.

4./ Air purification ventilators and water pumps are installed.

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5./ The position and strength of the gallery timber supports is checked at varying intervals.

6./ It is forbidden to pierce another gallery from adits at a distance of more than one meter from the last support. Should this rule be neglected, the coal produced from this digging is not credited to the team of miners who dug it.

However, said source, despite all these measures accidents are very frequent. One happens daily at least, owing mainly to inadequate ventilation and draining and also to the small number of support timbers. Source stated he had lived with a relative who was on the safety service team. Almost every night he would be called to the telephone because of an accident at the mine. In case of accident the blame was generally put on the victim who thus got no compensation.

Wages and Working Conditions

Apart from the general dangers of the mine, source said the workers complained of working conditions on a number of counts. They worked for eight consecutive hours without a break. Even their lunch would have to be eaten on the spot with a foreman urging them to eat their food in a hurry, otherwise he would report that their work was being performed unsatisfactorily. Should workers opening a new penetration strike a good seam of coal, their output would increase and so would their wages, but within a few days the management would increase the norm. As good seams were not encountered every day, the workers found they had to produce according to the new norm so that for the few days extra money they had earned they would be breaking their backs to produce more for less money for months to come.

In the morning, said source, the miners reached the mines half an hour ahead of time so as to register on the personnel attendance form, don their overalls and get down to the galleries on time. After eight backbreaking hours, he said they could not even wash. There were only two or three showers, and as the miners had to line up to use them, only the first arrivals ever got a shower, and the others would go home unwashed.

Once a year the miners were issued a pair of pants, a calico shirt, a pair of rubber boots and a pressed carton hat with a special attachment for the lamp. Should the miner lose any of this equipment during the year, he would have to pay for a replacement.

Source started in the mines in 1954 as a track layer. He kept this job for five months earning 600 to 700 leva monthly, but it was extremely hard work, he said. In August 1954 he attended a special school for "strelotchnik," and when he graduated

in October 1954, his wages were 17.80 leva daily, and he reached, after two years of work 20.16 leva daily. Source does not know the wages of the other miners but thinks they averaged between 16 to 17 leva daily with specialized workers getting 20 leva daily, technical workers 25 leva daily and supervisors 28 leva daily.

Source said the miners had their meals at a canteen where they paid for their food and found it very expensive. It was the same price as at the restaurants in the town, and the miners only ate there when they had money. A lunch or dinner cost approximately nine or ten leva. That's why the miners bought bread chiefly -- of very poor quality -- and cheese, and with tomatoes and peppers made their lunch. Nobody could manage to save a leva for clothes without cutting down on meals that were already insufficient.

Miners living in the vicinity of the mines went home after work. The greater part lived in houses built for them, "obstogitie," where six or seven persons lived in a room and paid a rent of ten leva per month. Prior to 1953 no rent was charged.

Source said that prisoners who were sent to work in the DIMITROVO mines had their prison term reduced by one-third; that is to say, two days of work in the mines were considered as three days in prison. The prisoners were employed only at the Blagoev I mine which was surrounded by barbed wire and guarded. They were not sent to the other mines. They were only paid seventy per cent of the wages of the regular workers. In the past, said source, political prisoners were also sent to the mines, but that has been discontinued now.

Source related that there was a Technical Mining School in DIMITROVO where young high school graduates who had already served their Army service were accepted for two-year training. Youngsters of the fifth gymnasium grade were also accepted, but their training was over a three year course. Usually this school gets students from those rejected after university examinations. Studies include mathematics, literature, and Russian language, as well as the technique of mining dealing with operations, finance, electromechanics, metallurgy, etc.

DIMITROVO was called "The Little Shanghai," said source, because of the many blackmailings, robberies and crimes that constantly occurred there.

End.

JB
Nov 27
II/4687

POLAND

COMMUNICATIONS (0500)
Waterways (0507)

NEWS FROM THE SZCZECIN SHIPYARD.

SOURCE STOCKHOLM: Confidential source.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Beginning of November 1956.

ENGLISH SYNOPSIS: Information concerning the present works at the SZCZECIN shipyard.

EVALUATION COMMENT: Attention "Anchors Aweigh" Program Editor.

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W obecnej chwili Szczecińska Stocznia Produkcyjna wyrabia statki typu B-32, klasy "Kolno." Klasa ta pochodzi z lat 20-tych.

Dokumentacje statków 10,000 tonnowych ukończono już w roku 1950. Dopiero teraz jednak statki te zaczynają być produkowane. Wynikiem tego jest, że statki te są przedawnione i w porównaniu ze statkami zagranicznymi tego typu, nie przedstawiają wielkiej wartości. W stoczniach zagranicznych rozbieżność w czasie między zakończeniem dokumentacji, a rozpoczęciem produkcji nie przekracza nigdy jednego roku.

Jeśli chodzi o polskie stocznie remontowe, to jedną z ich cech charakterystycznych są stałe przestoje statków. Powodem ich jest przede wszystkim istnienie roboczo-godzin. Czym wcześniej ukończony jest remont statku, tym mniej roboczo-godzin otrzymują robotnicy. Rzecz jasna, że w takich warunkach leży w interesie robotników jak największe przewlekanie remontu.

(over)

Wielkim utrudnieniem w pracy stoczni polskich jest także fakt przynależności stoczni remontowych do Ministerstwa Żeglugi, a stoczni produkcyjnych do Ministerstwa Przemysłu Ciężkiego. Współpraca między stoczniami bardzo na tym cierpi. Pokonanie trudności biurokratycznych przy przekazywaniu najdrobniejszych spraw ze stoczni jednego rodzaju do stoczni drugiego, zabiera niezmierną ilość czasu.

End.