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INFORMATION REPORT

REPORT

CD NO.

COUNTRY Rumania

DATE DISTR. 5 Nov. 1951 50X1-HUM

SUBJECT Evacuation of the Population from
the Rumanian-Yugoslav Frontier

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1. The evacuation of most of the civilian population from a section of the Rumanian-Yugoslav frontier, centered on Timisoara, began on 19 June 1951 and continued for a week. It is estimated that between 20,000 and 25,000 persons were moved.
2. The operation was kept a complete secret until two days before it was due to begin. The Communist Party organ Scanteia even tried to cover it up by describing "the successful harvest at the Timisoara area," although harvesting, in accordance with an ancient tradition, always begins on 29 June in that district. The move was actually carried out immediately before the crop was due to be brought in, which is an indication of its urgency and importance, in view of the earlier propaganda for a full, efficient and quick harvest. Since then, soldiers have been billeted in the evacuated villages, and have brought in most of the harvest. It is not known whether they are to remain permanently, or whether they will be withdrawn once the harvest is completed. The few Western observers who are familiar with the crop position viewed the evacuation with considerable pessimism. It is generally considered that it was carried out mainly for security and defense purposes, although it has also been suggested that the Russo-Rumanian Staff may be planning maneuvers in this area, especially if fighting is ended in Korea.
3. Up to now there were two distinct zones along the Rumanian-Yugoslav frontier. The first, about six kilometers deep, was practically evacuated some time ago, and a special military permit is needed to enter it. The second zone, about 20 kilometers deep, still had its normal population, and could be entered by means of a document from either a factory or a government department certifying that the visit was made on business. The present operation has now in effect placed the two zones under the same regime by the removal of all persons who might hamper the Army. The population consisted of a mixture of Rumanians, Hungarians, Serbs, Germans (Siebenburgen-Saxons and Swabians), and the evacuation appears to have been directed equally against all nationalities, and by no means against the Serbs in particular. Some villages were left completely empty, while in others trusted Party members were permitted to remain.

the categories evacuated were

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former S.S. men, ex-Army officers who had not been recalled to duty, businessmen with connections abroad, saloon-owners, manufacturers and property owners with money or relations abroad, refugees from Bessarabia (who had fled before the returning Russian authorities), and a mixed group of persons politically suspected for one reason or another. This description is approximately accurate in areas where only a part of the population was removed.

4. The evacuation was carried out speedily and with a certain care for the minimum comfort of the persons concerned. Road or rail transportation was provided nearby, trucks were equipped with benches and straw, and all evacuees were medically examined before they were moved. Those found unfit to travel were either allowed to stay behind or sent to near-by villages. Evacuees were permitted to take along a part of their property, including a cow, two horses and three other animals. The evacuees and their property were given transportation by families, two or three to a railroad car or trucks. They were taken to areas in the neighborhood of Calafat, to Dobrogea, and some to Muntania, near the Russian border. No preparations were made for their reception, but they were later given timber with which to build themselves huts. Although no details are known of their present condition, it is to be supposed that it is very hard.
5. No attempt is being made to find and deport the considerable number of persons who succeeded in leaving the villages and go into hiding in time to avoid the evacuation. Some of these have since returned to their homes or are still wandering, so that the operation cannot be considered completed.
6. The police used to carry out the operation were not taken from the local Militia, but brought from other parts of the country.
7. The operation was accompanied by virulent press attacks on Tito, but these have been a constant feature, and it is difficult to say whether there has really been any increase in violence. The Cominform also recently marked the third anniversary of its expulsion of the Yugoslav Communist Party, and this was an occasion for attacks on the Tito regime.
8. One effect of the evacuation was to increase the general anxiety of the population and its feeling of insecurity, fear of war, and dislike of the Government. Even Party members have been disturbed, and there have been suggestions that the evacuees were the victims of complete indifference in the areas in which they were "resettled."
9. There have been rumors since the evacuation that the authorities are preparing a general evacuation of bourgeois and non-productive elements, as in Bucharest. It is suggested that the police already have files containing 70,000 to 100,000 names. There has been an attempt, accordingly, by members of the middle classes to take refuge in official employment and other work recognized as essential.

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