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THE HAZARD OF GAS AND ROCK OUTBURSTS IN THE OLD MINE RUBEN (“PIAST” – NOWA RUDA)

Ruben Grube, gas and rocks outbursts, Nowa Ruda coal mine

In 1941 the old coal mine of Ruben (“Piaśt Nowa Ruda”) in Nowa Ruda saw the biggest gas and rock outbursts in the history of mining on the current Polish territory. The outburst was also the most tragic causing the death of 187 miners. This article discusses important documents related to that tragic accident. The authors came into possession of the documents courtesy of the private owner of the museum of the Coal Mine in Nowa Ruda. There was a need to summarize the history of mining as there are chances for the resumption of coal mining in the area of the discussed mine. The research concerning the not yet fully understood problem of gas and rock outbursts revealed those outbursts played a decisive role in mining. Therefore any resumption of mining could be an unprecedented opportunity to start research in this area.

Throughout the history of exploitation of the mines “Ruben” and “Piaśt” there were more than 1200 gas and rock outburst, and 13 accidents in which a total of 241 miners were killed, most of whom were the victims of the outburst of 1941. After analyzing the history of the mine, attention has been drawn to the political and social background of the history of Nowa Ruda. The largest number of gas and rock outburst occurred in periods when the mine underwent pillaging exploitation and during the personnel problems. It is argued that indication of the influence of the human factor as the cause of accidents seems to be unreasonable for the time before 1927. In the indicated period the miners were only beginning to learn about carrying out excavations under the ever changing conditions and trying to understand the phenomenon of gas and rock outburst.