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TRUCK TRANSPORT IN THE GDR

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According to 1953 plans, the transport performances in the GDR were to have been 21.3 billion ton-kilometers for the railroads, 1.8 billion for water transport, and 1.2 billion for road vehicles. The situation for road transportation, especially in trucking, has been deteriorating for the past years. There are no long-distance trucking firms; private firms handle only local transports. Despite all efforts by the authorities, two thirds to three fourths of all goods transported by truck are bulk goods, with coal representing one fifth of the total and wood and construction material representing an almost equally large portion.



Before the war, there were 80,000 trucks in the present-day GDR; today's truck park is estimated at 65,000. In addition, there are about 8,700 prime movers. The availability of these vehicles for service is lessened because the entire stock is obsolete. Before World War II about 40 percent of all trucks were over 5 years old; most of them are probably 20 years old by now. The average age of privately owned trucks is slightly higher than that of "people-owned" vehicles.

Yearly production of trucks amounts to only a few thousand units and very little of it is used to improve the domestic motor-vehicle situation. Heavy trucks with a capacity above 3 tons are not being built. New trucks are built by Horch, Phaenomen, and Pramo, but their production program includes only 1-ton, 1.5-ton, and 3-ton trucks.

Even more important than the drop of nearly 20 percent in the number of vehicles and the progressive obsolescence of the vehicles is the change in cargo capacity. Nearly 90 percent of all vehicles have a capacity of 3 tons or less, while in West Germany there are now six times as many heavy trucks on the road as before the war. Hardly any trucks with a capacity of over 5 tons are left in the GDR; the total capacity of all trucks is estimated at about 100,000 tons. This lack of cargo space, plus the shortage of fuel and of spare parts necessitates utilization of the trailer park, but there are only about 30,000 trailers of all sizes, and more than 80 percent of those carry less than one ton. The average trailer capacity is less than 2.5 tons, while it is nearly 3.5 tons in West Germany. The total cargo space in trailers in the GDR is estimated at about 70,000 tons.

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