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61

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
INFORMATION REPORT

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<b>COUNTRY</b>	Czechoslovakia	<b>REPORT</b>	<input type="text"/>
<b>SUBJECT</b>	Comments on Prime Minister Siroky's Speech Concerning Conditions in Agriculture	<b>DATE DISTR.</b>	29 April 1955
<b>DATE OF INFO.</b>	<input type="text"/>	<b>NO. OF PAGES</b>	11
<b>PLACE ACQUIRED</b>	<input type="text"/>	<b>REQUIREMENT NO.</b>	<input type="text"/> 50X1
		<b>REFERENCES</b>	

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(NOTE: Washington distribution indicated by "X"; Field distribution by "#".)

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COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

DATE DISTR. 28 Mar. 1955

SUBJECT Comments on Prime Minister Siroky's Speech  
Concerning Conditions in Agriculture

NO. OF PAGES 10

50X1

DATE OF INFORMATION

REFERENCES:

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1. At the plenary session of the CP Central Committee which was held on 10 and 11 February 1955, Prime Minister Vilem Siroky gave a speech dealing with the situation in agriculture in Czechoslovakia. The purpose of the speech was to present a critique of progress made in carrying out the directives set forth at the 10th Congress of the Czechoslovak Communist Party and to enumerate procedures necessary for more efficient adherence to the directives during 1955. [redacted] the speech [redacted] was published in the Czechoslovak daily, Zemedske noviny, dated 15 February 1955. Throughout this report, selected statements made by the Prime Minister are presented in condensed form [redacted]

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2. Siroky: Although requirements have increased considerably, the intensity of agricultural production has remained substantially at pre-war level.

[redacted] From statements made later in the speech, it is understood that there are now about 200,000 hectares of fallow land in the border areas. This acreage represents about four per cent of the total agricultural land in Czechoslovakia. Therefore, total production would probably not have reached pre-war level because in pre-war years there was practically no fallow land in Czechoslovakia. Actually, the figure of 200,000 hectares quoted by Siroky was too low anyway; the general consensus among Agroprojekt employees was that fallow land in border areas totaled approximately 300,000 hectares. Furthermore, it must be taken into consideration that production on cultivated land in the border areas was far below the pre-war level. This was true of private farms belonging to farmers who had resettled in the border areas and even more true of Unified Agricultural Cooperatives (JZD) located in the border areas. As a matter of fact, the cooperatives in the interior of the country achieved an average compensation of 12 crowns per work unit while the cooperatives in the border areas averaged only

50X1

**CONFIDENTIAL**

CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

50X1

eight crowns per work unit. A work unit represents a certain amount of a particular type of work as specified by government regulations.

3. Siroky: By increasing the barley yield per hectare by 100 kg. in 1955, we could raise enough fodder to produce 15,000 live-weight tons of hogs.

It is impossible to increase the national yield of a particular crop in the course of one or two years; as a matter of fact, this requires many years of intensive work.

4. Siroky: The present national average milk production per cow does not equal the pre-war level; however, the average milk production per cow on state farms exceeds the pre-war national level. This indicates that it is possible to achieve the pre-war level of milk production in all types of agriculture (state farms, cooperatives, and private farms).

The average milk production per cow on large farms was always higher than the national average. This was due to the fact that economic conditions were usually better on the larger farms. Therefore, it is nothing new to find this true on state farms under the Communist régime, especially since state farms receive preference in fodder supply. Siroky did not state whether or not the present state-farm average milk production was higher than the average milk production on pre-war state farms. Furthermore, a useful comparison cannot be made between state-farm production and national production because the state-farm production of milk is a part of the national average.

5. Siroky: It is necessary to decrease the amount of loss incurred during harvest. For example, sugar-beet harvest losses amounted to 16% this year. If we were to decrease the losses by half, enough sugar would be gained to equal the market consumption for two months.

It is not reasonable to decrease harvest losses beyond the point where such decreases would cease to be profitable; and, therefore, it is useless to raise the question of whether or not elimination of losses would actually proportionately and profitably increase the production. During the First Republic, sugar-beet harvest losses were from five to seven per cent. The fact that losses reached 16% in 1954 indicates that sugar-beet production was actually lower than before because no claims of increased production had been made. On the other hand, the fact that the losses had reached such a high percentage indicates that the causes for these losses were basic and rather serious and, therefore, could not be remedied during the course of one year.

6. Siroky: In order to increase the yield per hectare, it is necessary to increase the humus in the soil. Because of improper handling, stable fertilizer loses about 40% of the value of its organic substance.

Losses in organic substance amount to from 20 to 25% when stable fertilizer is handled properly. The losses in organic substance actually occurring in Czechoslovakia must have been higher than 40%; losses undoubtedly reached about 50% with cooperatives which handled fertilizers properly and no one state farm where proper handling was practiced. It was located in Viglas (N 48-34, E 19-18). When building common stables, very few cooperatives also constructed the pit necessary for proper storage of fertilizer. Concrete constructions for storage of

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 3 -

50X1

fertilizer which had been built by private farmers were not fully utilized because the private farmers had joined cooperatives and the cooperatives simply piled the fertilizer in heaps with the result that the liquid manure flowed off and was not utilized. Care of fertilizer was also neglected on private farms because the private farmers were usually preoccupied with more important work, had been deprived of their farm machinery, and were not allowed to hire laborers. Furthermore, there were fewer animals on the cooperatives than there were on the private farms before the members joined the cooperatives because each member kept one cow, one or two hogs, and some fowl for himself and used the fertilizer on the acreage he was allowed to retain when joining the cooperative. This acreage was not to exceed one half hectare. In this way, the small acreages which are the property of the individual cooperative members will soon have a sufficient quantity of humus, while the cooperative acreages will continue to be insufficiently fertilized since they receive manure from a smaller number of animals than the same acreage received when still owned by private farmers. The cooperative stables, especially those on cooperatives located in hilly areas, lacked proper bedding, and no effort was made to procure substitute bedding such as peat, potato greens, evergreen rakings, etc. Finally, the private farmers lost interest in fertilizing their fields because of constant land reapportionment which meant they never knew whether or not they would benefit from their own work. As of 1954, some of the fields of private farmers in Southern Moravia had been reapportioned as many as four different times.

7. Siroky: Supplies of artificial fertilizers must be increased. Supplies were already increased during 1953 -- nitric fertilizers by 31.4%, phosphoric fertilizers by 12.3%, and potassium fertilizers by 22%.

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According to instructions from the Ministry of Agriculture, the cooperatives, in 1953, were entitled to receive eight kilograms of nitrogen, eight kilograms of  $P_2O_5$ , and 16 kg. of  $K_2O$  for each hectare of arable land. These amounts were for grains; allotments of nitric fertilizer and potassium fertilizer were slightly higher for root crops and the allotment of phosphoric fertilizer was slightly higher for commercial and fodder crops. When considering the percentage increases for 1954 which were prescribed by Siroky, one finds that the amounts of fertilizers reached approximately 10.7 kg. of nitrogen, 9.3 kg. of  $P_2O_5$ , and 19.1 kg. of  $K_2O$  per hectare of arable land. These amounts were still very low, considering that the usual amounts of fertilizer used until 1948 were 30 kg. of nitrogen, from 20 to 30 kg. of phosphorus, and from 60 to 80 kg. of potassium per hectare. It is true that these amounts were not used by all farmers in Czechoslovakia; however, the use of these amounts was very frequent and proved profitable for acreages of all sizes.

8. Siroky: In our effort to increase the fertility of the soil, we must substantially improve the liming of sour and slightly sour soil.

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The liming of sour, slightly sour, and even neutral soil was discontinued in 1948 because all small kilns were put out of operation, slaked lime was used exclusively in the building industry, and there were not enough laborers to perform the work of liming the soil. Because of the labor shortage and the lack of equipment for spreading lime, liming by means of saturated sediment from sugar refineries was also discontinued. As a matter of fact, sediment accumulated in the sugar refineries was beginning

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 4 -

50X1

to hinder operations there. Therefore, in 1952, the sediment was ordered removed from the sugar refineries; but it was 1954 before source saw fields being limed with it. Thomas meal was unobtainable. Although this meal usually served as phosphoric fertilizer, it contains from 50 to 60% lime. There was also a complete lack of calcium cyanamide ( $\text{Ca N}_2 \text{C}$ ) and calcium nitrate. Ammonium sulphate ( $(\text{NH}_4)_2 \text{SO}_4$ ) and a superphosphate ( $\text{Ca}(\text{H}_2\text{PO}_4)_2$ ) were usually used as nitric and phosphoric fertilizers, respectively. These fertilizers contained only a small quantity of lime. When today the importance of liming fields is stressed, the question arises as to whether or not there will be sufficient quantities of Thomas meal and calcium cyanamide for this purpose. Furthermore, if the goals set by the 10th CP Congress calling for increased construction of apartments are to be met, it is doubtful that sufficient quantities of lime, if any at all, will be made available for agricultural purposes. This is especially true considering the fact that it has recently been very difficult to obtain lime for minor repairs of homes and for liming walls. The lack of lime will be even more acute should emphasis again be placed on expanding heavy industry, which is likely to be the case.

9. Siroky: If seeds are of poor quality, the resulting crop will be poor in spite of all the care and fertilizer which might be applied. This is common knowledge and the officials are aware of it. Why is it then that farmers receive poor-quality seeds?

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From 1950 through 1953, private farmers were not allocated "quality" seeds because of the government policy prevailing at that time, i.e., only state farms and cooperatives were entitled to receive and reproduce these seeds.<sup>1</sup> The "quality" seeds were frequently of poor quality because of the general situation on cooperatives and state farms, but nothing was done to correct this. On the contrary, seeds which under ordinary circumstances could not be considered "quality" seeds were frequently ordered to be classified as such because of political reasons -- so that the prestige of state farms and cooperatives would not suffer, or in order to insure compliance with a production plan. This is the reason why seeds which were allocated for 1954 and 1955 and classified "quality" were often actually of very poor grade. This situation cannot be improved in one year. Actually, several years are required to improve the overall quality.

10. Siroky: In order to increase crop yields, we must apply new methods as they were developed in Soviet agriculture and successfully tested in our country. We must do this on a larger scale than in the past. To name only some of them:

- a. Condensed sowing of grain.
- b. Check-planting of potatoes.
- c. Raising calves in isolation.

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- a. The question of sowing grain in rows which are more closely spaced was dealt with in various agricultural publications during 1951 and 1952. It was stated at that time that sowing grain in this manner would raise the crop yield from 1,000 to 1,400 kg. per hectare. Later, the statement was modified to claim an increase of only 300 to 400 kg. per hectare. This method of sowing was recommended and publicized in Czechoslovakia by Dr. Ing. Simon (fnu), professor at the Agricultural Institute in Brno, who experimented with this method in Southern Moravia.<sup>2</sup>

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

50X1

- 5 -

This method proved satisfactory there, apparently because of the climatic conditions in that area -- there is not much rain in the spring. Dr. Ing. Eduard Baudys, chief of the Phytopathological Institute in Brno and head of the Department of Phytopathology at the Agricultural Institute in Brno, did not agree with Simon and claimed that this method of sowing grain was not suitable for areas receiving more rainfall than Southern Moravia. Since it was wiser not to oppose Soviet methods too strongly, the methods were tested in other areas of Czechoslovakia and were found to be satisfactory, increasing the crop yield by 200 to 300 kg. per hectare. However, no one appeared to be concerned about the fact that the sowing process was more expensive and harvest losses were greater in rather wet areas when applying the new method than when using the standard system common to the area. The harvest losses were higher because when the grain was sown in more closely spaced rows in rather damp areas it had a greater tendency to fall and rot. This was especially true when stiff-stemmed grains such as Pyselka, a derivative of Carsten grain, or some other stiff-stemmed types were unavailable.

- b. Regarding the checked method of planting potatoes, i.e., fields made up of squares measuring 70 cm. each with two potato tubers at each corner

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it would be unreasonable to introduce this method in Czechoslovakia since potatoes planted in a checked pattern normally require cross-cultivation three times during the crop year. [redacted] not believe this work could be properly accomplished because the cultivation of potatoes occurs at the same time as the hay harvest. In fact, there was not usually enough time and labor available to cultivate properly potatoes planted according to the old method, i.e., in rows which were about 35 cm. apart with potatoes planted about one foot apart within the rows. This older method required cultivation of potato rows in one direction only, and only twice during the crop year. Even when using this method, the potatoes were cultivated only once and sometimes were not cultivated at all because of lack of time and labor. Therefore, [redacted] it might be better to continue planting potatoes according to the old method and to try to cultivate the entire potato crop twice during the year rather than to try to introduce new planting methods. Another problem would arise when planting the potatoes in a checked pattern. Czechoslovakia had no machinery to use for this method. There are machines for planting potatoes in rows but they are still not developed to complete satisfaction.

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- c. Siroky claims that "more than 38,000 calves were successfully raised by the cold (air) isolation method during 1954, which method, among other advantages, lowers the death rate of calves and will restore the health of our cattle". The "cold (air) isolation method" consists of weaning the newborn calf immediately and isolating it in a so-called Steyman hut, a wooden hut measuring approximately 150 cm. long, 150 cm. high, and 80 cm. wide. This hut affords minimum protection from the elements and supposedly permits the calf to develop faster and become more rugged than if it were raised under conventional procedures. In addition, the fact that the calf is isolated immediately minimizes the exposure to disease. Whether or not the isolation method is successful cannot be determined for at least three years after it has been put into practice, since this period of time is required to ascertain the quality of the resulting cattle. When discussing restoring the health of cattle, perhaps it would be better first to concentrate on improving the health of the cows rather than to begin by trying to improve the calves. Siroky did not mention the number of animals presently suffering from Bang's

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

50X1

- 6 -

Disease, rachitis, mastitis, or from herpes, a skin disease which was prevalent in the Karlovy Vary Region. What will be the fate of the 38,000 healthy calves raised by the isolation method when they are put into stables where they receive insufficient care, where the supply of bedding is inadequate, and where they receive just enough fodder to produce one-half liter milk daily? As a matter of fact, there were cooperatives where the average milk production was only one-half liter per cow per day; for example, the cooperative in Moravsky Lacinov (N 49-46, E 16-29) recorded this low production rate during 1953.

11. Siroky: We must solve the problem of coordinating research and practical application of new methods. When performing experiments, the research worker must be in touch with the greatest possible number of cooperatives and state farms; he must follow, check, and guide the work of the pioneers and those testing the improvements in actual practice.

Collaboration between members of scientific circles and the actual agricultural workers was very unsatisfactory because the average scientific worker was overloaded with matters dealing with politics and publicity in his field. Another reason for poor collaboration was the fact that the cooperatives and state farms were not willing to carry out practical experiments for comparative and confirmative purposes because this only involved additional work for them. Frequently, an experiment was initiated by a cooperative or state farm which, not being interested in the experiment, failed to establish the results of the experiment or arrived at them in such a poor manner that they could not be used as a basis for further scientific work. Actually, the research centers had the main responsibility for performing experiments; however, these centers suffered from continuous changes in their administrative setup. During 1950 and 1951 the centers were independent; then, for a short time in 1952, they were subordinated to the General Management of State Farms which existed at that time; sometime, still in 1952, they became independent again; later they were subordinated to the Main Administration for Research of the Ministry of Agriculture and received scientific supervision from the Czechoslovak Academy of Agricultural Science. The Academy of Agricultural Science assigned the scientific problems, but the centers were given a definite period of time during which a problem was to be solved and, because of this policy, work was often poor and superficial.

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12. Siroky: The reason for the unsatisfactory results of the "new course" in agriculture up to the present time is not that the level of agricultural production can only be raised slowly, as claimed by some of our experts, but rather that the whole program was improperly initiated in the first place.

It is possible to raise production to the pre-war level. It is doubtful, however, if this can be done under the Communist régime or when using Communist methods. To raise production above the pre-war level would be very difficult and can be accomplished only over a long period of time and through the application of new scientific methods which would further normal development. As a matter of fact, Czechoslovak pre-war agriculture was on a relatively high level and the acreage on which the level of agricultural production could be raised substantially was insignificant.

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13. Siroky: The directives of the 10th CP Congress called for a substantial increase of fodder crops. This is the key to animal production. Actually, fodder crops have been neglected; the

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 7 -

50X1

yield of these crops, with the exception of barley, has been far below the possible production capacity and even below the average pre-war level.

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- a. Because fodder production is lower than it was before the war, animal production is necessarily limited, since practically no fodder has been imported from abroad. The decrease in animal production not only makes for smaller financial gains but also results in the production of smaller quantities of fertilizer which, in turn, causes a reduction of sugar-beet and potato yields.
- b. Requirements for alfalfa and clover seeds were scarcely met, and no rapid increase in the amount of this production can be expected because the clover-grass and alfalfa-grass mixtures which had been introduced for use as green fodder and hay in 1950 offer no possibility for producing seeds for reproduction purposes. Only seeds from pure alfalfa and pure clover crops can be used for reproduction purposes and it will take at least two years before pure alfalfa and pure clover can be produced in large enough quantities to supply seeds for increasing alfalfa and clover production. There was also a shortage of grass-mixture seeds for use on meadows and pastures and there was a complete lack of all special seeds for "short time" fodder mixtures, such as ligrus, trifolium incarnatum, vicia, brassica, vicia faba, soja hispida, pisum sativum, lens, trifolium retens, and lupinus.
- c. Meadow and pasture yields were low because of the lack of artificial fertilizers and because old irrigation constructions were not maintained and no new ones were built. In the interior of the country, this situation existed primarily because of lack of money and the lack of interest on the part of the private farmers. The situation was much more serious in those border areas where people had not been resettled.

14. Siroky: We cannot be satisfied with the progress made regarding ensilage.

No silos have been constructed during the last few years because construction was expensive and there was a lack of necessary building material, particularly cement. For the same reasons, it is not likely that new silos will be constructed in the near future. In addition, the cooperatives did not make sufficient use of the silos which had been built by private farmers.

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15. Siroky: The directives of the 10th CP Congress stressed the principle of creating individual fodder funds within each district, cooperative, and village.

The realization of this program would involve much more than the improvement of organization in farming procedures, as claimed by Siroky, because the problem directly involves the attempt to be self-sufficient in Czechoslovak agricultural production. Since it is practically impossible to increase the yield of fodder on existing acreage, increasing the acreage devoted to fodder crops and proportionately decreasing the acreage of another crop should be considered. However, this is not likely to be the case because it is the policy of the régime not to decrease the present acreage of any crop.

50X1

CONFIDENTIAL



CONFIDENTIAL

- 8 -

50X1

16. Siroky: The situation regarding livestock, especially cattle, is very unsatisfactory and little attention is given to scientific research dealing with our animal production.

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- a. One of the main reasons for the situation regarding livestock being unsatisfactory is that the time-tested breeding procedures have been discontinued. In transferring the livestock from private farmers to cooperatives, the official records which had been accurately kept for each animal were almost entirely destroyed; thus the line of descent could no longer be determined. The jobs of Livestock Breeding Controllers were abolished. These officials kept pedigree records and maintained continuous data on individual animals. The markets for brood animals were discontinued shortly after the introduction of the Communist agricultural policy and were only reestablished at the beginning of 1954.
- b. One of the basic problems in animal production is hog breeding. The Communists transferred the bulk of hog breeding from small breeding units as they existed on private farms to large breeding units, most of which were set up on state farms. The remaining large breeding units were built as independent centers which were known as "giants". The large units were of several types but none of them proved satisfactory; all the units were cold, humid, and lacked proper bedding. These conditions resulted in the strain becoming infested with distemper which also affected the offspring and dangerously increased the death rate of sucklings. Furthermore, because of the conditions in the breeding pens, resistance to other diseases was lowered. After the results of this practice had been determined, the whole idea of "giant" breeding centers was abandoned; certain individuals were held responsible for the failures and were tried. However, the large breeding centers at the state farms were not reorganized and none of the scientific workers were eager to assist in such reorganization, perhaps because they were afraid that in the future they might be held responsible for any suggested changes and resulting costs. Furthermore, the government preferred to have hog breeding concentrated on the state farms and thus have complete control of the production of pork and pork products because of their importance to the life of the nation. They preferred a kind of compromise and claimed that the health of the Czech white hog had deteriorated and its resistance to disease was lowered because of constant attempts to improve the strain; therefore, they believed it would be necessary to breed a new type of hog which would be more adaptable to the new conditions. They did not mention that such a solution to the problem would require about 10 years.

17. Siroky: In 1954, the Machinery and Tractor Pools received hundreds of binders and thousands of spreaders for both natural and commercial fertilizers.

\_\_\_\_\_s of 1953, there was a complete lack of spreaders for fertilizers and thus, even if it were true that thousands of them were delivered to the Machinery and Tractor Pools in 1954, it does not necessarily follow that there were enough to fulfill the demands. Siroky did not mention the quality of the machinery which was, as a matter of fact, quite poor. The tractor drivers complained that the binders only operated efficiently for two seasons and then had to be overhauled.

50X1

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

50X1

- 9 -

18. Siroky:

- a. The Machinery and Tractor Pools require cadres of tractor drivers, maintenance mechanics, foremen, and agronomists.
- b. Up to now, the Tractor and Machinery Pools have failed in their task to effect the changeover from existing agricultural systems to socialistic agricultural mass production.

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What Siroky meant was that the Tractor and Machinery Pools must perform their work well in order to contribute their share toward the development of socialistic agriculture. But the problem lies in the fact that the Tractor and Machinery Pools cannot perform their work well. As a matter of fact, the cadre procedures for recruiting personnel for the Machinery and Tractor Pools were more stringent with regard to obtaining reliable Communists than in any other field of agriculture. The result of this policy was that personnel, particularly key personnel, were not agricultural specialists and were often people whose attitude toward agriculture was negative and remained so. To rectify this situation and recruit qualified personnel would necessitate discontinuing the severe cadre policy, since it is very difficult to secure qualified personnel who are also reliable Communists. But it is also obvious that professionally qualified personnel who are not reliable Communists cannot be expected to encourage the adoption of socialistic agriculture.

19. Siroky: The resettlement of the border areas must be completed, since this is essential for increasing agricultural production, but the 1954 investment plan for building up the border districts is far from being fulfilled.

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It is very difficult to carry out the resettlement program in the border areas, especially in the western border areas where most dwellings are in ruins and large capital investments are necessary for their reconstruction. All of the farm buildings in the western border areas must be completely rebuilt. Furthermore, not many people are willing to resettle in the border areas because they are afraid that the former Czechoslovak-German nationals might return to the area.

20. Siroky: We are experiencing difficulties in cultivating fallow land in the border areas; yet, in 1956, the USSR plans to sow grain on an area of new land totaling about 30,000,000 hectares, which is almost six times as great as the entire area of arable land in Czechoslovakia.

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Thirty million hectares is about 1.37% of the total of Soviet territory, while the 200,000 hectares of fallow land in Czechoslovakia is approximately 1.56% of the total of Czechoslovak territory. There are many more people needed to cultivate one hectare of fallow land in Czechoslovakia than are needed in the USSR because Czechoslovak land cannot be cultivated by the extensive farming method which will be utilized in the USSR. The natural fertility of soil in Czechoslovakia is low and therefore soil cannot be cultivated over a period of years without simultaneously raising livestock and using manure to increase fertility of the soil.

21. Siroky: Production costs on state farms were about 25% higher than production costs on cooperatives and this difference was even greater with regard to some products, e.g., potatoes and cattle.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

- 10 -

50X1

[ ] This was the first time it was officially admitted that production costs on state farms were higher than in other types of farming. However, the fact that production costs were lower on cooperatives does not mean that production itself was more profitable on the cooperatives than on state farms, but rather that production costs on cooperatives were lower because the cooperatives did not have to pay a minimum wage as did the state farms.

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22. Siroky: The task of the state farms, i.e., to be the avant-garde of socialistic agricultural mass production, requires that the national morale and the morale of the laborers be raised and that the employees be taught their true relationship to socialistic property.

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[ ] In this statement Siroky was acknowledging the fact that the employees on state farms steal. As a matter of fact, thefts of produce on state farms became the common practice for supplementing wages. These thefts occurred in spite of the fact that wages on state farms have increased compared to farm wages in pre-war years. For example, wagon drivers formerly earned 200 crowns per month in comparison to their present salary of 800 crowns. This comparison is based on the calculation that the rate of the pre-war crown to the present crown averages one to three, not considering actual purchasing possibilities, of course. Theft on state farms is tacitly tolerated because the personnel in charge are not usually really interested in the results of the farming and they do not wish to become unpopular with their subordinates. This is especially true in cases where the subordinate personnel are more politically active than their superiors.

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50X1

CONFIDENTIAL