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SUBJECT Gas Mask Production at the Chotebor Metalworking Plant; Miscellaneous Political Information

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SUPPLEMENT TO REPORT NO.



1. The Chotebor Metalworking Plant was founded as Eckhardt and Company in Prague in 1927. In 1936 the plant was moved to Chotebor (050/M75). During World War II, filters for German gas masks and oxygen apparatus for the use of the Wehrmacht were manufactured at a rate of 70,000 filters and 500 oxygen apparatus units per week. In addition, 49,000 canisters for gas masks were produced each week as well as a limited number of autogenous welding machines. During the war 90 percent of all productive capacity was devoted to producing filters and canisters.
2. In 1944 the factory was ordered to produce airplane engine coolers in cooperation with the Junkers factory. In reality, this production was not begun until the end of the war. At the end of the war, production was started on autogenous welding machines and milk cans. Today, about 100 welding machines are produced each week and about 5,000 milk cans each month. A small number of miners' lamps and oxygen apparatus for use in the mines are also manufactured. Special bottles for the storage of butane are manufactured at a rate of about 10,000 per month; the plant's quota is 30,000 per month. Most of these bottles are exported, largely to France.
3. Production of filters for gas masks was stopped shortly after the end of the war. In 1947 about 150,000 filters were in storage. A small number of these have been issued to fire-fighting brigades and about 15,000 sent to Yugoslavia. Early in 1948 the Military Technical Institute in cooperation with the Chotebor Metalworking plant began work on the development of a new type of filter for a new Czech gas mask. Because of the lack of technical experts, production has not yet begun on the new filter. Still, production of these filters has been made part of the Five Year Plan. The Chotebor plant received a credit in 1949 to construct a 20,000 square meter building for the production of the filters at a rate of 10,000 per shift. The rubber parts for the new gas mask are to be manufactured at the Svit Rubber Plant (formerly Patra) in Napajedla (P50/010).
4. It was planned that the new type of filter should be designed in such a way that it might at some future time be further impregnated against new types of gas not yet known. This requirement cannot be met. A substance other than active coal is being sought for use as the neutral layer for the filter. [REDACTED] however, that an effective filter can be made from a mixture of cellulose and powdered coal. The raw materials for the filters are available

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- 2 -

from domestic Czech production and are needed only in small quantities. Only the poor quality of tin will have an adverse effect on the quality of the filters.

5. Drawings of a Soviet model filter were to be delivered to Chotebor for production. They had not arrived as recently as October 1949. Even if a new filter design were developed and accepted, or if the drawings for the Soviet filter were delivered, it would not be possible to begin on a mass production basis for at least a year because of difficulties in converting the plant from the production of machinery.
6. In order to tie Czechoslovakia with the Democratic German Republic, Poland and Hungary in a common economic program and in order to continue to force Czechoslovakia to export steel and iron to the USSR against the interests of the country,* it is necessary that the key positions in Czech industry be held by persons who are completely willing to carry out such a program. It was because of their lack of energy in carrying out this program that Milan Reiman, Chief of the Office of the Prime Minister, and Evzen Loebl, Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade, were purged. It is probable that Vojtech Slesinger, the brother-in-law of Loebl and manager of Metrans, national trucking corporation and Fisar, Deputy Minister of Social Welfare, will also be removed from their positions for similar reasons.
7. Some of the Communists placed in important positions in the economy of Czechoslovakia include Ludvig Frejka (alias Freund), who controls the economic structure of Czechoslovakia through the economic commission of the Communist Party, Jaromir Dolansky, former Minister of Finance who was recently made Chairman of the Planning Board, and Dr. Jaroslav Kabes, newly appointed Minister of Finance. Kabes was formerly secretary to Dolansky and is still greatly influenced by him. Thus, Dolansky and Frejka exercise very extensive control over Czech economy. Both are loyal Communists. It is reported that Dr. Eduard Outrata will probably be removed from his position on the Economic Council because of Dolansky's distrust of him.

25X1X * ~~Comment:~~ The USSR ordered Czechoslovakia to produce iron and steel for export to the Soviet Union and other satellites at 12 kcs/kilogram in place of manufactured articles which Czechoslovakia could export for 30 kcs/kilogram.

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