

K/ M
20 June
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CZECHOSLOVAKIA

INDUSTRY

Musical instruments
Management
Defective production

Inferior Portable Gramophone Only Alternative to Expensive
Electric Article For Czech Music-Lovers.

SOURCE FRANKFURT

30-year-old office employee in the bookkeeping department of the JABLONEC gramophone factory belonging to the trust Gramofonove Zavody N. P. who worked there from March to September 1952.

As source only remained six months in the factory, he is not able to give detailed general information. He escaped West in September 1952.

DATE OF OBSERVATION

September 1952.

EVALUATION COMMENT I

This is a very authentic information on the gramophone industry in USSR. For detailed research see Evaluation Comment II.

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A portable clockwork gramophone costing about 1800 Kcs is the only alternative available for Czech music-lovers who cannot afford an electric gramophone, according to source. The quality of this machine is inferior; it is frequently defective, the speed varies and the turntable is often badly centered so that sound is distorted. But it was rumored among the workers at the gramophone factory JABLONEC ZAVOD 7000 that even this indifferent substitute might be abolished as a luxury article.

The factories combining to produce the gramophone belong to the gramophone trust Gramofonove Zavody N.P. As the gramophone is regarded as a means of disseminating information, the trust is under the control of the Ministry of Information. Source claims that the Minister of Information - KOPACKY Vaclav arranged it so that workers in factories control-

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led by the Ministry could not be drafted to heavy industry or subjected to purges.

The head office of the gramophone trust is in PRAHA ZIMNI Stadion. It controls all factories making portable gramophone parts and accessories including PRAHA BALABENKA, LODENICE U PRAHY, VRABLE NA SLOVENSKU ZAVOD 5000, JABLONEC ZAVOD 7000 and OLOMOUC. Each factory is responsible for a different component gramophone part such as portable cases, needles, records etc. The factory JABLONEC ZAVOD 7000 makes only the clockwork mechanism known as type "ME a" and mounts it in a metal case preparatory forwarding it to the VRABLE NA SLOVENSKU ZAVOD 5000 factory where it is installed in the portable case.

The original JABLONEC factory was established before 1948 by KOZENY Olaf. It was a small plant employing about 200 workers known by the name of "AREPHON". Shortly after the putsch in 1948 this factory was nationalized, combined with several smaller ones making different small metal articles, and absorbed into the gramophone trust. KOZENY joined the Communist Party and remained as manager of the now enlarged factory. The factory moved in spring 1950 to larger premises in the same street at JABLONEC PODZIMNI 25 formerly belonging to one of the metal bijouterie factories.

The present factory is a three-storied L shaped building. The offices and two private apartments are located in the main building, one apartment belonging to the manager KOZENY and the other retained by FIEDLER (fnu) director of one of the metal bijouterie factories. KOZENY's office was on the first floor adjoining the office of the book-keeper (Hospodar Zavedu) HAVLIK Jaroslav, who also bought all the tools, fittings etc. for the factory. The tool shop (Nastrojovna) where all parts are hardened, ground, and shaped etc., was supervised by REICHL Zdenek a 20-year-old Red, chairman of the factory Communist cell and Czech Youth Organization (CSM). This man was an enthusiastic Communist and continually urged the workers to take part in sessions and brigades. Fourteen workers were employed in this department, including one other fanatic Communist JUN Kamil, well-known among the workers as a footballer.

The machine shop on the second floor of the wing was equipped with 2 large hydraulic presses, and about 20-25 work benches where the workers in groups of five assembled and mounted the gramophone mechanism in the metal cases. The cases were then labelled with the legend Gramofonove Zavody JABLONEC. The foreman of this section was a young non-Communist ethnic German called SCHMIDT (fnu).

Daily production averaged about 100 pieces which were packed 30 at a time, in large crates and sent to the trust factory

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ZAVOD VRABLE NA SLOVENSKU where the mechanism was fixed in the portable gramophone case.

in the Before August 1951, according to source, the only Communist factory was the former owner KOZENY. In August an order was given by the cadre department at the PRAHA head office that in future only Communists would be eligible for employment with the trust. In September 1951 about 14 Communists were given employment at the JABLONEC factory but none of the old workers were dismissed. The number of employees in March 1952 was about 77, of whom about 45 were women.

There was no cadre department in the JABLONEC factory and political schooling only took place twice a week for Party members. The CSM (Czech League of Youth) to which all young workers belonged held meetings once a week.

The worker's council met about once a month and attendance was compulsory. The chairman was a woman Communist JUNOVA Marie, the mother of the footballer JUN. She left the gramophone factory in July 1952 and went to the PRECISA N.P. in JABLONEC which manufactured precision instruments. She was replaced by the non-Communist foreman of the tool shop (NU).

Source, who was employed in the gramophone factory from March to September 1952 assisted the bookkeeper HAVLIK, and thus knew some of the wages paid. The manager KOZENY received about 9,000 Kcs monthly, the manager of the machine shop about 6-7000 Kcs monthly, and women workers were paid about 1,500 Kcs every fourteen days. These sums included pay for overtime which was 25 per cent more than the normal hourly pay. Source was not able to say how much of the monthly pay quoted was attributable to overtime, but many of the workers worked about 20 hours overtime monthly.

The machine shop had two eight hour shifts from 6 a.m. till 14 hours, and from 14 hours till 22 hours. Offices and tool shop only worked one eight hour shift from 8 a.m. till 16,30 with a 30 minute break for lunch.

Lunch was provided in a nearby communal kitchen (Zavodni Kuchyne) where workers from several other enterprises also took their meal. The factory paid half the cost of the lunch, 7 Kcs, and the worker also paid 7 Kcs. Two lunches a week were meatless, and when meat was served it was only a small portion weighing about 70 grams.

When source worked there production was planned for 100 pieces daily. During the summer months production was fulfilled to 103 per cent except in July when the factory was shut because all

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the workers were on annual leave at the same time.

About 3000 machines "ME 1" a month were completed by the JABLONEC factory. Source does not know whether any were ever exported.

The plans prepared by the central planning department of the gramophone trust in PRAHA ZIMNI Stadion, simplified production as far as possible to produce a standard machine. Materials used were of home production so there was no difficulty in obtaining them. The amount of sheet metal and metal for springs used by the JABLONEC factory was comparatively small, and was supplied by another trust plant Gramofonny Zavody Zavod Ledenice U PRAHA which purchased steel for its own use in mounts to include the requirements of the JABLONEC factory.

The JABLONEC factory was allowed 360 Kcs for each complete mechanism, and all trust factories manufacturing gramophone parts sold to each other at standardized prices fixed by the PRAHA central office.

The VRABLE factory rejected 2000 machines from the JABLONEC factory in June 1952 because they did not work. This was finally traced back to damage sustained in transport the machines having left JABLONEC in working order, but another 2000 replacements had to be sent off immediately to VRABLE. The damaged consignment was dumped in the VRABLE cellar and source believes they were still lying there up to the time he left.

The JABLONEC factory suffered another loss in May 1952 when 3000 faulty cases required for mounting the clockwork parts were delivered from Metalis Narodni Jednik Nejdek which did not belong to the gramophone trust. These metal cases had holes for the mounting screws in the wrong places so that it was impossible to connect the top to the bottom. Although the JABLONEC factory complained to the supplier, no action was taken and the faulty cases were left still crated in the factory yard. Metalis delivered 4000 such metal cases monthly to the JABLONEC factory, although 3000 would have been adequate. Source attributes this surplus to faulty planning on the part of the PRAHA office, but the JABLONEC manager and officials kept the matter quiet, storing the surplus cases in the attic.

Source estimates there to have been about 20,000 surplus metal cases stocked in the attic during the time he was there. Director KOZENY passed this off with the remark that it was good to have reserve supplies which could, in an emergency, be used for other purposes.

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This caused the workers to believe that the manufacture of gramophones might one day be abolished as luxury industry, and the material converted to other manufacture.

EVALUATION COMMENT II : "Gramofonove zavody" n.p. at JABLONEC nad NISOU is confirmed here. According to the telephone directory the head office of the enterprise is located in PRAHA II, Palackeho 1. "Gramozavod," the production enterprise of the "Gramofonove zavody" n.p., is located "na Stvanici" which corresponds with the winter stadium as reported here. The enterprise at PRAHA VIII Belasenska 319, and the enterprise at LODENICE near BEROUN, are also confirmed here.

According to Item No. 10331/52, the gramophone industry at VRABLE was established on 1 February 1952. "Gramofonove zavody" n.p. Ultraphon is confirmed at OLCHOU, Masarykova n. 27. JUN Kamil from JABLONEC was once mentioned in one of our background reports to be a football player of the "Sokol" association of the "Preciosa" enterprise. One SMIDT, most probably an ethnic German, was reported in Item No. 8477/52 to be the chief of the production department of the glass industry at JABLONEC. It is UNCONFIRMED here whether he is identical with the person mentioned in this report. "Preciosa," the production enterprise of fine mechanical items, is confirmed here. The other names under reference are UNCONFIRMED here.

End.