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EASTERN GERMANY

The Old Course In The MANSFELD Copper Mines

SOURCE BERLIN: Observer of the MANSFELD Copper Mines.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: 17 October 1953.

EVALUATION COMMENT: This report illustrates the inherent contradiction, between the "New Course" promising an easing of conditions, and the continued need for high production -- to create the consumer goods which are needed to ease conditions. Since, in addition, Soviet demands must be met, the "New Course" does not have much of a chance.

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In the MANSFELD Copper Mines, scene of the latest one-day strike in East Germany, the Communist Party is trying to take the bull by the horns and force copper miners to again accept higher work norms.

The sixty-year-old former cook, SED director GUT-JAHR, issued a directive (No.7) on 16 October informing "Werkleiter" and "Normenbearbeiter" (section chiefs and specialists planning and controlling work norms) that until the end of this year, the daily output of miners will have to correspond to norms valid prior to 17 June 1953.

The directive says: "The work norms valid on 1 June 1953 will have to be reached until 31 December of this year." Since the work norms to be reached till the end of the year correspond to the norms valid under the old course (proclaiming and pretending the construction of Socialism) the directive of GUTJAHR means a switch back to the old course in MANSFELD. The way in which the MANSFELD director tries to raise work norms is particularly astonishing since the protests of workers on 17 June were directed in the first place against the work norms considered too high by workers all over Soviet-occupied Germany.

While section chiefs and norm specialists are thus

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held to raise work norms accordingly, they are also warned by a special letter attached to those copies of the directive that were issued to section chiefs and norm specialists personally, that discussions in which workers participate in great numbers should be avoided. Discussions on raising work norms should instead be held directly at the place of work of the individual worker. "The decision of the individual miner to raise his work norm according to previous standards will be listed on a special list in his presence. Miners should also be told who of their colleagues has already agreed to raise his norm."

As it appears, norm specialists are fearing sharp reactions of workers and miners. On the night of 13 October, during a special session that had been called by SED-supported director GUTJAHR, the majority of the norm specialists declined to raise work norms forcefully and contradicting wishes of miners and workers. Several norm specialists pointed to the June decision of the GROTEWOHL Government, which denied the right of anyone to raise work norms by force, i.e. simply by administrative measure. Other norm specialists recalled a recent speech of SED boss Walter ULBRICHT, who had said that all workers have to agree to higher work norms prior to their being upped.

In the second part of his directive, director GUTJAHR expects workers "to find out yourself those who sabotage our constructive work by deliberately working slowly."

Confirming thus a number of Western reports on MANSFELD workers' unwillingness to produce copper for the Communist regime, GUTJAHR carried on by saying: "The raising of work norms will be the best indication everyone can give to show that he does not want to have anything to do with those who deliberately work slow."

End.