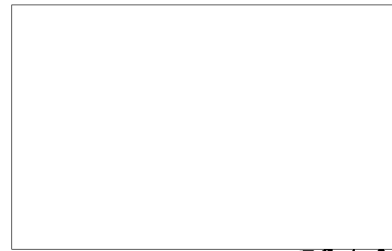


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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY Czechoslovakia/Hungary

SUBJECT Radio Amateurs" Categories/Quality and Shortages of
Radio Parts/Government Regulations/Recording Machines



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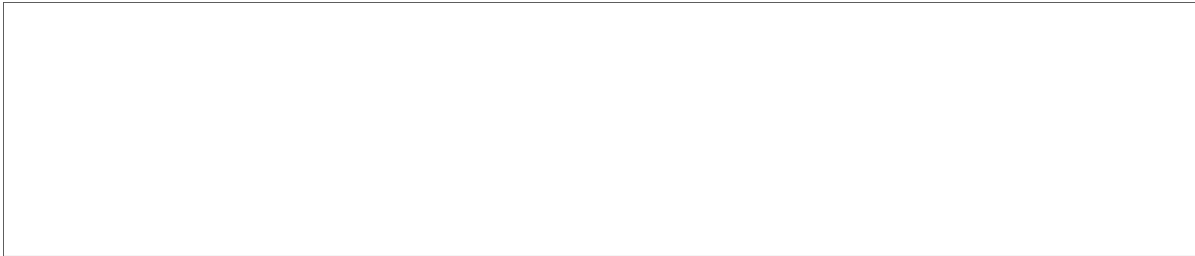
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Categories of Amateurs

2. "The Czechoslovak Government is sponsoring radio amateurs as a part of pre-military training within the SVAZARM movement. The Youth League (CSM) has in several towns special units of radio amateurs. There exist also many private amateurs who devote all their spare time to building new radio receivers. Building transmitters is strictly limited to the officially supervised groups.

Quality and Shortages of Parts

3. "The main problem for radio amateurs is how and where to find parts and components for sets. Besides wireless receivers the amateurs also build amplifiers and recording machines of various types and repair old radio sets for their friends. The main source for parts and spare parts are stocks of secondhand radio materiel from German and UNRRA origin which are still available in Czechoslovakia. These parts were unsuitable for the mass production of the nationalized radio industry, Tesla, and therefore found their way to official radio shops, the Elektra and Mladý Pionyr (Young Pioneer) shops.



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4. "It is natural that the main difficulty is to procure condensers and resistance coils of the size and volume to fit the specifications in the blueprints of various sets. Sometimes one cannot even get the required parts for blueprints officially issued by Elektra. On the other hand, there are many special parts available, which can seldom be used although they are of very good quality. The latter are mainly elaborate press-button sets with complete coil and resistance gadgets, including the and out-pat condensers. (civkove soupravy s vystupem, vstupem a vsemi prvky soupravou). These parts originate mainly from the UNRRS [sic; UNRRA?] but some

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of them are brand-new imports [redacted] Only after they had been imported was it found that they were completely unsuitable for Czechoslovak mass production - and this for a very simple reason: the best sets had up to 24 press buttons which enabled an exact partition of short wavebands, including ultra short wave. These press-button coils were originally intended to be used for an exquisite set called Harmonia, the blueprint of which equalled the best foreign radios. This special press-button coil would ensure perfect reception of scores of foreign stations in all possible shortwave-bands from 5 to 170 metres - and that was considered undesirable by the nationalized radio management! Therefore the idea was abandoned and the coils given to radio amateur shops. 50X1-HUM

5. "Unfortunately these valuable parts were purposely made unusable, because the shops were not given any technical data on the exact 'value' (hodnota cívky) of the individual coils. The complete press-button set consisted of a set of coils plus a corresponding air revolving condenser (vzdušný otočný kondenzátor), plus in-put aerial set of coils (vstupní anténní cívková so-uprava), and finally interlinking coils (mezifrekvenční cívky). The shops split, sometimes purposely, the whole sets of coils, thus damaging the whole circuit unit. It was up to the radio amateur to find out by elaborate ways how to use the individual parts. Those who owned very sensitive measurement apparatus could find out the actual technical data of the parts, by measuring and by calculating the winding of the coils (odhad hodnoty s počítacím zívítu). The interlinking (mezifrekvence, resistance coils were then adapted to the required number of kilocycles. Receivers equipped with these parts are extremely efficient and in excellent working order. Only after several months did the shops receive the corresponding condensers and interlinking coils. These were discovered only by frequent and permanent customers at a shop or by personal friends of the shop assistants.
6. "Radio parts produced by Czechoslovak nationalized enterprise Tesla are of very poor quality, because the indicated 'values' (hodnoty) are almost never correct. When a radio amateur is building a set of these new Tesla parts, he may have to replace ten or fifteen resistance coils or condensers before he finds the right one.
7. "Radio amateurs have had to make, therefore, frequent changes which are actually improvements on the original blueprints of circuit diagrams. This indirectly proves the high standard of the present amateurs in Czechoslovakia. The majority of the 'old' amateurs managed to get after World War II remnants of radio sets and radio building equipment from the German Army stores - mainly aircraft communication sets, measurement apparatus and precision mechanical tools. Some parts made by the amateurs do not only equal in precision and perfection those made by Tesla, but in many cases are even superior in quality. Tesla builds radio sets according to blueprints at least ten years old. Apart from changes in cabinets and some tuning improvements the new Tesla sets are completely identical with the old types. 50X1-HUM
8. "Another difficulty in getting suitable parts is that many shops will sell only whole blocks of old sets so that usually only two or three parts from about twenty can be used at all. [redacted]
9. "Valves available in shops are either from the old Tesla stock of the H-series (H-21, and 22, FBI 21, LF 21, AZ 11, etc.), or new valves made by the Hungarian firm Tungaram. These are mainly midget lamps, based on Philips construction, but their output and efficiency are much lower. [redacted]

[redacted] although the circuit scheme was more or less the same, the aerial input on the latter was much lower and therefore the ultimate output was weaker. [redacted]

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[redacted] Czechoslovak amateurs are prepared to pay three or four times more for Western valves than for those produced by Tesla. A set of five valves for an ordinary receiver cost in old currency about 2,000 Cr., in new currency about 500 cr. [following reform of 30 May 53].

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11. "The biggest difficulty for Czechoslovak radio amateurs is the lack of screws, nut and bolts made of copper, soldering apparatus and precision tools as well as insulating materials.

12. "Radio amateurs are kept busy repairing private sets for all their friends, because repairs done at the nationalised shops are much worse in quality. New radio sets built by amateurs are very popular, because they not only give better reception but also wear better. All the parts for a five-valve receiver cost about 4,000 cr. in the old currency (without a case). The radio was then sold for 8,000 to 10,000 cr. The recording machines were also sold at about 10,000 crowns.

13. "Many radio amateurs are engaged in building recording apparatus which are used by enthusiasts to record important political speeches, news bulletins, etc. from foreign broadcasts. Some of the music fans record Western jazz music. These recording machines operate on homemade discs made of X-ray films. These discs may be used up to 200 times.

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14. "Although it is strictly prohibited to own a recording machine and the owner risks severe punishment, there are hundreds throughout Czechoslovakia, mainly in Prague. All the parts for recording and engraving are made by amateurs themselves, so that they need only an ordinary, strong electric gramophone motor with speed regulator. All the transmitting gears and magnetic engraving gadgets are homemade. [redacted] several groups of enthusiasts [redacted] record Western jazz music for use at home dancing parties. The only difficulty to this process is the regular supply of large-size X-ray films. Nurses and girls employed in hospitals are the main source of supply.

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15. Government Regulations

"Ultra short wave frequencies must not be used in Czechoslovakia, neither for radio amateurs' transmitters nor for receivers. Old German wireless sets from aircraft and tanks were fitted with these ultra shortwave coils. [redacted] all these sets have been confiscated during the last few years, and radio amateurs have been warned not to hide them. The ownership of German or Western portable transmitters-receivers (walkie-talkie type) is prohibited. The sets have had to be handed over to the police. These sets, especially the transmitters, could very easily be converted to very effective transmitters for longer distances. When in 1949 the sale of these sets was prohibited and their registration ordered, some of the proprietors risked keeping them illegally and used their parts for other purposes.

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16. "All radio amateurs who own an international license have to sign a statement declaring that they will not disclose any state secrets, as understood by the present laws, and that they will send in regularly exact reports on any conversations with foreign amateurs. The license is given only to very reliable Party people who must be recommended by their local police post as well as by their local Party organisation. Several big factories have their own radio units which operate under the supervision of the factory militia. The Svazarm radio units attend regularly tests and training transmissions in the open air using weak short wave transmitters and receivers of army type."

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