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CZECHOSLOVAK L-29 AIRCRAFT
WILL BE SOVIET BLOC JET TRAINER



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CZECHOSLOVAK L-29 AIRCRAFT
WILL BE SOVIET BLOC JET TRAINER

Recent evidence shows that the Czechoslovak L-29 will be the standard jet trainer aircraft for the Soviet Bloc. The 1 April 1964 issue of Kridla vlasti, a Czechoslovak biweekly magazine devoted to aviation and space, reproduced a personal letter sent to its editorial staff by Vladimir Janik, a member of a technical service team that was sent to the USSR to service the Czechoslovak-designed-and-manufactured L-29. A partial translation follows:

Originally, I wanted to write you a long letter about my impressions from Ivano Trankovska [airfield]; instead, I am sending several photographs, from which you will learn much more. Two years ago three types of two-seat jet trainer airplanes were tested in the Soviet Union (the Soviet Yak, the Polish Hiskra, and our L-29); the L-29 was best. The decision was made to use the L-29 for training CEMA military pilots. This was perhaps an even greater honor than that given to our Ae-145 and L-200-D "Morava" airplanes of which 400 are still flying for Aeroflot. The consignment of L-29's, however, will exceed this number many times, and we cannot discount the interest other nations will show for our product. The world market has very few planes which measure up to the quality of our L-29.

The first tens of these planes began arriving in the USSR at the end of last May. It became imperative to set up service stations and to recruit, in the shortest time, a sufficient number of technical experts to properly service the L-29's and to move the personnel with their families to the receiving stations at Ivano Trankovska [airfield] in the USSR.

It was known that there was a competition among the Soviet Magnum (Yak-30)/Mantis (Yak-32), the Polish Iskra (Ts-11), and the Czechoslovak L-29 jet trainers, but it was not clear which trainer had been selected. It now is apparent that neither the Magnum/Mantis nor the Iskra will enter series production and that the L-29 will serve as the

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jet trainer aircraft for the Soviet Bloc. The letter also indicates that there will be large numbers of these aircraft delivered to the USSR and reveals that deliveries began in May 1963, which is earlier than had been estimated.

One photograph accompanying the letter shows 15 L-29 aircraft carrying Soviet markings lined up on Ivano Trankovska airfield. The L-29 is a two-seat jet trainer with the following specifications: wing span, 11 meters; length, 10.5 meters; height, 4 meters; empty weight, 2 metric tons; maximum flight weight, 3.3 metric tons; maximum speed, 950 kilometers per hour; maximum altitude, 13 kilometers; and maximum time in flight, 1.5 hours. The L-29 has been seen deployed in Czechoslovakia, East Germany, and the USSR.

It is estimated that the L-29 is being produced at the rate of 10 per month and that, as of the end of May 1964, approximately 200 had been produced.

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