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INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY	USSR (Belorussian SSR)	REPORT NO.	<input type="text"/>
SUBJECT	How USSR Imports are Handled Through Brest	DATE DISTR.	19 April 1955
50X1		NO. OF PAGES	5
50X1		REQUIREMENT NO.	<input type="text"/>
DATE OF INFO.	<input type="text"/>	REFERENCES	<input type="text"/>
PLACE ACQUIRED	<input type="text"/>		

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COUNTRY USSR (Belorussian SSR)

DATE DISTR. 16 Mar. 1955

SUBJECT How USSR Imports are Handled Through Brest

NO. OF PAGES 4

DATE OF INFORMATION

REFERENCES:

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50X1

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION

1. Various numbers were assigned to rail-freight shipments for the USSR which originated in East Germany. Military transport numbers were probably assigned by the Transportation Section of the Soviet Control Commission in East Germany while civilian numbers were probably assigned by the all-union association which had ordered the freight. Two different terms were used in connection with rail-freight numbers:
 - a. Transport number (nomer transporta) which was used for an entire train that transported similar freight and which was used only for military transports. It appeared as a plain number of several digits, such as "No. 17425".
 - b. Trans (trans) numbers were used for piece-freight which occupied only a part of one freight car or one of several cars of a train. This type of number was used for civilian freight which was normally ordered by an all-union association. In giving orders to their foreign counter-agents (kontr-agent), the all-union association specified the trans number under which the freight was to be shipped. These numbers were made up of two components stated in the form of a fraction; the numerator represented the identification number assigned to the specific all-union association while the denominator indicated the current registry number of the specific order. Thus, the trans numbers usually read as follows: Trans 59/10587 or Trans 24/27372. Numbers "59" and "24" represent identification numbers of two all-union associations. Although source was unable to remember any specific numbers assigned to associations, he vaguely remembers that TekhnoEksport was assigned the number "64".
2. There was a basic difference in the way that transport numbers and trans numbers were written on documents or used in business correspondence;

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50X1

SECRET

- 2



the term "transport" never appeared as a component of the number but the term "trans" always did. Thus, the numbers would appear as "No. 17425" and "Trans 59/10587". In the movement of the freight from its point of origin to its destination, the trans numbers remained unchanged, whereas transport numbers were often changed in Brest, where the freight was reorganized. Source does not know how the reorganization of the freight was accomplished and is not certain whether or not the method of numbering was ever changed. However, he believes the all-union associations retained their assigned identification numbers, if not permanently, for at least a period of several years. Because source's associates in Brest knew all of these numbers assigned to various all-union associations so well, source assumes that they were in use for a long period of time. Another reason for the permanency of trans numbers was the fact that large orders were spread over a period of several years. A change in numbering during this period would result in confusion on the part of the firms executing these orders.

3. As a rule, Soviet freight cars did not travel into satellite countries nor did satellite freight cars travel into the USSR. Transloading was done at the border, usually Brest, by placing both trains beside a railroad platform and carrying the piece-freight from one train to another. Freight such as coal and similar products was transloaded with the aid of an elevated scaffold bridge from which the contents of railroad cars on one gauge was merely placed in cars of another gauge. Axles were changed on some passenger cars at Brest to enable these cars to travel all the way from East Germany to the interior of the USSR. However, source doubts that freight cars were ever handled in this manner because a specially-designed axle which was too expensive would have been necessary. Source heard that some time ago a railroad line running between Moscow and Berlin had been opened, which was presumably Soviet gauge in its entirety. Another railroad line of Soviet gauge was presumably to connect Moscow and Vienna via Chop and Budapest. In mid-1953, this line had allegedly been completed from the USSR-Hungary border as far as Budapest.
4. The counting of freight car movements in tons or by carloads depended solely on the purpose of the counting. For instance, DERUTRA A.G. was interested in determining only the tonnage that was transported and did not care about the number of cars used.¹ DERUTRA carried this system so far that even new railroad passenger cars manufactured for the USSR in East Germany and shipped to the USSR by DERUTRA were recorded in tons as piece freight (11.4 tons per car as source remembers). The Brest office of LenVneshTrans was interested in both the tonnage of freight passing through the Brest railroad station and the number of cars.² For the latter purpose, serial numbers of the cars were registered, but even then the counting of cars was done without any specification as to whether they had two or four axles. In a similar way, counting was done at the regional office of DERUTRA A.G. where, in addition to the tonnage, serial numbers of the freight cars were registered. The freight was always weighed when carloads of homogeneous freight were concerned, estimates were never made. In cases of piece-freight, such as machinery and similar items, weight was of no particular importance; only the number of pieces involved mattered. In these cases weighing was usually disregarded.
5. All trade agreements concluded between the USSR and East Germany had a clause which stated that both parties must insure their freight as far as the border. East Germany always complied with this rule; however, the USSR never insured its freight, preferring to pay any claims instead of paying a great deal more to insurance companies.

SECRET

50X1

SECRET

- 3 -

6. Although source was not familiar with the procedure followed for ordering cars and did not know which authorities were charged with the approval of car requests, it was his opinion that this was left to the railroad authorities and that the Soviet transport agencies were not concerned with these problems. Based on source's experience in serving with the Brest office of LenVneshTrans for several months in 1950, the procedure was the following:
- a. Any foreign firm or shipping agency forwarding freight to the USSR, sent notification to the concerned parties at the time of the actual shipment. The all-union association which had placed the order was notified that freight (Order No.) had been shipped for the association's disposal to the Brest railroad station. Also included was the date of shipment, the number of freight cars involved and serial numbers, as well as notification that one copy of the letter had been simultaneously forwarded to the regional office of LenVneshTrans in Brest.
 - b. Shipping documents also accompanied the freight sent to the Brest railroad station. These documents described the contents of the shipment and its destination, for example, 10 drilling machines, Siemens Type No....., tonnage....., consignee: VO TekhnoImport, Brest.
 - c. When the freight arrived at the Brest railroad station, during office hours, the railroad authorities informed the regional office of LenVneshTrans within 30 minutes that specified freight had reached the railroad station.
 - d. As soon as this notification was received, the Brest regional office of LenVneshTrans informed the Brest railroad station within one hour regarding the disposition of the freight, giving the names of the plants or installations where the freight was to be shipped and the addresses of recipients in the USSR. The Brest regional office of LenVneshTrans also notified the Brest railroad station of the import license number to be used for customs clearance.
 - e. The regional office of LenVneshTrans in Brest meanwhile had received all the data for this notification from the appropriate all-union association as soon as the latter had received notification from the manufacturers that the freight had been shipped. (See a. above.)
7. Source does not know whether or not there were delays in receiving the cars requested because this matter was under the jurisdiction of the railroad authorities; LenVneshTrans in Brest had nothing to do with this problem. However, source heard that occasionally, the cars were received in poor condition for loading and that they had to be returned, but this happened only rarely.
8. Commodities handled by LenVneshTrans went through Brest. Soviet exports to the West were not disguised and the names and addresses of consignees were stated openly on all shipping documents. Because of this, the LenVneshTrans regional office in Brest had nothing to do with such shipments and practically all procedure for such shipments was handled by the railroad administration. In other words, the LenVneshTrans office in Brest was concerned solely with commodities going to USSR. ²

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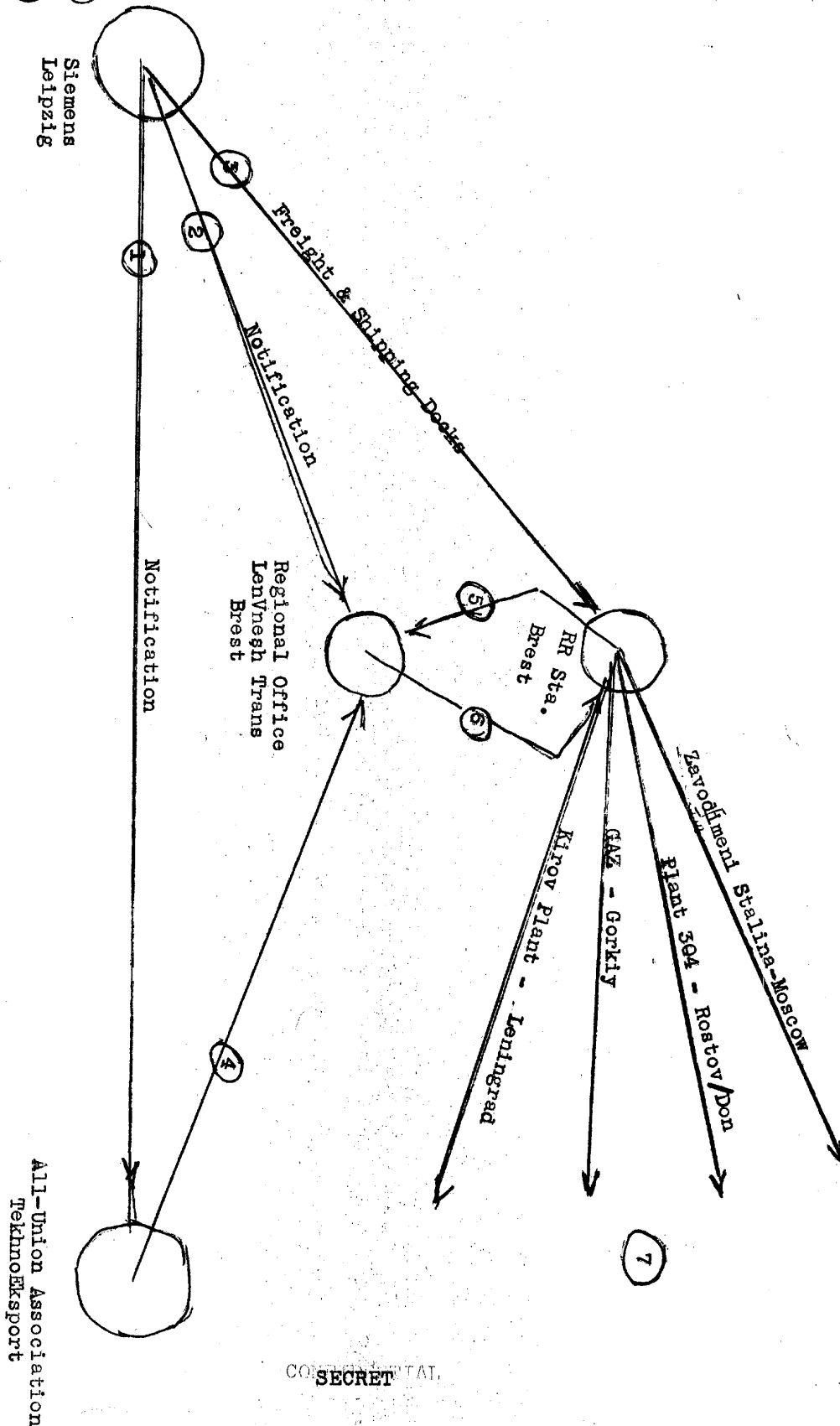
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SECRET
- 4 -



Diagram of procedures used
in imports of goods to USSR

Legend: ①, ②, ③, etc. = sequence of actions.



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