

General Introduction

Nature of the Target

The Ruhrchemie A.G. was formed by a group of Ruhr Companies, the principle shareholders being :-

Gelsenkirchener Bergwerke A.G.
Gutehoffnungshütte
Harpener Bergbau A.G.
Fried. Krupp A.G.
Mannesmann Röhren-Werke A.G.
Essener Steinkohlen Bergwerke A.G.
Rheinpreussen.

About 1935, following the acquisition by Ruhrchemie of exclusive rights to the Fischer-Tropsch process, the Company started the construction of a plant for the commercial operation of this process, and a subsidiary company known as Ruhrbenzin A.G. was formed to serve as the operations organisation for the project. It is believed that the desire to find outlets for the surplus coke produced in the Ruhr was one of the main reasons for the new venture.

Not only did this plant represent the initial large-scale operation of this process, but it also served as the research and development centre for the process and many modifications and ancilliary and related developments which followed later. The other eight Fischer-Tropsch plants which were subsequently erected in Germany were licensed by Ruhrchemie and were based on the Ruhrchemie model.

The catalyst factory at Sterkrade-Holten supplied all catalysts required for the operation of the six Fischer plants in the Ruhr area.

Plants erected (or projected) in foreign countries (e.g. Japan) were licensed by Ruhrchemie and depended on them for the basic technical information necessary for the operation of the process.

It is therefore clear that the Sterkrade-Holten works constituted a target of major importance for C.I.O.S. Item 30, and required thorough investigation. Other Fischer-Tropsch plants in Germany would serve mainly to confirm and amplify information obtained from Ruhrchemie.

Object of the Investigation

1. To obtain technical details of the operation of the Sterkrade-Holten plant and of the research and development work of Ruhrchemie in the field of hydrocarbon-synthesis.
2. To obtain information regarding the location, capacity and nature of Fischer-Tropsch plants erected in Japan or in Japanese-occupied territories.