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Poland

OCT.
1946

A Magazine of British-Polish Interests



Silesian Harvest 1946

Western Territories Issue

Contributors : Mrs. Joseph Macleod, George Thomas, M.P.
Harry Bloom, Donald Douglas, etc.

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MONTHLY

POSTBAG

To the Editor

From Miss Doreen Holford

(Miss Holford is a former secretary of the Friends of Democratic Poland and has gone to Warsaw last month to join her Polish husband).

I feel very proud to be in Warsaw and to know that soon I shall be a worker here. All that has been said about the streets of ruins, the wanton and deliberate destruction, I could, of course, repeat—but I am fortunate perhaps to have come a little later than others, and now it is the busy-ness of Warsaw and of its people that absorbs me. Everywhere is action and purposefulness: shops going up, ruins being pulled down and cleared away, buildings being restored — and I, quite frankly, forget the gaping holes, the towering skeletons of what were obviously such magnificent buildings, and feel only that there is plenty to do. Yes, it is good to live a little more roughly in order to be part of this re-birth.

Warsaw, 16.9.46. Doreen Holford

Sir,

The retention of Poland's gold in this country, at a time when Poland needs it most is a cause of disturbance to people who rank fair play above any political considerations.

Yorkshire. Diana B.

Preparing for the elections the Polish National Council passed on September 23rd a new electoral bill. The new bill, of a truly democratic character, guarantees to all voters secret, equal and proportional elections. The new House will consist of 444 members. The National Electoral Commission will be composed of 6 members each chosen by one of the 6 political parties.

Appeal to Poles in Britain :

'Your place is at home!'

MARSHAL ZYMIERSKI made recently the following appeal to Polish soldiers under British command.

"The Government of National Unity has more than once expressed its concern for the fate of the soldiers of the former Polish Armed Forces remaining under British Command. In accordance with the best interests of the soldiers themselves and with the interests and needs of our country, the Government of Poland more than once asked the soldiers abroad to come home, since, it was of the opinion that the soldiers from Narvik, Tobruk, Monte Cassino, Falaise and many other battles, had in no way deserved to become nomads serving a foreign cause under foreign colours.

Despite the lies and slanders spread about conditions in Poland and the treatment of soldiers returning from the West, some scores of thousands of soldiers have come home to their country and their families. They have seen with their own eyes the mendacity of anti-Polish propaganda; they found that, after the dark night of occupation during the war, the Polish nation is winning increasing success in reconstruction, and that despite the difficulties natural after a war.

They discovered that the return of the Regained Territories, where 4,000,000 Poles have already been settled, opens up before us splendid vistas of advancement; they found out that **the place of every upright Pole is not abroad**, where nothing awaits him but the bitter fruit of vagabondage, **but at home** where he can, together with the whole nation, set to fruitful work for his country and himself.



Nevertheless, a considerable portion of the soldiers of Polish units remaining under British Command fell for this mendacious propaganda and remained abroad. **They were deceived by promises of an easy and comfortable life abroad, and by the prospect of a third war which neither has nor will come.**

In reality, however, these soldiers were driven into a tragic situation. What was to be foreseen, did in fact happen. The Polish Armed Forces hitherto under British Command are being dissolved. In their place the so-called Polish Resettlement Corps was set up without consulting the Polish Government of National Unity, and forms part of the British Army.

In accordance with the 1920 law on Polish nationality, entry into foreign military service without the consent of the Polish Government renders the offenders liable to loss of citizenship. **On behalf of**

(Continued page 15)

New Poland

Offices

(Editorial and Business):

CHRONICLE HOUSE,
72-78, FLEET STREET,
LONDON, E.C.4.

Telephone: CENTRAL 3460.

Subscription Rates:

3/6 for six months

7/- for one year

(Post free).

Published monthly.

NEW POLAND

new Poland

OCTOBER

1946

No. 8 Vol. 1

A Magazine of British-Polish Interests

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The Frontiers of Peace

WE have devoted much of this issue to the subject of Western Poland, or as the Polish people call it, the Regained Territories.

One of the most profound decisions of the Big Three at Potsdam, was that concerned with the Polish-German frontier. The Agreement signed by Mr. Truman, Mr. Attlee and Marshal Stalin included these words:

"The three heads of Government agreed that, in the course of the final determination of Poland's Western frontier, the former German territories east of a line running from the Baltic Sea immediately west of Swinoujście (Swinemünde), and thence along the Odra (Oder) to the confluence of the Western Nysa (Niesse), and along the Western Nysa to the Czechoslovak frontier, including that portion of East Prussia not placed under the administration of the U.S.S.R., and including the area of the former Free City of Danzig, shall be under the administration of the Polish State, and because of this cannot in future be considered as part of the Soviet zone in Germany."

It is necessary to note here that the Agreement speaks of a "frontier" and not of a demarcation line. It was in conformity with the Potsdam decisions, that the Polish Government began the systematic

moving of Germans from these traditionally Polish lands, and at the same time settled over 4,000,000 Poles there.

The significance of these actions for the future peace of Europe and the world cannot be over-stressed. At a single blow Germany has been deprived of one of her main territorial springboards for future aggression. At the same time, the regained territories, have provided the industrial base for a prosperous and strong Poland, capable of acting as a democratic barrier to any new "Drive to the East."

It was this drive against Poland, by the German army, which was the prelude to a drive to the West and bringing them rapidly to the very doorstep of Britain.

We make no apology for reminding readers of these facts, for there are voices raised today which would forget the experience of history, and talk glibly of a new strong Germany. For the people of Europe such talk is listened to with dread, awaking nightmare memories of the previous "strong" Germany which was allowed to develop after the first world war.

The western frontiers of Poland are the frontiers of peace—a peace

★ CONTENTS ★

Mr. Byrnes and the Frontiers	4	Western Poland in Pictures	8-9
Give Poland the Tools.....	5	Polish Once Again	10-11
Impressions of Silesia	6	Post-War Intellectuals.....	12-13
Youth Town	7	Poland's Parliament Meets.....	14

NEW POLAND

for which millions of people have died—they must remain as a bulwark against aggression.

Needed at home

The Polish Government, through Marshal Zymierski, has made yet another appeal to Polish soldiers in Britain to return home.

What a tragedy it is that so many of Poland's young men are estranged from their homeland at a time when their presence was never more urgently needed.

The hundreds of thousands of vigorous young Poles who could do so much to speed the rebuilding of their country, are fast becoming, what Marshal Zymierski calls "vagrants in a foreign country."

Will this new call from their homeland reach the hearts of the 200,000 Polish troops who are reaching our shores? The friendship of our two countries is bound up with the answers to these questions.

The British people, millions of them without adequate homes of their own, will hope that the Government will do everything possible to persuade the Poles to return.

Welcome

Britain is to publish shortly a newspaper in Poland. It is to be called, *Glos Anglii* (The Voice of England) and the estimated circulation is 50,000 copies a week.

We warmly welcome this step by the British Embassy, as a means of drawing our two peoples closer together by helping to bring about better mutual understanding. We believe that the considerable circulation envisaged is an indication of the widespread interest in, and goodwill for, Britain that exists in Poland.

Glos Anglii will be something of a counterpart to our own *New Poland*, and we take this opportunity of wishing it good luck.

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Mr. Byrnes and the Polish Frontiers

by
HARRY BLOOM

MR. BYRNES' proposal to re-open the question of Poland's Western Frontiers has caused widespread surprise, if not alarm. For the Polish settlement was not the solution of an isolated problem, but an integral part of a system of security on which the future peace of Europe depends.

There is a sort of innuendo that the new Polish territories are not being properly administered. And some kind of implicit suggestion that the settlement is an unjust one.

What truth is there in these suggestions? I was in Poland only a few months ago and visited a large part of the disputed area. I can thus write with a certain amount of personal knowledge. I found the area around Wroclaw (Breslau) to be smashed up as perhaps no other part of Europe had been. This area had been a vast battlefield, and its devastation was part of the price Europe had to pay for victory over the Nazis. No responsible person, therefore, would expect it to be back to full productive capacity today. But I saw many signs of the prodigious efforts of the Polish government to restore these territories. One example (of many I saw) was the railway wagon factory in Wroclaw, which had been razed to the ground by the Nazis when they retreated before the Red Army. Within a few months of the end of the war, the Polish government had rebuilt large parts of it. It is now producing five hundred wagons a month. In two years' time it will become the largest factory of its

Page Four

Wladyslaw Gomulka
Minister for Western
Territories



kind in Europe. I saw many bridges that had been rebuilt, and roads relaid. We travelled many miles over the countryside, and saw how the farmers with primitive equipment (the Germans took all the best equipment when they retreated), and depleted livestock are working heroically in the fields to raise a crop. Many fields could not be ploughed because of the danger of mines. Because of the shortage of labour whole families were out working, children and mothers included.

I met a delegation from the fifty thousand Poles who had been settled in France for fifty years, and who are now coming back to work these territories. I saw many of the resettlement hostels from which the Government is settling millions of Poles who were D.P.'s in Germany, or come from the Soviet Union. Given a period of peace, and the goodwill and assistance of other nations, there is no doubt that the Polish Government will make better use of these lands than the Germans who ran them as feudal estates.

If it is suggested that the present solution is an unjust one, the question must be asked—unjust to

whom? To Germany? One does not need to have a long memory to recall the savage Nazi onslaught on Poland. The cold-blooded extermination of six million people in murder camps; the complete destruction of entire cities; the systematic plunder of everything of value in the country; the devastation of the entire countryside—these make one question whether any material kind of compensation from Germany can possibly do justice to Poland's claims. The Nazi crimes against Poland were on a scale too huge ever to be put right by fines or compensations. But to suggest at this stage, while bodies are still being recovered from the ruins of Warsaw, that an injustice has been done to Germany, is an inversion of ordinary moral principles, that most people will find hard to understand. I know from my visit to Poland that it sounds like a kind of lunacy to most Polish people.

Many people are upset at the idea of moving mass populations as the Potsdam agreement provides. The press have not lost the opportunity of playing on this humanitarian concern of ordinary people in order

(Continued on page 5)

NEW POLAND

to confuse the issue about the former German territories. What is not stressed is that nearly one half of the German population left with the retreating Nazi armies. These included almost all the landowners and industrialists, who today in Germany lead the agitation for the return of these territories.

As for the removal of the remainder, that must be seen against the background of the whole European situation. It is impossible, in making provision for European security, to lose sight of the part played by German minorities in furthering Hitler's aggressive plans. There is one other point that should be mentioned. These territories were never German in the ordinary sense of the word. A large proportion of the people, particularly rural workers, were Polish, speaking the Polish language and keeping up Polish traditions. Many others were of Polish origin, but assimilated with the Germans. This is because the territories were originally Polish, but were conquered by Prussia, and administered as a German colony for over two centuries.

It was on the conquest of these territories that Prussia grew from an insignificant duchy into a European power, the power which under Bismarck led the unification of Germany; and it is from these territories that the spirit of German militarism has always sprung. The members of the Junker military caste were recruited largely from the landowners of Prussia and Pomerania. In fact Prussianism and Junkerdom have become synonymous with German aggression.

Moreover, in both world wars, the Germans used these territories as the springboard for their attacks on eastern Europe and Russia. Must they again be given a chance to use these strategically important areas for military purposes?

The aims in granting the former German territories to Poland are (a) to weaken Germany militarily, (b) to compensate Poland for the grievous damage done by Germany during the war, (c) to add strength, economic and military, to Poland,

NEW POLAND

'Give Poland the Tools!'

By
GEORGE THOMAS

M.P. for Cardiff Central
(Concluded from last issue)

The question of the Polish territories is one which can be discussed with academic detachment in Britain—but not so in Poland. I arrived in Cracow two days after the assassination of two Polish officers, and witnessed the tremendous demonstration of public sympathy. In Warsaw I often heard in the still of the night the sound of rifle fire. At each Youth Centre which I visited I saw a young lad or lass on duty with rifle over the shoulder. Such is the uneasy atmosphere. How easy it is to give advice on democracy to those facing such circumstances. Sometimes I feel that if we had the problems of banditry and material destruction which faces Poland we would have had martial law prevailing!

I was particularly interested in standard of life of the workers. My impression was that it is understandably higher in industrial Silesia where the damage has not been on the same colossal scale as in Warsaw. Workers in Poland receive a free ration of cigarettes each day and in many cases a ticket enabling them to obtain a meal at the canteen forms an essential part of the wages system.

As is to be expected, there is to

be seen poverty worse than anything we are accustomed to in England. The rate of sickness is dangerously high and the need of U.N.R.R.A. medical supplies is urgent.

It was my privilege to address many thousands of workers in various parts of the country. Always I was faced with the same questions in private conversation, e.g.: "Why does a Socialist Britain insist on maintaining relations with Franco Spain?" There was almost a fashionable interest in this. There was, understandably, equal feeling in the inevitable questions relating to Anders' Army. The nature of my replies may be gathered from the fact that I earned the nickname "Mr. Bevin." I take a poor view of the man who goes abroad and voices criticisms which are better and certainly more effectively made at home—as they should be.

I left Poland with a feeling of profound admiration for the gallant struggle that is being put up against tremendous odds. I am confident that her vigorous people will triumph in their battle for a better fatherland; but they need all our help and understanding.

and hence to all the countries of Europe desiring peace.

The Potsdam decision on Poland's frontiers has been taken seriously and already acted upon. One of the consequences is that two million Germans have already been moved out of the territories, and four million Poles moved in. To reverse the process now, to return the Germans and expel the Poles, would be showing an incredible lack of responsibility in regard to international agreements. Decisions involving the lives of millions of

people cannot be made and broken in this lighthearted fashion.

CHRZANOW LOCOMOTIVES PRODUCTION

The locomotive factory at Chrzanow has now exceeded its pre-war production and is turning out seven new locomotives and four narrow gauge industrial locomotives a month. It is also carrying out 12 complete overhauls a month.

Page Five

Impressions of Silesia

by Mrs. Joseph Macleod

First of a series of three articles on
a recent tour of Silesia

AT 9 a.m. one morning my interpreter and I boarded a very new and luxurious Soviet built Douglas plane. Beautifully comfortable seats, soft carpet and yellow silk curtains, ash trays for each passenger and nearly all of the twenty-two passengers using them. We were not strapped in and the atmosphere was friendly and casual without rules or instructions. I could not understand why the Wing-Commander, with whom I talked at Gatow, and teased about the Dakotas of Transport Command being less comfortable than the little planes to the Outer Hebrides, when he replied, "Just wait till you see the Polish planes." On my return journey from Cracow I understood only too well! But that is another story.

After an uneventful trip lasting one and a quarter hours, over open country with the willow lined roads looking, from the air, like slightly curved ostrich feathers, we arrived at Katowice airport. We were driven to the Town Hall and were received by one of the three vice-wojevods who had been in London during the war and had a great admiration for the British and their "calmness." I explained the purpose of my visit and indicated the things I wanted to see and he at once sent for the Chief of Information, Colonel Stahl, a huge and impressive Highlander. We followed

him to his room and soon he, his deputy, his secretary and my interpreter were in conference. A discussion among Poles always makes me laugh, if one only listens and doesn't look it sounds most alarming and bellicose but if on the other hand one looks also then it is a pantomime, everyone shouting and no one listening, laughing eyes and waving arms. But soon this outburst of energy produced a plan for the afternoon and after an early lunch we set off.

Katowice is very like one of our north country industrial cities, with cobbled streets but with a much cleaner atmosphere and on the outskirts neatly cultivated allotments. Our companion, the colonel's deputy, was a short, powerfully built man who had spent three and a half years in the forests as a partisan. As in our northern cities we were soon out of the town and into lovely country, passing over the late German frontier and through Bytom, until recently a German town. In this part of the country, County of Opole, Upper Silesia, every inch of the ground was cultivated and there were fields of tall full-eared wheat, rye, barley and lush red clover and the rows of green potato tops gave promise of a good harvest. We sped through beautiful forests of pink pines, carpeted with blaë berries, where fat Goering used to hunt wild boar and

past a large castle, once the home of the Kaiser. When in season the blaë berries are made into soup and people go about with purple stained lips and tongues. Soup made from fruit is very popular in Poland, and the rhubarb soup which I had on several occasions is certainly delicious.

The beauty and smell of the forest affected us all, and soon our tough companion was entertaining us with partisan songs, which, like the other Slav partisan songs I have heard during the war, were full of sentiment and a curious and attractive plaintiveness.

On the outskirts of the forest we stopped at Koszencin, once a German estate and now a school for training Youth Club leaders. The house and surrounding grounds were beautiful, masses of flowering shrubs and everywhere young men and women in their 20's, dressed in gay coloured blouses and shirts, playing games, walking about or lazing in the hot sun on this Saturday afternoon. Those in charge were also young and the young women who received us both spoke English. Before coming here candidates have a month's elementary training in Warsaw. At this centre the training is advanced and practical and lasts 2-3 months, according to the aptitude of the students, who are drawn from elementary and secondary schools. When trained they can either be employed full time as Club leaders or as voluntary workers in their free time. I was asked if I could send information on the training methods used in Britain. It was easy, they said, to get information from the Soviet Union but they also wanted to be informed about our methods. Again and again I met this desire for closer contacts with us and a great eagerness for information about our ways of life. After a hurried glass of tea we regretfully left and on leaving a boy and girl presented me with that unfailing Polish grace, with a large bunch of superb rhododendron blooms.

(Continued on next page)

NEW POLAND

(Continued from previous page)

Back again in the forest but the edges now were of mixed trees, the pines remaining in the background. Birch, beech, ash, hundreds of Christmas trees and Robinia in full flower and smelling so exotic. Before reaching Olenso (Rosenberg) the country opened out again and the road sides were lined with plum and cherry trees. These are planted and cared for by the Roads and Highways Committee and the fruit sold by them locally or to jam factories. The roads must look wonderful when the fruit trees are in blossom. We passed many abandoned tiger tanks lying in ditches or upturned in adjoining fields. On the road side also we passed a jeep which had broken down, and round it were clustered five young Red Army men with their heads buried in the bonnet. Here, I thought was the beginning of the Russian invasion about which I had heard so much from a member of the Embassy staff. But throughout my month's stay I was only to see fifteen Red Army men, the five already mentioned, three walking in the park in Warsaw, two officers invited to a Polish-Soviet concert which I attended and five officers, also by invitation, at a children's dance-recital in Katowice.

(A further article will appear in next issue)

BRITISH EXPERT TO ASSIST POLISH M.O.L.

Mr. Pickersbill, a representative of the British Ministry of Labour and expert in the training and employment of the disabled, has arrived in Warsaw. At a conference with representatives of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare and of the trade unions, he discussed the training and employment of the war disabled in Britain. He was also acquainted with Polish plans in this direction. He will stay in Poland for some six months to help to organise the training of the disabled.

NEW POLAND

YOUTH TOWN



Here in "Youth Town" war orphans learn and work in the splendid surroundings of a former prince's castle grounds.

By
G. D. H. Douglas

POLAND has a "boys' town," or rather a boys' and girls' town, a community set up in the 300-acre grounds of one of the former castles of the German Prince von Hohenlohe, where young people between the ages of 12 and 21 run their own lives and aim to be dependent on adults only for instruction—in trades, technology and general citizenship.

The movement was started on the initiative of a former student — 22-year-old Jerzy Beldach—who requisitioned the Hohenlohe estate and brought the first contingent of boys here last March.

The Government approved of the scheme and made a grant of 1,000,000 zlotys (£2,500 at the official rate); the Wojewodstwo (provincial administration) of Lower Silesia added 3,000,000 zlotys (£7,500) and M. Osobka-Morawski, Polish Premier, has allotted 100,000 zlotys out of his private expenses.

At present there are only 100 boys and 40 girls, all of them orphans or half-orphans, but the aim is to have 30,000 in this and similar youth centres which are to be opened.

The day begins at 6 a.m. with P.T. and ends at 10 p.m., when a choir, alternately of boys or girls, marches round the camp singing Polish hymns.

As yet the work is mostly strictly practical and consists in instruction in various trades — metalwork, woodwork, building and gardening for the boys, housework, dressmaking and first aid for girls. But this is only the beginning. (As yet there are only four teachers).

Recreations include football, volleyball and swimming in the river that runs through the park. The boys are building themselves canoes.

Theatricals have been started, but there is a shortage of costumes, and an orchestra is being organised, when they can get the instruments.

Discipline, which appeared to be well maintained, is entirely in the hands of the boys and girls themselves—the ultimate penalty, for stealing or "sabotage," being expulsion from the camp. Everyone is allotted some special duty.

There are Church services on Sundays, but attendance is voluntary. There are also lectures on Polish history and institutions but, the boys said, "no politics."

It appeared to be a watchword of the camp that Reconstruction comes first, while political disputes are frowned upon.

This non-political attitude is apparently in keeping with the Government's policy of convincing its opponents by results in the field of reconstruction, rather than by theoretical arguments. G.D.H.D.

Page Seven



Six million acres — 62 per cent. of all the Western Territories — is arable land. UNRRA tractors are helping to turn the soil back to productivity.



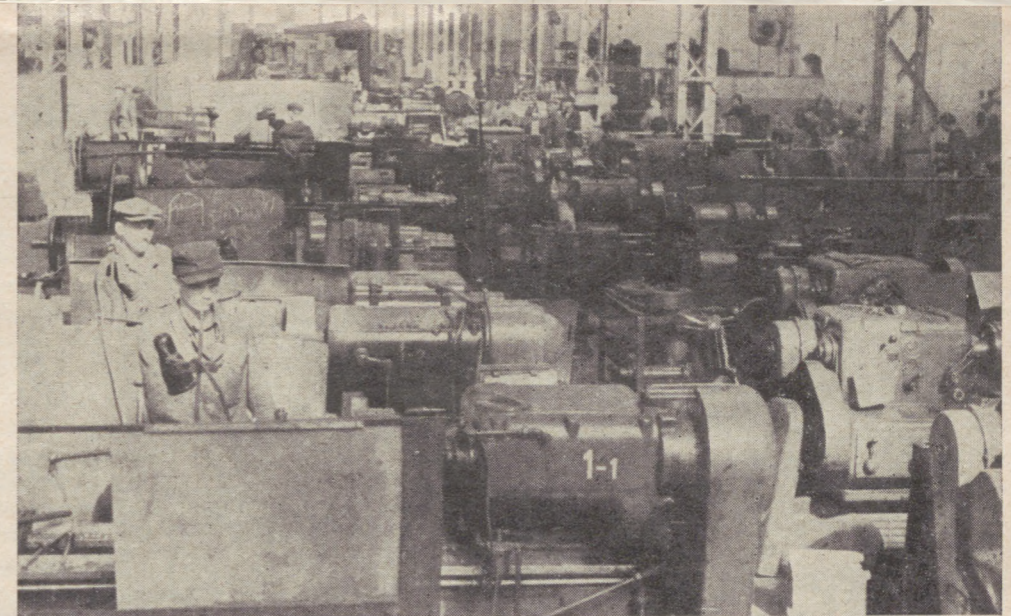
Harvest in the regained West is in full swing.



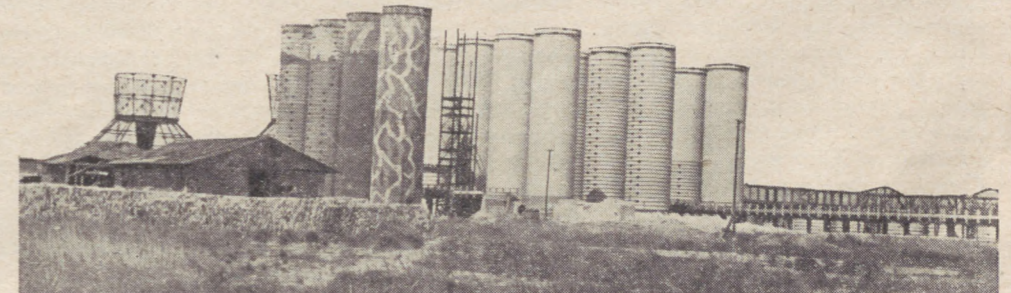
Here is the spirit of the new Poland. Some of the thousands of youthful volunteers who are clearing Wroclaw and other towns.



The Cathedral at Wroclaw (Breslau), capital of Silesia, still shows scars of war.



A locomotive works, manned by Poles, is in production again. In the last ten months over 150,000 Polish workers have settled in the West.



Synthetic oil from Silesia for Poland's industries.

WESTERN

TERRITORIES, restored to Poland under the Potsdam Agreement, comprise one third of the present area of the country. More than 4 million Poles have already settled there. The lands of the Oder and the Neisse have lost their German character, and the industrial might of Silesia which once served the Prussian warmakers now works for peace and the reconstruction of

POLAND



In the West, 26 coal mines and 7 zinc and lead mines, as well as industrial combines like this, are now working for Poland's reconstruction.



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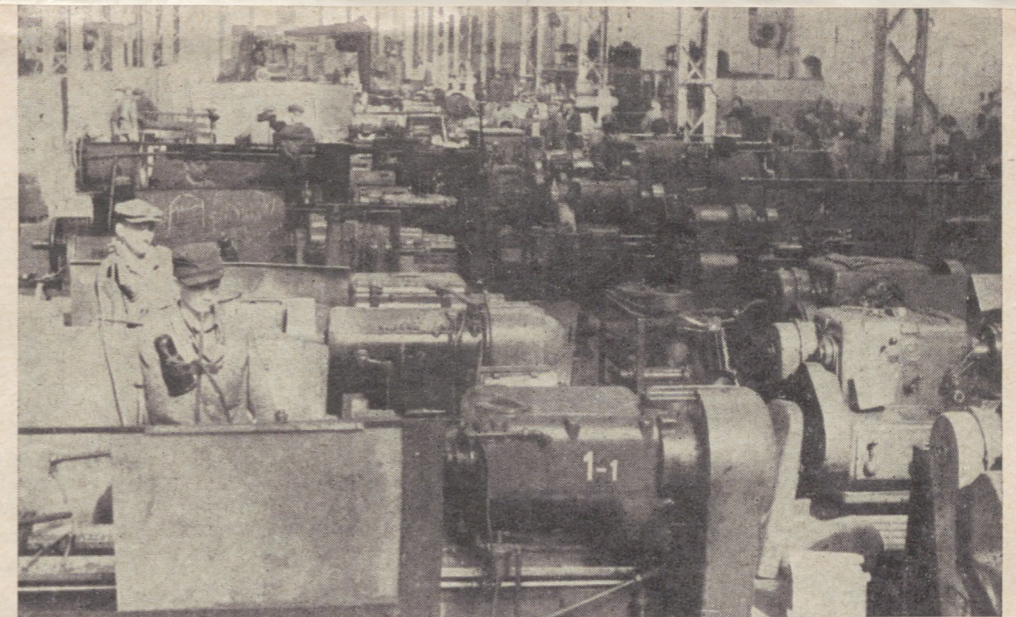
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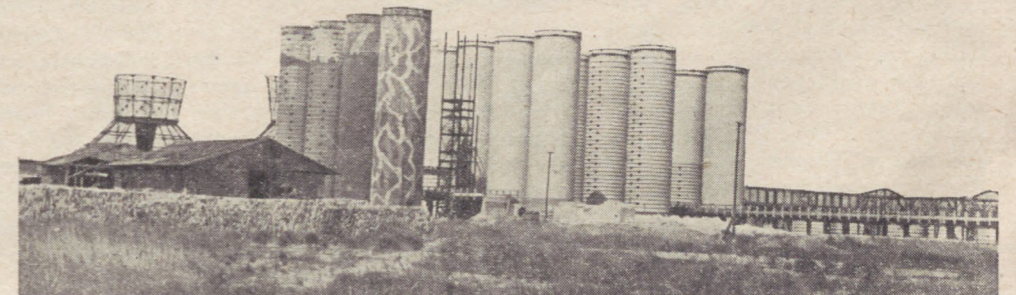
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France supports Poland's Western Frontiers

The French Ambassador to Poland, M. Garreau, in an interview with the Polish press, stated recently that the whole French nation thinks that Poland's western frontier are justified.—He said:

"The Poles deserve the greatest admiration for the work carried out during the last eighteen months in the Regained Territories. The lands on the Odra and Nysa have lost their German character, and the remainder of the aggressors will soon leave these territories. I very often visited Silesia and Pomerania, and my opinion is based on personal experience. A few days ago I returned from Szczecin (Stettin). I can state with complete impartiality that enormous progress has been achieved in the Regained Territories. The reconstruction of Poland and the development of the Regained Territories is of greater importance to Europe than the reconstruction of Germany. *The whole French nation thinks that the Polish frontiers established at Potsdam are completely justified from the historical point of view and from the*

point of view of the security of Poland and of all Slav nations.

We consider that the time for setting up a central German Government has not yet come. First, Germany must be denazified completely. This, according to the opinion of the French Government has not yet been done. The German mentality has not yet developed sufficiently in the right direction for the Germans to be granted a Government. The education of Germans should last a long time.

"The Germans constitute a potential threat to the peace of the world. The mentality of a nation cannot be altered in a short time. That is why Germany will in the future also constitute a potential threat to the peace of the world. Poles and Frenchmen, who suffered most through the German aggression, know this perfectly well."

'Come Home' urge returned Poles

THE numbers of Poles from abroad are still small. Several hundred thousand have come back from Germany, but few from England and Italy. For them the new territories are still waiting. I was particularly interested in the fate of those who have come from England. They have jobs, some very good ones. Of half a dozen I met working in one steel factory in Lower Silesia only one said that if he could choose he would go back to England.

But hundreds of miners who had come back from France all said they were happy and would not return even if they had the choice. In Walbrzych I talked to some who said they led a much happier life in Poland today than they ever did in France. Housing and food, they said, were superior to anything they had when working in French

mines. They were mostly men of frankly Leftish outlook who found present-day Poland generally, and the "regained territories" in particular, well suited to their pioneering spirit. They constantly write to other Poles still in France urging them to come to Poland. Almost every day more arrive to find jobs waiting for them. From Yugoslavia, too, about 10,000 Poles have returned.

The Poles realise that, whatever their historic or later claims to these lands may be, the decisive thing will be their ability to resettle and develop them properly. Many are optimistic that their success will make even Poles in America "envious and return home." Given political peace and order, this optimism may be largely justified."

Manchester Guardian, 28.9.46.

"SILESIA was, and will be, Polish." That is the slogan blazoned everywhere on factories, railway stations or town halls.

Historians may still be disputing Silesia's Polish past, diplomats may be found to raise doubts about the future, but what is not in doubt—and what is more important than either—is that SILESIA IS POLISH NOW.

I have just been through Silesia from one end to the other with a party of British journalists and that, I am sure, was the dominating impression we received.

Before the war in German Silesia, according to the official statistics, there were 7,500,000 Germans and about 120,000 Poles.

Today, in the same territory, there are 3,200,000 Poles and about 500,000 Germans. But every day the figures are changing as Poles flow in—about 10,000 a week—and Germans leave at about four times that speed. It is hoped to have completed the evacuation of Germans by November.

Of the Poles 1,953,000 are from central Poland, 697,000 from Russia and about 550,000 are former inhabitants of the territory (so-called "autochthons"). The discrepancy between this and the German figure arises from the different criteria used in determining nationality.

The Polish tribunals have, on the whole, been generous in according Polish citizenship. Theoretically, the only two indispensable qualifications are a desire to be Polish and a clean political record during the occupation.

When the Poles tell you that there were "no good Germans" in Silesia, what they mean is that if good Germans were good enough they are Poles.

The second impression one has of Silesia is one of shock—of shock that one's journalistic predecessors should have talked such nonsense.

Instead of the "barren fields choked with weeds," one sees a smiling landscape of fields rip-

Our Warsaw Correspondent:

Polish once again!

By G. D. H. DOUGLAS

pling with corn awaiting harvest or else already dotted with stooks, neat rows of potatoes or glossy sugar beet, patches of pink and white poppies or yellow mustard, and sometimes—but more often than in other parts of Poland—herds of cows.

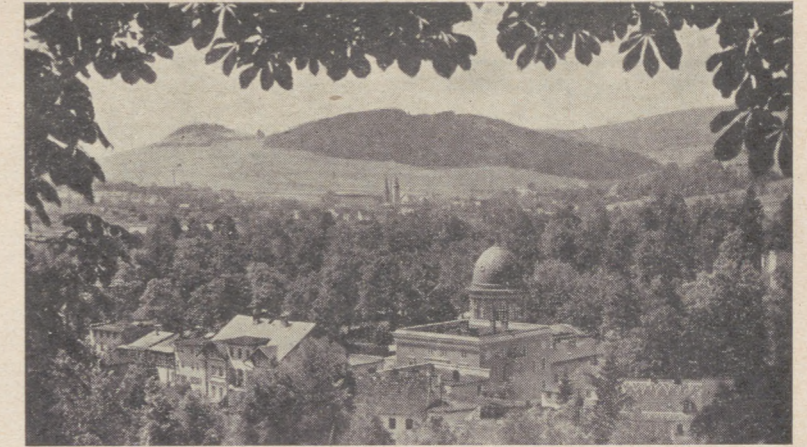
Instead of empty towns and deserted villages, one sees busy streets and tidy homes and gardens.

Though some parts of Silesia almost escaped destruction—notably the industrial triangle of Upper Silesia and the mountainous belt along the Czech frontier—others have suffered as much as anywhere in Poland.

One of the most encouraging things about Silesia is the rapidity with which the railway network has been rebuilt. For instance, bridges: Out of 209 railway bridges, large and small, in Katowice province that were destroyed when the Poles took over, 168 had been repaired by the beginning of June.

One of these, though only a temporary structure, seemed an extraordinary feat of engineering—a 200-foot high viaduct, about 400 yards long, across a ravine has been built entirely of wood.

But the most cheerful thing in the whole Silesian scene was the



'Ladek-Zdroj where the luxury hotels, the bathing pools and pleasure gardens have been taken over' for the people

sight of the former German "Kurorte" in the Sudeten mountains or the Riesengebirge—Jelenia Gora, Bierutowice, Szklarska Poreba, Ladek-Zdroj—where the luxury hotels, the retired gentlemen's residences, the bathing pools and pleasure gardens have been taken over by innumerable workers', clerks', students', religious, political or boy scout organisations as rest homes (*domy wypoczynkowe*).

Members of the organisations can spend their holidays in these homes at prices ranging from about 30 zlotys (1/6) a day for full board, which is what students or workers pay, to about 150 zlotys a day (7/6)—for managers or professors. Young people—boy scouts or young workers—may pay nothing at all.

Hiking, swimming, mountaineering, cycling, tennis, gliding seemed to be popular occupations; but one of the most popular appeared to be—in a quite casual and unorganised fashion—lending a hand with the harvest.

One old railwayman who had not had a holiday for more than ten years and had lost his family in the war, just wanted to look at the flowers and trees. "They are so quiet," he said.

Servants in these hostels are often Germans. In one students' hostel, the housekeeper was a Prussian

baroness—the former owner. Relations between her and her new "guests," though one felt an underlying tension, were on the surface excellent. She performed numerous little extra kindnesses for them, and they in return treated her with every consideration.

Elsewhere one found less idyllic relationships. From time to time "Werewolf" bands put in an appearance, though they are relatively considerably less active than the NSZ and other Polish terrorist bands.

On the whole, the German "underground" seems to favour the spreading of rumours and scare stories to daunt or bewilder the Polish settlers.

One—which I had direct from a German—was that the Russians had handed back Lwow to the Poles, so that they in turn should give back Silesia to the Germans. And there are also threats of "super-Oswiecims," "when we return."

But neither these threats nor those of certain politicians seem to have any great effect on the settlement movement. The Poles have come, and they have come to stay; it is doubtful whether any decision arrived at in Paris would succeed in getting them out again.

Post-War Intellectuals

By Abbé Glasberg

The writer is a well-known French Catholic. This article appeared in "Les Lettres Francais."

THE present position of Poland is of unusual interest to us. Poland is the Slav country most influenced by the West, moreover a Roman Catholic country nurtured for centuries in the traditions not only of Rome but of Italy and France.

The reconstruction of Poland is being carried on under our eyes. No "Iron Curtain" cuts it off from the West. The foreign observer wanders freely in the country according to his fancy, and local authorities only ask him to see for himself.

The sudden inrush into this Polish world, so strongly influenced by the West, of decisive social reforms such as only the U.S.S.R. has known up to now, is for us an experiment of incalculable value. What biological change, as one might say, will these new forms of social life—claimed by a few to be possible in the East only—go through once they have adapted themselves to the climate of a country which is an outpost of the West?

Let us examine the consequences of this political and social upheaval on what is termed the Polish upper classes.

On the eve of the war, these strata still kept their essential character of "gentry." Land-owning gentry, big

landowners, colonels and brass hats, high dignitaries of the Church set the tune to the country. They had kept, more than in any other nation, the caste prejudices, the love of titles, the narrow-minded and harmful conception of "aristocratic pride," this "honour" which was one of the greatest plagues of Polish history, with its evil consequences: contempt for work and above all manual work. Social climbing is the Pole's obsession. The peasant dreams of educating his son into a teacher, and the worker wishes his to become a civil servant and so approach the status of the small gentry, the "szlachta." "Zastawsie a postawsie" says the proverb, which means, "Pawn what you own in order to show off."

These very feudal conceptions have naturally come into conflict with the present tendency towards the levelling of classes. Not only have the privileged few been swept away but also many small landowners whose limited income allowed them to live sparingly but without losing their dignity, *i.e.*, without working. Overnight, the ex-gentry found themselves faced with the necessity of earning their living. Naturally, they were unable to make a complete political change over. Most of them were neither able nor willing to put themselves at the disposal of a government which had just deprived them of their privileges. What were they to do? The army itself, the everlasting refuge, though it is not closed, is hostile to them because of its new structure. It is a popular army born of the Resistance whose officers and even generals have come from the ranks.

Hence the ex-country gentleman regards as the least dishonourable solution "intellectual" work, in the teaching profession or journalism. As cadres are lacking, they may find a small niche for themselves there. Others, without any professional qualifications, but resolved to avoid at all costs manual labour, turn willy nilly towards trade; yet they do not give up vague titles proving



NEW POLAND

their distinction. For example, it is comical to hear the waiter call "Pan doktor" the landlord of the pub who sits enthroned in the cash-box. There are a few exceptions: Count Potocki has become the manager of a small firm and there are even foremen who are excellencies of a sort.

Yet the very fact that the country gentlemen have turned to work has greatly helped to enhance its importance and raise it in the scale of values held by the man in the street. The Government, seeking for reconstruction purposes to arouse enthusiasm for work finds support henceforth not only in the working and peasant masses but in the middle class. However backward, however mediaeval this Polish conception appears to us, it is necessary to take it into account to measure the moral upheaval which has taken place. Many people still tied to the past and hardly willing to accept the social changes declare themselves ready to work for the reconstruction, with the naive hope of being able to confine themselves to the economic side without helping the political aspect of reconstruction.

True, in that country with its deep-rooted feudal prejudices, the new government, its revolutionary programme and its ties with the

Soviet have met with deep misunderstanding. Not only the gentry, but the middle classes hesitate before accepting the *de facto* situation.

The Lublin Government could find support, when it was formed, only in the numerically weak anti-Fascist groups, recruited from the opponents of the old regime, party leaders back from exile or just out of prison, progressive intellectuals, working people, landless peasants, Jews. The latter, having fought in great numbers in the Resistance movement, provided with civil servants a government badly in need of them. But we shall deal later with this question. At the moment, let it be sufficient to note that thanks to these reliable elements, Poland was given a chance to form a new framework in government and administration and so reach national existence proper. *This structure is obviously the work of men self-taught in politics. None the less they succeed in dealing with problems at least as ably as their predecessors. Their opponents, when they have a grain of good faith, must acknowledge this, even if they carp at the "lack of culture" of those "uncertificated rulers."*

But while it is possible in the last resort to do without certificates and degrees in the civil service, this is

not true of the academic world. It is notoriously so as in Poland, more than in Czechoslovakia, a country of more Germanised culture, the Germans have relentlessly hunted down the intellectuals. The destruction of all Polish thought was a part of the general plan of extermination of all non-German civilisations, and in the first place of the Slav. An inferior race, the Slavs were to be reduced to slavery, to the condition of morons and robots, docile servants of the Herrenvolk. The Nazi crimes against the Polish intellectuals, scientists, artists, writers, professors and teachers are as numerous as they are methodical. It is not surprising therefore to see those classes decimated. So the few survivors represent a national capital which is all the more valuable. It must be taken for granted that new academic cadres could not be created in such a small period of time. Far from rejecting these cadres, the Warsaw Government is seeking their collaboration. It is encouraging to see that on the whole the members of the teaching profession respond whole-heartedly to this appeal. Former universities have been reopened; new ones have been created. In Lodz alone a new university and a new technical college number already 7,000 students.

(Concluded in next issue)

The New Village

IN the year 1936, a Polish novelist, M. Jalu Kurek, wrote a best-selling novel dealing with life in his native village in Cracow province.

The novel was called "Influenza Rages in Naprawa," and it dealt with the sufferings of the villagers—their poverty and land-hunger—few had more than 3 hectares (7 acres)—and their struggles with the middlemen to whom they sold their crop, with the landowners for whom they had to hire themselves to supplement their tiny earnings, with ignorance and disease.

A little over a year ago another novelist, born in the same village,

M. Miroslaw Olcha, travelling through Poland's new western territories, came across an abandoned German village.

He immediately went back to Naprawa and persuaded about 150 of the poorer families, totalling some 1,000 people, to move to the German village, which was rechristened "Nowa Naprawa."

Here they received land from three to eight times the size of their former holdings, cottages with four rooms instead of hovels with one and about twice the number of cattle, horses and pigs.

We spoke with a gathering of

villagers in the house of the peasant who organises the local "Samopomoc Chlopska"—the Peasants' Self-Help organisation.

The main function of the Self-Help organisation is to organise the collective purchase of seed, fertiliser and anything else the peasants need to buy in the towns, and the marketing of the crops.

The parish priest who was a Franciscan missionary from Warsaw, and not a native of the old Naprawa, is the largest landowner in the village, holding 30 hectares.

He seemed to be very popular in the village and stated that the whole village attended church on Sundays—including the Communists.

—Our Warsaw Correspondent.

Polish Press on Battle of Britain Anniversary

"On September 15th Britain celebrated the anniversary of her great victory over the German Air Force—the Battle of Britain—which may have decided the fate of the human race. A relatively small group of British and Polish fighters resisted Goering's men. We still remember Churchill's famous words about "The Few." A great part in this battle was played by the Polish Air Force, and especially by the 303rd Division. The number of Germans shot down by these boys gives them a better testimonial than anything we could write here. Polish airmen took part in the

parade over London. We are proud of our brothers and sons, but there is some bitterness in that pride. The Polish-British brotherhood of arms was wonderful during the war. There is no such brother-

hood in peaceful co-operation. But we still want to believe that the story of Poland's tribute to the Battle of Britain will help to return to the policy of traditional friendship."

REMEMBER WARSAW!

The "Warsaw Accuses" Exhibition, which had its première in London last January, will open at Glasgow in October. This follows a highly successful tour covering York, Leeds, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee, where over 8,000 people visited the exhibition in the first week alone.

In town and city, the civic head opened the display, which depicts Warsaw before and after the mass destruction by the Germans, as well as the rebuilding already achieved

and plans for the future of the city.

The exhibition has done much to strengthen the bonds of understanding and friendship between Poland and ourselves, particularly in Scotland, where so many of the Polish armed forces are stationed.

Lord Provost Sir Garnet Wilson, who presided at the opening at Dundee, referred to the hospitality of that city to the Polish forces and stated that nearly 300 members had married girls from Dundee.

Poland's Parliament Meets

Opening the eleventh session of the Polish National Council on September 21st, President Bierut said: "I think it necessary to express clearly and unambiguously our attitude to certain statements and opinions which have recently been given in the international forum on a matter of fundamental importance to our country, nation and state—to wit, the western frontiers of Poland.

THE decision on the transfer of our territory towards the West was neither simple nor easy for us Poles. Historical experience provides ample proof that territorial changes of states have always represented a most difficult and tragic problem in both the international and internal relations of the country which undergoes this change. In the circumstances a task has devolved on our shoulders, the like of which no other European nation has ever been called to perform in such magnitude—the task of resettling in the shortest

possible time 6,000,000 to 7,000,000 of our citizens.

He who has never had to cope with difficulties arising from such a change for every individual family of farmer, worker or artisan, in a period immediately following a war, in conditions of extreme poverty, destroyed roads, lack of transport, food difficulties, high prices, and so on, can never grasp the full extent and the tragic immensity of the task with which we have had to cope and are still coping, although we are a nation and country mercilessly devastated by the barbarian occupants.

He can never grasp the unparalleled effort, heroism and determination which the present situation demands from us in no less degree than the war and our fight for survival against the Hitlerite invader. We are coping with these difficulties and mastering them, depending almost entirely on our own resources."

Poles determined to get on

A Meeting on Poland was held in Dundee on September 15th. We reprint the following extract from the "Dundee Courier and Advertiser."

"Mrs. Joseph Macleod, wife of the former B.B.C. announcer, said nobody could judge a country honestly and objectively by her exiles.

"Mrs. Macleod, who spent a month in Poland at the request of women's organisations there, said the Poles were bitterly disappointed with the result of the Labour Parliamentary delegation in January. Nothing had been done to help them, but they were determined to get on. She wanted to foster the goodwill and friendship the Polish people were offering.

"Asked if she had addressed Polish soldiers in this country, Mrs. Macleod said the War Office did not allow such meetings by those who had visited Poland, or by members of the present Polish Government in this country."

NEW POLAND

Polish Youth in London

THREE young Polish students arrived in London after attending the International Co-operative Youth Conference at Bexhill.

They had many stories to tell of their life in Poland during the occupation, and how their education was continued by means of secret classes.

Richard Leski of the Peasant Youth Organisation is an agricultural student. He told me about his life in Poland during the war. "Two or three of the secondary school boys would gather together in a house, and professors went from one place to another to teach. I attended these classes but I was supposed to be working on a farm."

His parents were both killed and Richard now lives in a boarding house attached to his university where lodging and meals are provided free to students.

Both Richard and Sofia Wlodek speak English and are very anxious to improve their knowledge of the language.

Sofia at 21 years of age, is the eldest of the three and is a student at the Cracow Cooperative Faculty. Her father was killed in a concentration camp. Sofia was a messenger in the underground army.

Christina Jędrzejczak, aged 20, represents the Polish Workers' Party Youth Section, commonly known as the Z.W.M. She is a student of economics.

Christina was interned at Oswiecim and later at Buchenwald until the end of the war. Her mother was at the ill-fated camp of Ravensbrück where the Germans used her for medical experiments.

The three students have spent a busy two weeks in London sight-seeing.

Their main idea, however, was to meet as many British young people as possible.

Miss Jean Thurman, who recently visited Poland on a youth

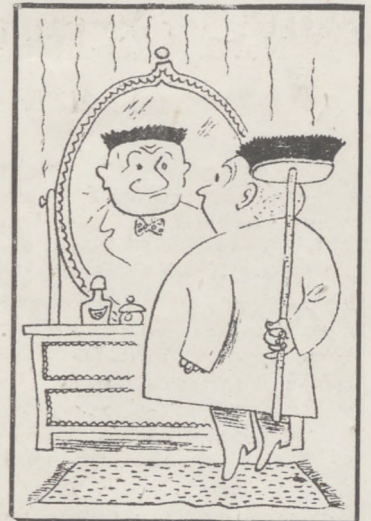
NEW POLAND

delegation, and Miss Ritchie McInnes arranged a programme of visits to youth clubs which included the Camden Town Youth House, and the East Ham Youth Council. They met the officials of the clubs and talked to members who were keenly interested to meet the students.

At the Perivale Youth Club, the students were present at a social evening, organised by the members. They danced and talked with their newly-found friends and were interested in the activities of the Club while they told about their own organisations.

At the International Youth Centre they were very excited to find youth literature recently sent from abroad, including publications from their country.

POCKET CARTOON



—"Przekroj," Cracow.

Appeal to Poles

(Continued from page 2)

the Government of National Unity I want to warn you, soldiers, that entry into the Resettlement Corps exposes you to the danger of losing your rights as citizens and, following from this of losing the possibility of returning home. In joining the Polish Resettlement Corps you are widening yet more the distance between the nation and yourself, and doing a great injury to your families, which are deprived of their fathers, husbands and brothers.

"At this turning point, when the soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces remaining under British Command are to decide their fate, the Government of National Unity gives all soldiers another chance of returning home.

You will be received at home in the same way as your comrades who came home before you, who are now helping in the reconstruction of their country and in many cases occupy highly responsible posts in the Army or State and economic apparatus. This does not, however, mean that the Government of National Unity looks with disfavour upon all projects of setting up institutions abroad to prepare former

Polish soldiers for civilian trades.

The Government of National Unity understands that various considerations may keep soldiers from deciding to return home, and agrees to their training in various institutions. The Government of National Unity demands however, that the organisation and activity of these institutions should be carried out in consultation with it and in co-operation with its representatives.

The Polish Government of National Unity cannot, however, agree to the setting up of a Polish Resettlement Corps as a foreign military formation, since this runs counter to the honour and interests of the Republic.

The Government of National Unity draws the attention of soldiers of Polish Armed Forces remaining under British Command to the exceptional importance of the decision they have to make. This time the responsibility for the decision lies not with the Command, but with each individual soldier.

I remind everyone that the honour of a Polish soldier does not allow a Pole to serve under any but the Red-White Banner at a time when his country needs him and summons him to return."

Page Fifteen

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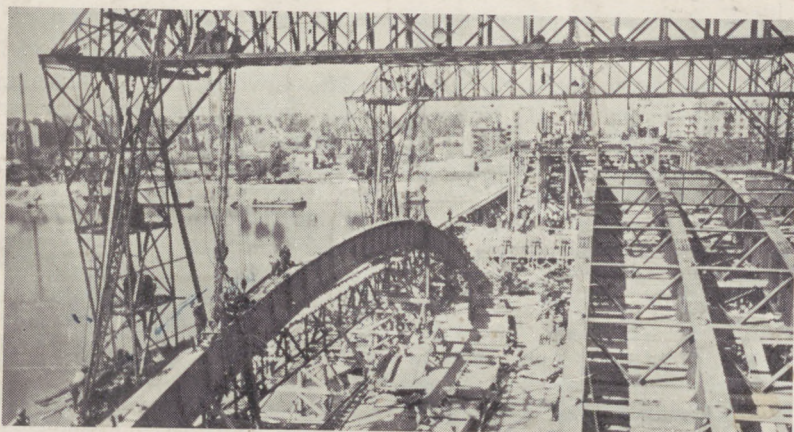
POLAND IN RECONSTRUCTION

TOLD BRIEFLY

No. 2. Rebuilding Poniatowski Bridge



The Poniatowski Bridge across the Vistula as the retreating Germans left it.



Thousands of steelworkers and engineers laboured to restore the vital link in Warsaw's transport system.



On July 22nd of this year, barely nine months after the commencement of operations, the bridge was reopened.

EXHIBITION IN WARSAW

"Reconstruction in Britain" is the name of the Exhibition organised by the British Embassy in Warsaw. This is being shown in the palace of Count Zamojski in the centre of the city.

The exhibition, which shows rebuilding and reconstruction in Britain will next be shown at Katowice, Poznan and Sopot, near Gdansk.

* * *

UNRRA MISSION TO POLAND

UNRRA chief, General Drury, interviewed by the Polish Press Agency said: "The system of distribution of UNRRA goods is based on sound foundations, priority being given to those who work hardest for reconstruction. There is not the smallest doubt that after UNRRA ceases to exist, Poland should receive foreign help in 1947 . . . I should like to thank the Government of National Unity for its co-operation."

* * *

FURNITURE FOR BRITAIN

The Union of Timber Industry for the Cracow and Rzeszow areas is now executing part of the British furniture order in three factories. The Cracow factories are to produce for this order 700 bedroom suites, 1,000 oak sideboards and 20,000 bentwood chairs.

* * *

WARSAW SPECIAL HOUSING COMMISSION

A Special Housing Commission has now been active in Warsaw for a fortnight. During this time, Workers' Housing Committees, including 1,800 wage earners in all, have been set up. These Committees have submitted to the Special Housing Commission some 400 proposals attested by teams of inspectors.

Printed by S. Sidders & Son, Ltd., 115 Salisbury Road, London, N.W.6, and Published by Friends of Democratic Poland, Chronicle House, 72, Fleet Street, E.C.4.

NEW POLAND

