

# New Poland

A MAGAZINE OF BRITISH-POLISH INTERESTS



See Children's  
Literature—Page 6

**IN THIS  
ISSUE**

- ★ *Going Home*—Mrs. Vera Friedman
- ★ *British-Polish Night*—Pages 8—9
- ★ *Promised Land*—Stewart Valdar

**FEBRUARY**

1948

**6<sup>D</sup>**  
MONTHLY





**STEFAN DYBOWSKI**

MINISTER OF CULTURE  
AND ART

STEFAN DYBOWSKI, the previous Governor of the Province of Bialystok, was born in 1903 in the Konskie district, of a teacher's family and became a teacher himself. He was trained at the State Teachers' College in Warsaw. Since 1930 he has been editor and publisher of "Ziemia Kaliska." He is interested in bibliography and has published several works on the subject. Before the war, he started work on the bibliography of the Polish peasant and his notes on the subject have survived. Since 1940, Dybowski has belonged to the radical wing of the Peasant Party. After his second deportation he settled in Pinczow, where he worked in the Co-operative Movement and organised the Peasant Movement. At the same time he lectured at the People's University. After the liberation he became a member of the Praesidium of the Kielce RN (National Council) and later Governor of the Bialystok district. He is a member of the Supreme Council of the SL (Peasant Party).

**Commentary—**  
(continued from page 1)  
quantities of "leguminous forage crop seed" and fertilisers. These steps, among others, are to halt the rapidly declining fertility of Poland's soil, both in the old and the Regained Territories. Invited to Poland by her Government, these experts came from Britain, Canada and the United States.

The declining yield of Polish soil is one of the problems set out for solution in the Economic Plan. Here it is shown that food-crop targets are set below the average figures for 1934/8. Last year, for example, the planned yield of wheat per acre was only 71 per cent. of 1934/8 average, and even in 1949 it will still be 20 per cent. below pre-war yields. Comparable figures are: Rye 77 per cent. of 1934/8; potatoes 82 per cent. and sugar beet 59 per cent. Nevertheless, these totals (excluding sugar beet) represent about a 6 per cent. increase above 1945.

## GDYNIA-AMERICA SHIPPING LINES LTD.

also MANAGERS of

POLISH-BRITISH STEAMSHIP COMPANY, Ltd.  
and ZEGLUGA POLSKA, S.A.

45/7 WHITCOMB STREET, LONDON, W.C.2

Telegraphic Address:

Inland: POLAMERYKA, LESQUARE, LONDON  
Overseas: POLAMERYKA, LONDON

Telephone:

WHITEHALL  
7561 (10 LINES)

REGULAR PASSENGER & CARGO SERVICE between  
**United Kingdom and Poland**

Also REGULAR SERVICE from  
**Poland to Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland, Belgium,  
Near East, U.S.A., and South America**

Head Office: 13/15 ULICA PORTOWA, GDYNIA, POLAND

NEW POLAND

A MAGAZINE OF BRITISH-POLISH INTERESTS

### Contents for February 1948

Going Home by Mrs. Vera Friedman	2	Promised Land by Stewart Valdar	10
Poland's New Buildings by John Silkin	4	Human Rights in Poland Col. Marian Muszkat	12
Children's Literature	6	Scots Diary	14
British-Polish Night	8-9	Parliament: Maj. D. Bruce, M.P.	15
		The Polish Press says:	16

#### EDITORIAL BOARD

Editor: STEWART VALDAR

Chairman: Mrs. Cecil Chesterton, O.B.E. Gordon Schaffer  
Aylmer Vallance, Mrs. Joseph Macleod.

### Commentary

POLAND'S Economic Plan enters its third year,\* and it is timely to review—howbeit briefly—some of the more important achievements. For those of us who have watched with sympathy the heroic efforts of the re-united Polish people to extricate themselves from the economic chaos into which they were precipitated by the German invasion and occupation, it is exhilarating to learn that pre-war production has been reached and surpassed. But these achievements have an importance for the whole British people: Poland is becoming an increasingly important commercial associate of Britain, and Poland's growing prosperity is

materially adding to the stability and well-being of Europe as a whole.

Polish coal production topped the target of 57½ million tons by 1 million last year, and of this 17 million tons were exported—as planned. Behind these figures is the story of tremendous human efforts by the miners and the large-scale production of mining equipment which reached 19,000 tons last year—the guarantee that this output is not only to be maintained but increased this year. It will be remembered that it was Polish coal which helped us to make up our shortages in 1947. This year, fortunately, Britain is also exporting coal to Europe.

The engineering industry which planned to produce, among other things, 10,600 freight cars, 300 tractors, 60,000 bicycles and 220 loco-

\* Commonly referred to as the "Three-Year Plan," it actually covers the period of January 1, 1946 to December 31, 1949.

FEBRUARY 1948

motives, has exceeded the targets by 6 per cent. This achievement is the more remarkable when it is noted that before 1946 Poland produced no tractors (next year it will be 1,200), and that in 1938 made only 28 locomotives.

The production of textiles achieved the 1947 target figures which are still below pre-war levels due to the ravages of war. Cotton fabrics reached 75 per cent. of 1938 (parity will be achieved in 1949); woollen fabrics, 80 per cent.; silk fabrics, 39 per cent. and knitted goods, 68 per cent. It is interesting to note that plastics, nylon and other synthetic fabrics commenced production last year and that 100 million tons will be produced in 1949. From these figures we see that the Poles, like ourselves, will have to buy clothes with coupons for some time to come.

#### Bacon for Breakfast

A Polish trade mission is coming to Britain to offer us bacon, eggs, poultry, tinned ham, timber and sugar. This cheering news may soon resolve itself into more bacon on our breakfast tables. The Poles, it is reported, have 5,000 tons of bacon ready for export to us during the first six months, also over 50 million eggs. Polish willingness to conclude the deal is shown by the fact that they are altering their usual bacon curing process in order to suit British tastes.

#### Report on Food

The United Nations' Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) has produced a report on Poland in which is estimated that within a few years her food production could be raised 50 per cent. above pre-war levels. As Poland was one of the main food-growing countries before the war, this estimate is impressive. If this is to be achieved, the report explains, Poland must take certain steps: import large

(continued on previous page)



IT started with a crazy conversation. A fellow traveller on the plane to Warsaw asked: Are you going to Poland on a visit?

No, I am going home.

Where is that?

Poland of course.

But where in Poland? Which town do you come from?

I am afraid, no town. My town is no longer on the map.

And your people, where are they?

No longer among the living.

No more questions were asked, but the answer to the unasked question was there: yet, it is going home!

Going back to one's own country after several years of ordinary emigration is a great event.

Going back to one's own country, after crucial years which deeply transformed your country, is a life's experience.

To one who has followed every event in his country and formed his set picture of it, going back is a serious test: the test of a cherished vision against reality.

The strange conversation with my fellow-traveller made me realise that there was yet something more than the test to my beliefs awaiting me; the test of my emotions. Is love of one's country, stripped of all personal things such as familiar places and people, as strong as one wishes to believe?

#### THE STRANGE BEAUTY OF WARSAW

Warsaw deeply impresses foreign visitors. Warsaw is passionately loved by the Poles. To one who loves Warsaw and comes to see her from far away, she reveals her strange beauty.

Warsaw, as I saw her on that first Saturday afternoon, was a theme worthy of a Picasso's genius. Her shattered body was held together with bright coloured ribbons of a most perfect rainbow. The centre of that rainbow resting on two pillars—a mutilated skeleton of the pre-war sky-scraper and a brand-new, white modern building—formed a symbolic arch of triumph for those busy little people who filled the patchy streets with life and sounds

# Going Home

by

Mrs. Vera Friedman

*The writer, who is a foundation member of the British-Polish Society, describes her feelings as a Pole returning home after years of enforced separation.*

of constructive work. The glow of the sun setting behind silvery clouds lent warm colour and light to the air. There is no place like home, and there is no city like Warsaw. It is a home, and what a home!

The emotional test passed, but there still remained a more serious test to face: the experience of my own vision of the new Poland standing up against reality. My British friends, to whom I have spoken in past years about the Poland I wanted to see, may like to know how that picture compares with what I saw. We all realised that deep reforms were needed, and we had no difficulty in listing the reforms wanted; but how effectively they changed the lives of the people remained to be seen.

#### MAINLY ABOUT PEOPLE

The proof of the pudding is in the eating, and the proof of a social system is in its effect upon living people. The test is: does it make them happier and therefore better human beings? Does it give them

a chance to live richer and fuller lives? Studying facts and statistics does not always provide the answer to these questions. One has to meet the people and see their day to day life.

I knew well that the land reform was a historical necessity for the country; I knew that it was bound to improve the life of the peasant, but not until I met village school children did I realise the deep human sense of that reform. From my short experience as a village school teacher in pre-war days, I remember the haunting conclusion (which I was then afraid to admit even to myself) that school for many of those unhappy children was just an additional burden. In winter, the effort of walking for miles, in frost and snow, inadequately clothed, made them incapable of learning anything, let alone enjoying school. In spring, their little heads dropped with fatigue from early hours of farm work done before school. They had never the look of normal school children. School, in those circum-



*To-day the village youngsters are just "a bunch of normal happy children."*

stances, was merely a begrudged tribute to modern times. It gave them little, and it promised them nothing for the future.

But the village children I met this time were a bunch of normal happy children, such as one might expect to find in any elementary school in Britain. To the foreign visitor, it is an ordinary sight without significance. For me, it was not only a moving event but a testimony of better days. To see small village girls, with trim little plaits in a neatly arranged lock crowning their heads (this hair style seems to be the 1947 fashion for little Polish girls) gave me the greatest pleasure. Gazing at them, I realised that not only is the village child happy today, but the village mother, who finds time and patience to dress her child's hair so beautifully, is certainly more cheerful than ever before. I know that this sounds a very unorthodox way to measure social progress, but in the circumstances I feel that it is as accurate as figures quoting the size of land given to the peasants. My picture tells what the

bald figures cannot convey—one way in which the peasant receives preferential treatment, and how the new Poland has attempted to make up to the peasant for all the injustices of past centuries.

Non-political little factors, such as the improved looks of the village child or a dentist's waiting room crowded with peasants, help one a great deal to understand politics. For it was mainly these improvements in the everyday life of the Polish peasant which finished Mikolajczyk's career as a peasant leader. One could not possibly remain the leader of the group which benefitted most by the new social order if, at the same time, one leads the fight against that order.

It is no wonder, therefore, that Mikolajczyk, in his interview given to *Picture Post*, chose to pose as the defender of the "exploited" Polish working class. This, however, is a thankless role, for I am afraid he will receive no gratitude from the Polish workers.

Human beings are often better than they are credited for. They

value dignity highly. The Polish worker has won his dignity and he is willing to pay the price for it. He behaves as becomes the bread-winner of the country. He is, moreover, a generous bread-winner, often accepting shortages himself in order to keep the home going. I have yet to hear a Polish worker complain of the fact that the peasant's standard of life has improved more than his. Such grumbling, however, I have heard from shopkeepers and small traders, who complain that the peasant is allowed to sell produce without having to comply with controls and taxes as they do. No worker complains of too much socialism. If anything, he will tell you that here and there, there is not enough of it. He is often annoyed by the sight of luxury goods displayed in the Marszalkowska shops. He argues that these shops are proof that there are still people who earn easy money and spend it upon luxuries. He is solidly behind his trade union in the fight against "spivs" and speculators. He says bluntly: "I am not asking for more pay because we cannot afford it, and because nothing but my own output can make it more, but what we *do* have must be distributed justly." If anything, he wants more controls and not less.

The worker adopts that kind of attitude because he feels that he has a hand in the running of the country, and he approves of it. In his own day to day life he likes participating in the running of his factory; he has a passion for charts, drawings and statistics concerning his workshop; and he is proud of the modest labour and material saving improvements which he has introduced into his job. He is not a servant to a machine any more; he is what men should be among machines—a master.

There is another thing that matters. The existence of a sound partnership between the country and the individual worker. The Polish worker knows from his own short experience that his work benefits

*(continued on next page)*



(continued from previous page)

himself and his country alike. Progressive output bonuses, no income tax deductions and no fear of his wage-rates being lowered are not only excellent incentives, but a tangible proof that no one is out to exploit his labour. The State has given him an enhanced social standing. The State, as yet however, cannot give him prosperity. This is to be created by the workers themselves—for themselves. I say "for themselves," and I mean it in the strict sense. No longer are the worker's children a worry to him. He meets daily the youngsters attending the factory technical school (and nearly every factory has one), and he can see his own son developing into an educated man and a skilled worker.

The road to social advance for the individual is wide open. Already today the barriers between management and worker, and between brain and manual worker are broken down. When meeting the new Polish intelligentsia, particularly technicians, factory managers and directors, it is difficult to guess their social background. Those who came from the ranks of the workers, as well as those who came from the pre-war universities have both changed under the impact of events. Moreover, it is not always the former category which has benefitted by that change. Among the factory directors of today, I met personal friends from my university days before the war. I well remember the cynical attitude to life and work which many of them had. Knowing what inflated commodities knowledge and degrees were in those days, one became accustomed to such pretensions. It was a revelation, therefore, to meet the same people now and see what two or three years of constructive work has done to them. No amount of studying could have advanced them intellectually so far in such a short time. They are satisfied human beings, and they live their lives fully. "I envy them—I must catch up with them."

Page Four



A new building, made with reclaimed bricks by bare hands.

## Poland's monument is in her New Buildings

says

John Silkin

WHEN the war ended the Polish people faced a problem as vast as any in history. For six years they had witnessed the systematic destruction of their cities, their homes, their historic buildings and monuments, their schools, churches, cathedrals and palaces. In Warsaw, one of the most beautiful cities in pre-war Europe, one building in ten was

completely destroyed. In their new Western Territories the towns of Breslau (Wroclaw) and Danzig (Gdynsk) had been ravaged by shell fire and aerial bombardment, and the centre of Stettin (Szczecin), which had formerly been one of the finest of the Baltic ports, had been reduced to rubble by the Royal Air Force. Destruction indeed was the last legacy of the Occupation; all

NEW POLAND

John Silkin accompanied his father Lewis Silkin, M.P., Minister of Town and Country Planning, and a party of British town planning experts on a tour of Poland last September. The delegation visited Poland's industrial centres in Central Poland and the Regained Territories, and studied the plans for rebuilding Warsaw. The writer here describes some of his personal impressions.

over Poland the towns and villages presented the same appalling spectacle.

There was, however, another difficulty; the Germans had endeavoured, not entirely without success, to humiliate the Poles and destroy their national consciousness. They had quite deliberately burned or looted the Polish art treasures, banned the display of the Polish national colours, and even forbidden the playing of Chopin. Accordingly those entrusted with the rebuilding of Poland had to contend with three distinct aspects of the same problem—the purely physical difficulties of providing comfortable homes, reconstruction in the former German territories, and the restoration of Polish self-confidence.

The housing problem is being tackled, like all other reconstruction problems, by three different enterprises (or "sectors"), the Government sector, the Co-operative sector, and the Private sector. In these circumstances one might expect a constant conflict, or, at the best, an element of the haphazard. The reverse has happened. The Poles are indifferent to the relative successes of this method or that; they note that the system as a whole works smoothly and efficiently.

The main difficulties that confront them are shortage of machines and shortage of materials. To combat the first, they have drawn on their most valuable assets, their large and willing labour force. The people are determined that if they must rebuild their country with their bare hands then everyone, skilled or unskilled, will give of his best. The sight of so many volunteers, students, government servants, professional men, all assisting in the national task, is one of the most inspiring in post-war Europe. As to the shortage of materials the authorities have, particularly in

devastated Warsaw, used the most readily obtainable materials. Timber, bricks from destroyed buildings, and any other materials that will not hamper Poland's already overburdened transport system are pressed into use.

The result is never displeasing and sometimes highly entertaining. In country areas the traveller is occasionally fooled by what appears to be a genuine Tudor-period cottage, but which is in a reality a product of the last two years (as different, incidentally, from the English suburban-Tudor as most originals are from copies).

In addition to building, the Poles have imported a certain number of prefabricated wooden houses from Finland. These are invariably clean and pleasant and extremely comfortable. In Katowice, a typical 19th century industrial town, slum-ridden and squalid, these new houses stand out like gold in a sea of lead. In fairness, none of these houses are comparable with British housing standards, but this is hardly surprising. The true standard of comparison is between the old Poland and the new and, looked at in that light, the pioneers of modern Poland have very little with which to reproach themselves.

In the towns of the Western Territories, rebuilding is not so pressing a problem as elsewhere in Poland. The present population is not nearly so great as was the German. In consequence all the undamaged German houses have become Polish homes and there is little overcrowding even by the best English standards. The towns now have a definitely Polish appearance and the Poles have fitted very quickly into their new surroundings. In the country, however, much has to be done. Apart from villages destroyed in the fighting, the break-up of the large Junker estates has

meant the development of new villages and centres of population. This in turn means the provision of utility services, schools and churches on an enormous scale. The task has hardly been started, it will not be completed for a generation. The plans, however, are there. They are bold and progressive. When they reach fruition Poland may well provide an example of rural housing that the world would do well to study.

With one aspect of Polish rebuilding, the average Englishman, brought up in the shade of the Albert Memorial and the neo-Gothic monstrosities of the Victorian era, can never feel any real sympathy. Far too many buildings are being slavishly rebuilt from nothing to resemble their pre-war appearance. All too frequently one hears a remark like this, "This cathedral" (pointing at a heap of rubble) "was erected at the orders of Jan Sobieski. It was totally destroyed by the Germans. We are rebuilding it exactly as it was." So with different materials, different methods, different architects, and above all with the different but wide resources of the twentieth century, another attempt is made to recapture something that is gone. In housing, as in most aspects of life, it is a mistake to be ruled by the dead hand of the past.

The difficulties that face them are frightening, but when all is said the Polish people and their Government are making endeavours which must inevitably bear fruit. Whether they know it or not, they are today building something of the age in which they live that will long outlive the past glories they seek to resurrect. The epitaph on Christopher Wren is particularly appropriate to modern Poland: "If you seek my monument, look around you."

FEBRUARY 1948

Page Five





## Children's Literature

by

Hanna Mortkowicz-Orczak

IN THE FIRST DAYS OF JUNE, 1947, some 500 teachers, librarians, social workers, publishers, writers, painters, draughtsmen, etc., gathered in Warsaw for a conference on children's literature. This convention called by the Polish Teachers' Union, an organization of more than 100,000 teachers, met for four days. It was the first congress of its kind to be held in Poland. One of its interesting features was an international exhibition of books for children which, among others, contained numerous American, British, Russian, Czechoslovak and Italian books.

In addition, there were theatrical performances. The *Teatr Dzieci Warszawy* (the Warsaw Children's Theatre) showed several plays requiring the co-operation of living actors and puppets, and producing in all a very interesting effect.

During the conference the attempt was made to give as complete a picture as possible of children's publications in Poland in the two and a half years since the expulsion of the Nazis, and furthermore, to draw up a plan of future co-operation for the purpose of creating a truly valuable literature devoted to Polish children.

Among those participating, one could find not only teachers and social workers, but also Poland's foremost authors of children's books, all of them pioneers in the field of education and reform. There were also many young librarians. The discussions were on a high level and revealed an eager intellectual curiosity.

I mention these facts to show that the interest in child literature is nationwide in our country, as it always has been in the past. Considering the conditions under which two years ago Poland started out on her reconstruction work, the results achieved are noteworthy. We can point at present to quite a number of books for children of various age groups, many of them in well-prepared and attractive edi-

*Above, left: "Mr. Blot's Academy"—a fantasy for children by Jan Brzechwa.*

tions. Apart from new works, written during and after the war, we have a wide variety of new editions, Polish originals as well as translations from other languages, among them such distinguished authors as Dickens, Kipling, Mark Twain and others.

I am very happy I can make this statement, for in the beginning we had all been under the apprehension that the gaps caused by more than five years of war and occupation would never be filled. And this would have been the more to be deplored as child literature in Poland has indeed an old and enviable tradition.

Poland was among the first nations to dedicate her best talents to the service of children, creating for their enjoyment masterpieces of poetry and humour. In an era as far back as the end of the 19th century we find such poets as Maria Konopnicka, Bronislawa Ostrowska, Janina Porazinska and such prose-writers as Adolf Dygasinski, Wiktor Gomulicki, Henryk Sienkiewicz at work producing classics of great artistic beauty and educational value.

When in 1918 Poland regained her independence, her child literature received a fresh impetus which brought forth a whole crop of new and valuable books. The harmonious combination of picture and verse, the pleasant humour of the rhyme added elements of charm and grace. Besides stories dealing with school life and everyday experiences in which fantasy was absent altogether or was merely a decorative frill, such as we find in the books by Zofia Kownacka, Hanna Mortkowicz-Olczak, Ewa Szelburg, works of a poetic and fantastic nature began to appear. The best examples are Lucyna Krzemieniecka's stories in verse, and the literary jokes in which such distinguished poets as Julian Tuwim and Jan Brzechwa excel.

The war years had a disastrous effect upon the psychology of Poland's children. It seemed as if these children who for five years witnessed scenes in such violent

contrast with the moral precepts of the home and of the school, would never again seek the enjoyment and stimulation of books. They had often been forced to watch the execution of those dearest to them, they had been forced to watch scenes of torture, they discovered that the parents words and protection were powerless, they learned to save their own lives by lying and stealing. Hunted by the Germans, deprived of home and school, they lost the habitual daily contacts with the printed word. In the most tragic moments, amid bombardments and shelling, in over-crowded cellars and shelters, mother and children alike reached out for books. It was in those years of terror and defeat that we realized how necessary, how indispensable, books really are.

This knowledge carries with it a great responsibility for Polish writers. The child which has experienced misery, persecution and death, the child which in the past few years was initiated into life's dismal depths, has naturally become a critical and exacting reader, not easily deceived by a jest, carried away by a phrase, or fooled by a pleasant-sounding rhyme.

Polish child literature follows in its development a pattern set by the talents and abilities of the writers themselves. Although they are familiar with the tastes and interests of the reading public, the creative works of the authors do not necessarily follow the dictates of popular requirements. And so we find, for instance, the bravado, the pleasant rhyme, the fantastic and amusing ideas of Jan Brzechwa influencing the style of Polish post-war production in the field of child literature. The beautiful and richly illustrated editions of Brzechwa's books actually represent a series of splendid jokes, clad as it were in poetic garb. Imitators, who followed, tried to capture the spirit and the style of the master.

We find at present among our post-war children's books quite an

*Right: "In a Convent Garden"—a tale for children between 10 and 15.*

assortment of stories, sagas and fantastic tales which try to carry the youthful reader away into the realm of fantasy. On the other hand, however, there are books which draw their subject-matter from recent war experience.

Nonetheless, the blossoming of Polish letters, and especially those devoted to children, has just begun.

There are not nearly enough books devoted to the present, there are not nearly enough books exploring the difficult tasks ahead, or books having for their theme the work and play, the joys, the sorrows, the hopes that stir our lives today. Our literary needs are tremendous. Children's theatres complain of the meagre repertory, magazines beg for articles, and there is still an acute shortage of paper and manpower.

But the sincere and honest efforts on behalf of children and the harmonious co-operation of scholars, writers and artists, of publishers, book dealers and librarians, offer the best guarantee that in the not too distant future Polish children, so grievously hurt by the war, will find in their literature the instruction and inspiration that is essential for their further development.



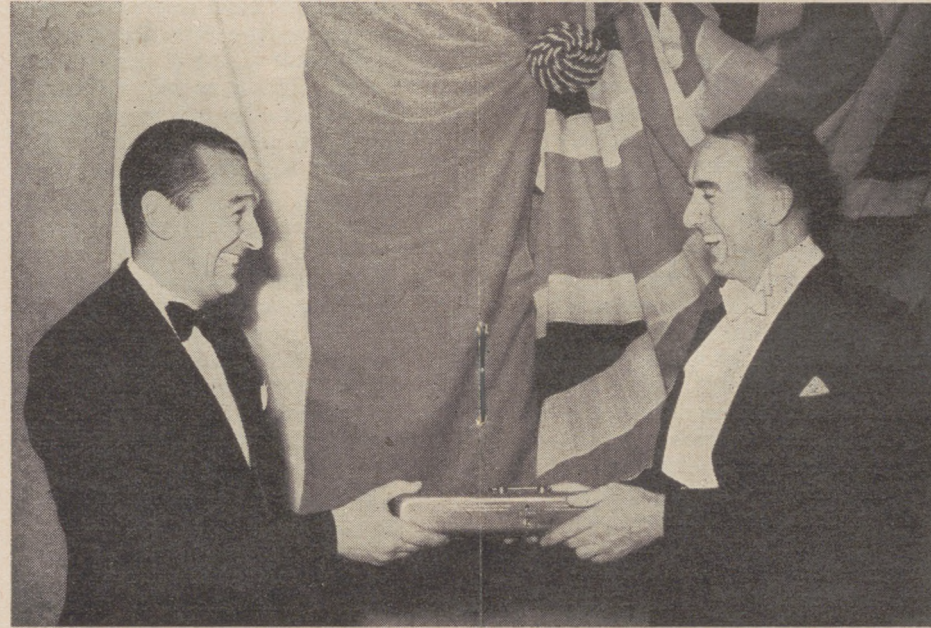




(Above) In the foreground, Louis Golding, the well-known novelist, has a word with Mrs. Cecil Chesterton, O.B.E. On the extreme left is Mrs. Vera Friedman (see page 2) and beyond, Dr. Konarek, Cultural Attache to the Polish Embassy in London. Henryk Gotlib, the Polish painter, is seen on the right.



(Right) Graceful Margot Fonteyn of Sadler's Wells Ballet was there.



(above) The Polish Ambassador accepts the present from Elwyn Jones.



(right) Joseph Macleod chats with Miss Ninette de Valois.



## A British-Polish Night

Reception at the Dorchester Hotel, January 15th, 1948

MANY PROMINENT PEOPLE IN THE world of art, letters and science, gathered at the Dorchester Hotel, London, on January 15, to meet recent distinguished visitors to Poland. Received by Major F. Elwyn Jones, M.P., President of the British-Polish Society, the guests were addressed by Gerald Barry, former Editor of the *News Chronicle*, Miss Ninette de Valois of the Sadler's Wells Ballet, Mr. Allen Bush and Mr. J. G. Crowther. His Excellency the Polish Ambassador, M. Jerzy Michalowski, was present.

Following a speech of welcome, Major Elwyn Jones presented a thoraxoscope (a medical instrument for examination of the lungs) to the Ambassador as a gift from the

Society to the Wroclaw University Tuberculosis Clinic. In reply, the Ambassador spoke of the growing friendship between the two countries and expressed the wish that within a few years both Britain and Poland would no longer require assistance from outside.

Miss de Valois, in a charming speech, spoke of her appreciation for the generous and enthusiastic reception accorded to the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company during their tour in Poland during last September and October. Mr. Allen Bush, the well-known composer and conductor followed with a description of the impressive growth of orchestras and musical appreciation in

Poland today. The last speaker, scientist J. G. Crowther, compared the destruction of Poland to the effect of "100-200 atom bombs."

The celebrated guests included actress Mary Merrall, novelist Louis Golding, Professor C. L. Wrenn of the School of Slavonic Studies, broadcaster and writer Joseph Macleod, the artists Mrs. Cora Gordon and Henryk Gotlib, and Miss Margot Fonteyn and Harold Turner of the Sadler's Wells Ballet. Mrs. Cecil Chesterton, O.B.E., writer and social worker, on behalf of the British-Polish Society Cultural sub-Committee, invited the guests, numbering over sixty, to join the Society.



100,000 Jews make

# Poland their Promised Land

by Stewart Valdar



*On their forearms, a tattooed number but in their hearts, hope. Jewish clothing workers in a Dzierzoniow (Lower Silesia) co-operative factory.*



EARLY last year I visited Poland, and on the night train coming back to Britain through Czechoslovakia I shared a compartment with two Jews. One was Lt.-Col. Dr. David Kahane, Chief Rabbi of the Polish Army, the other a man who described himself as a Zionist "organiser."

Dr. Kahane is a youngish man, with a neat pointed beard, smartly dressed in field-coloured uniform with purple flashes at the collar. Hanging from his shoulder was a shiny leather dispatch bag. The Zionist was an intense man in the early thirties, looking rather like an undergraduate. With him was a large suitcase packed with propaganda material and foreign currency. He was working his way through Eastern Europe to the Balkans, Italy and back to Palestine. It was inevitable that our conversation should turn to the question of Jews in Poland. I had spent many days touring the country by train, aeroplane, coach and drosky, during which time I spoke to Jewish farmers, textile workers, miners, and children's welfare workers.

My Zionist companion told me he had helped to form young Polish Jews into groups of what he called "cadres." Their job, he explained, was to prepare larger groups of volunteers for the "new life in Palestine." He showed me photographs of splendid young men and women who comprised some of these groups, and described how these and many other Jews were making their way to Palestine. Many had forged papers—visas bearing the crests of Sweden, Belgium and San Domingo—and he told me how they had left Poland via Szczecin (Stettin) and across the Black Border (through Czechoslovakia into Austria).

Did the Polish Government know that he was encouraging Polish Jews to leave the country, I asked. "Certainly," he replied, "I have been given every opportunity to put

*This article first appeared in the bulletin of The Trades Advisory Council (T.A.C.).*

the Zionist case for these Jews to come home." I thought of the dire shortage of hands in Poland, and how every man, woman and youngster was needed to rebuild the country, and I marvelled at the human understanding of the Jewish question displayed by the Polish authorities.

I realised how many of the surviving Polish Jews wanted to escape from the land where millions of their fellows had been done to death. Before the war, three and a half million Jews lived in Poland. Some 80,000 survived the war. About 160,000 were evacuated to the Soviet Union and spent the war years there, making a total of 240,000 who remained alive.

No less than 3,260,000 Jews perished in gas chambers and concentration camps. Of the surviving 240,000, about 140,000 emigrated from Poland immediately after their repatriation from the Soviet Union. In the words of Dr. Kahane, "these unfortunates returning to Poland in 1946, did not find any of their relatives alive and were incapable, psychologically, of standing life in what, for them, seemed a cemetery."

## 100,000 REMAINED

A hundred thousand Jews chose to remain in Poland, and although some returned to their former homes, 70 per cent. decided to seek a new life in the regained Western Territories of Poland. Dr. Kahane explained that these Jews had become integrated in the reconstruction work of the whole population, and that the old Jewish religious councils were replaced by Jewish denominational congregations and Jewish committees organising Jewish life and controlling schools and social institutions.

In this work the Polish authorities gave full support, which is of great importance, especially in the case of Jews in the Western Territories.

How are the 100,000 faring? In Lower Silesia at Dzierzoniow I found a town of hope. Here some 20,000 Jews have created what is

really a big workshop and educational centre. Primarily it is connected with the education of a new generation of Polish Jews. The organisation centre is the O.R.T. (Office of Rehabilitation through Training) building, around which are vocational schools training people for the many-sided co-operative life of the town.

It was here that I visited a co-operative farm, run by four Jewish families which shared equally in the proceeds. All the women had been in Oswiecim concentration camp as the tattooed numbers on their forearms testified. Most of the men had fought either with the partisans or the Red Army.

I spoke to Mr. Eisner, one of the farmers, who had fought with the Red Army on the Byelorussian Front and had later joined the Polish Army as it fought through to Berlin. He told me: "I am very contented here. If others want to leave the country they are free to do so. Jews here have the same opportunity as other Poles. If they want to work they can live well." I gazed round their well-furnished house and well-laden table and agreed with him. While in common with all Polish farms, they were short of mechanical equipment, my hosts had excellently-kept cows, horses, and even pigs in the cleanest sties I have ever seen.

Here were Polish Jews working hard, enjoying the fruits of their labour, raising children and facing the future with hope. The curse of anti-semitism has become for them a nightmare of the past, and the new generation will be the first to grow up as free and equal citizens.

## NOW PRODUCTIVE WORKERS

In a nearby textile factory 20 per cent. of the 340 workers were Jewish. It was Sunday and the workers came in to set their factory in motion for the benefit of the foreign journalists with whom I travelled. The workers proudly referred to "our" factory and I wondered if workers in Britain would give up a few hours on a holiday to

show their factory off to foreign visitors! Jews and non-Jews worked here in perfect harmony. A Jewish machinehand, Sara Fleish, told me: "There is no difference between us and the other workers. Many of us were artisans and traders, and have now become productive workers."

This last remark is very significant. Thousands of Jews who were traders are now productive workers, for there are no kinds of labour today in Poland which Jews do not perform. At the time of my visit, there were over 600 Jewish coal miners in Poland and over 20,000 Jews in State-run factories. They work in the glass works and coal mines at Walbrzych, in the textile mills of Bielawa, textile factories of Lodz and the wagon factories at Wroclaw (Breslau). Jewish farmers till the soil of Szczecin province, Dzierzoniow, and Swidnica districts of Lower Silesia. Jewish life in Poland to-day is based upon productive work.

## CULTURE PRESERVED

Although the Jews form an integral part of modern Poland, they are not "absorbed"—despite their small numbers. I was struck by the fact that at a Jewish orphanage named after Janusz Korzak, which I visited in Lower Silesia, the children were taught Yiddish as well as Polish. I asked why a special Jewish orphanage had been set up, and the reply was: "The Jewish community have been decimated; we feel that we must draw closer together to preserve our culture from extinction." In this aim the Government is giving every possible assistance.

I shall long remember the faces of the little Jewish boys and girls at this orphanage. Their features were marked by the memory of horrors which no child should see, and yet their eyes were bright as they sang songs of the new world they were making and of the things they were going to do.

It was a new life indeed: with their eyes on the future, the 100,000 Jews who stayed are making Poland their promised land.



THE protection of human rights is not a new question in Poland. Even in the middle ages, Poland was considered a country of religious tolerance and an asylum for the unfortunate, especially for Jews who were then being persecuted and driven out of Western Europe.

Amongst those who fought for the improvement of social conditions in Poland were the statesman and philosopher, Frycz-Modrzewski, sometimes called the Polish Erasmus, and the Polish astronomer, Nicolaus Copernicus. They were the most prominent representatives, in the Poland of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, of what was known as "the party of execution of laws." This party had, as its general aim, the realization of the conception of humanism held at the time of the Renaissance and, more particularly, it sought to create a legal system of protection for human beings.

One of the earliest declarations of civil freedom to be made in Europe is contained in the Polish Constitution of May 3, 1791, the democratic ideas of which were fought for by Kosciuszko and Pulawski. This Constitution sought to destroy feudal inequalities and establish a state of equality before the law for the middle class—the peasants who, until that time, lived under conditions of feudal enslavement, and the Jews who then had no civil rights.

Polish legions took part in the revolutionary fighting in France against feudalism and, later, in the fight for liberty in Italy. They wore on their shoulders the symbolic words: "All men are Brothers."

Some years later, during the insurrection against the Tsars in November, 1831, the rebels began their activities under the slogan: "For Your Liberty and Ours." The man who inspired the struggle was Poland's greatest national poet, Adam Mickiewicz.

It is natural, therefore, that when Poland regained her independence after the first world war, the Polish people assured for themselves, in

## The Growth of Democracy

First article on human rights in Poland by

Col. Marian Muszkat, LL.D.

*Polish Representative on the U.N. War Crimes Commission*

the democratic constitution of February 21, 1921, all those civil liberties which were their watchword in the centuries-old struggle.

The equality of every citizen before the law, freedom of speech and of the Press, of public meetings and associations, freedom of religion, of personal security by means of independent courts, the right of participation in public life, through the five-point elections (general, free, proportional, secret, direct)—these were all included in the constitution of 1921 as collective civil liberties, legally defined.

In such a way, only at the beginning of her second period of independence, did Poland start to solve these problems, the solution of which in England began under

Henry VIII and resulted in the development of the British middle-classes and her democratic legal and political systems.

For the establishment of a democratic political system in Poland after the first world war, it was necessary to undertake great social reforms, and the first had to be in agriculture. The big Polish landowners—last survivors of the feudal system—who had the greater part of the land in their possession, naturally opposed such reform. Political democracy, even formal equality in the eyes of the law, and the possibility that the peasants and workers might have a majority in parliament—these were threats to their social position and, therefore, a few years after voting the con-

*Oswiecim concentration camp criminals who faced trial in Krakow recently.*



NEW POLAND

stitution of 1921, they began to violate its articles.

Land reform was held up, police were called in against workers who went on strike, and the president, Narutowicz, elected by the democratic majority of the Diet, was shot. The way was open for semi-fascist dictatorship, with the aim of abolishing all the social and political achievements of the peasants and workers. By applying terrorist methods—such as the notorious gaol of Brzesc (for democratic leaders), the persecution, illegal arrest and murder of others, the system of discriminations, armed pacification and pogroms of national minorities, and creating one of the first concentration camps, in Bereza Kartuska—all the civil liberties guaranteed by the constitution which thus became a piece of worthless paper, although formally it remained in force.

To end even this, in April, 1935, parliament was ordered to vote a new constitution, the provisions of which abolished the freedom of the Press, of united action and all other civil liberties, for which generations of Poles had fought against our own and foreign oppressors.

During the last war the Polish people, once more, joined in a fight which was at the same time national and social, because their aim was not only political liberty, but also human rights. And, like their fathers who raised their banners with the words "For Your Liberty and Ours," Polish soldiers became fighters against fascism all over the world—in Warsaw and Westerplatte, in Narvik and the Maginot Line, in the sky over Britain, in the African deserts, the Russian Lenino, the Italian Monte Cassino, the French La Falaise—in fact wherever the battle for freedom raged.

But especially did they fight in the Polish forests, in the guerrilla country, wherein was born the National Council of the Country and its successor, the Polish Committee of National Liberation.

This Committee produced the Manifesto of July 22, 1944, published in Chelm, the first Polish town

to be liberated from Nazi occupation. In this Manifesto it was stated that, as soon as Poland was liberated, the fascist constitution of 1935 would be nullified and, until a new freely-elected parliament had been voted, a new constitution—based on the democratic constitution of 1921—would be in force in the country.

"The Committee of National Liberation," it was said in the Manifesto, "starting with the restoration of the Polish State, declares solemnly the re-introduction of all democratic liberties, the equality of all citizens before the law, regardless of race, religion or nationality, freedom of political and professional organisation, freedom of the Press and of conscience."

But after their experience of Poland between the two wars, the authors of the Manifesto understood that it would be impossible to realise the ideal of complete civil liberty and real political democracy, without social reforms, in a country where feudal institutions still remained.

How could the peasants and the workers profit by the freedom of the Press, by the right to have their independent associations and by the benefits of scientific progress and equality in law, if they had no money for printing presses to publish their newspapers and books, to rent rooms for their unions and meetings, to pay for schools and universities for full-time study, or pay the costs of courts and barristers?

The democratic constitution remained a fiction in a country where the majority of the population was economically in the power of a minority of the feudal upper classes who were closely connected with the leaders of the great capitalist industries and banks and they, by reason of their economic supremacy could end such civil liberties as were in operation, even if only formal.

In a second article, Col. Muszkat describes how the introduction of land reform, nationalisation of basic industries and legislation banning fascist organisations implemented the promises of the 1921 constitution.—*Editor.*

## AN XMAS TALE

IT was a Christmas window display in a Warsaw food shop. The ingenious shopkeeper had in his window the traditional images of the Holy Child in the stable, but had adapted the characters to the Poland of 1947. Instead of the shepherds, there were images of a miner bringing a pail of coal produced above the target, a sailor bringing fish, a peasant woman with bags of poppy seeds and baskets of eggs, and a mountaineer leading a flock of hens and geese. The most interesting figure, however, was one with a brief case labelled "civil servant." He brought the Holy Child a birth certificate and also a first category ration card, such as was given to workers in nationalised industries or to civil servants. There was also a form which was extremely appropriate as Jesus was born in a stable for lack of accommodation—it was a housing allocation. In Warsaw, so many people are faced with the alternative of living in hovels or having a flat repaired at their own expense (if they could afford it) unless they are lucky enough to be able to rent a flat from the firm or institution employing them, or have joined a building co-operative and been put on their waiting list. So a housing allocation was something which thousands in Warsaw are eagerly waiting for. The last form brought to the Holy Child was an income-tax form!

The window display is significant of the opinion of the pillars of free enterprise, the small tradesmen. If I interpret the picture rightly, they are satisfied. They glory in the successes of the Polish miners, realise that Poland has become a maritime country, know that housing for a long time will remain a sore spot in Warsaw, and approve the way the food shortage is handled by a judicious mixture of free enterprise, rationing and price control. If they kick at the income tax—well, don't we all?

—from the Polish Radio.

Page Thirteen



# 'The call of the Homeland was too strong'

Scots Diary

by

John Cartwright

(Our Scottish Correspondent)

*By the middle of December, that is, fourteen months after the formation of the Polish Resettlement Corps, 10,000 Polish soldiers had been absorbed into civilian life in Scotland. This leaves 8,750 officers and men still in Scotland most of whom are likely to be repatriated from early spring onwards.*

A pleasing feature of this draft was the inclusion of over 150 Polish civilians, demobbed soldiers, whose intention was to live in this country, but having met with unexpected frustration decided eventually to return to Poland. The "call of the Homeland was too strong" for them as one of them said, and another said they "felt aliens in a strange land" and would be happier, to use a Scots expression, "among their ain folk." I noticed back numbers of *New Poland* had been distributed among the men on the ship.

Not so pleasing was the story told to me by a friend who travelled from Crewe to Glasgow with a de-

mobbed Polish officer, a doctor, who said this was a rich country and he proposed staying in it. He was on his way to the Polish Hospital at Ballochmyle, in Ayrshire, where he would be employed. A product, in all probability, of what Harold Laski describes as the "poisonous propaganda and evil influence of the extremest elements in Anders' Army." My friend expressed his contempt for the mercenary outlook of a professional man so badly needed in his own country.

Mr. George Thomas, M.P., Chairman of the British-Polish Society, addressed a meeting in Glasgow on December 14, under the auspices of the Socialist Teachers Society. The meeting was well attended and Mr. Thomas's address was warmly received. Polish literature was on sale at the meeting and sales exceeded expectations. I am told the attractive cover sold out December's *New Poland*.

Man's social union, as Burns called it, is becoming closer and more appreciative between the peoples of Poland and Scotland. Ernest Reoch, in the *Glasgow Evening News*, writes: From Krakow to a colleague's house in Glasgow has come a Christian gift—a beautiful wall plaque done in wood, artistically designed and covered. "It's comin' yet for a' that, that man to man, the world o'er, shall brothers be for a' that!"

It was refreshing to learn that *New Poland* had penetrated some of Scotland's "Backward Areas." Firm orders, I hear, have been received from Dumfriesshire, the Isle of Arran, and the Island fortress of the Duke of Montrose.

NEW POLAND

IF any doubted the extent of Britain's dependence on European recovery for the achievement of her own economic objectives, the Government's enforced reduction in its capital expenditure programme, together with hard currency import cuts and higher export targets at the expense of domestic consumption, must have dispelled any remaining illusions to the contrary. Interest in Poland's achievements during the past year is, therefore, far from academic; and those who are looking even more frequently at production portents in Europe must derive some little encouragement from recent Warsaw announcements.

In the Fuel and Power sector it appears that the coal target of 56,500,000 tons was reached a week or so before the due date; that electric power has exceeded its 1946 level by 10 per cent. (66 per cent. above 1938); and that the coke target of 2,750,000 tons was passed on December 24, 1947. This is very impressive indeed and reflects great credit on all concerned.

On the industrial side the results are difficult to interpret owing to a statistical presentation in *Polish Facts and Figures*\* which makes comparative analysis almost impossible. We are pleased to learn, none the less, that the targets set have been reached, before time, in Textiles, Timber, Chemicals, Sugar, Minerals, Cement and Glass.

Perhaps a friendly word of criticism addressed to *Polish Facts and Figures* will not be taken amiss from those of us in Parliament who find it very difficult, in the time at our disposal, to check through supplementary statistical data in amplification of certain deficiencies which, many of us feel, can easily be remedied.

It is reported, for example, that the Metal (engineering) industry exceeded its plan by 6 per cent.,

\* Published weekly by the Press Department of the Polish Embassy, London.

FEBRUARY 1948

PARLIAMENT

## Polish production is impressive but let's have more figures!

says

Major Donald Bruce, M.P.

but it is not stated what the plan was. Later it is recorded that 780,000 tons of pig iron, 1,450,000 tons of steel and 990,000 tons of rolled products were produced in the first 11 months of 1947. The targets are not stated and the reader has no idea as to whether production schedules have been attained.

Comparison is hardly made any easier by the variations in the basic date selected. For instance: chemical production is quoted at "pre-war prices," Minerals and Textiles at "1937 prices," Metals at figures "before the War," and Generating as "above 1938." Many of us will be grateful if it can be made possible for a standard pre-war year to be selected and adhered to; for quantities, percentages and values (in a standard and not a varying currency expression) to be stated instead of what may be taken by some to be the singling out of whichever method will give the most impressive presentation; and for the periods or dates relative to the appropriate statistics to be expressly given.

Agriculture would seem to be a little in the doldrums. Exasperatingly enough the figures are not

stated, but cereals were less than "73 per cent. of pre-war production per head of population." Anyone with experience of Britain's share of European weather conditions this past year will hardly be surprised.

There may be other considerations. In November, 1947, we discussed the incentives in the Polish economy under which industrial, but not agricultural, workers were permitted to buy goods at one-fifth of their market price. Weather conditions may have dissipated the favourable conditions under which the Polish smallholder could derive an equivalent incentive by large scale sales to non-privileged classes.

It would therefore be interesting to have some further facts about this, not only to be able to assess the relationship between agriculture and industry, but also to judge the effects of a novel experiment in labour incentives.

On the whole, however, Poland's economic progress during 1947 presents a good augury for the future; and her friends in Britain's Parliament wish her every success in 1948.

(see Editorial, Page One).

Page Fifteen

ON December 12, the British troopship *Eastern Prince* left King George V Dock, Glasgow, carrying 1,363 repatriated officers and men, together with wives and children. Bound for the Port of Gdynia this was the fifty-fourth draft and will probably be the last until the spring as the Polish Government are concerned about risking the Baltic in severe winter weather.

A good send off by the Band of the Highland Light Infantry from Maryhill Barracks was impressive. It must have been particularly so for the British wives of Polish soldiers who heard the band play: "Should auld acquaintance be forgot and never brought to mind?"

Over seventy British wives and children embarked on this trip. Down the Firth of Clyde the sun was shining on never-to-be-forgotten scenery, described as amongst the finest on earth. Surely they would hope that, in happier times, they and their children would pass that way again; they "... the heirs of all the ages in the foremost trials of time."

Amongst the repatriates were soldiers returned from Italy just two months ago and young fellows who had fought in the Underground forces in Warsaw. These latter had been captured by the Nazis and in the end liberated by the Americans. They were going back to take up their jobs where they had left off. Foreign lands, they said, had no attraction for them. Another thing that Press men, like myself, wondered at were the number of Polish P.O.W.'s lining the ship's side still wearing the uniform of Nazi captives. We could not get any answer to our queries as to why they were still in the Nazi slave uniform.





## THE POLISH PRESS SAYS:

*Our selection of quotations from the Polish Press covers the main topics of comment during recent weeks.*

### The New Educational Laws

Before the war, 5 per cent. of Poland's students were of working class origin and 9 per cent. came from the peasantry. This has been fully changed under the new law. Fifty per cent. of the students, in departments with limited number of places, are now of peasant and worker origin. In the medical faculties peasant youth predominate and in technical faculties, workers' children. The percentage of workers' children studying dentistry is 35, of peasant children 12. Corresponding figures for medicine are 19 and 24, and for polytechnics 37 and 13. The school year 1947/8 radically changed the social structure of student youth.—Głos Ludu.

### Warsaw's Communications

Before the war Warsaw had 1,800 streets and 11,000 cars. At present the city has only 600 streets and 14,000 cars. This state of affairs requires, in the interest of communication problems and safety, a quick and efficient solution of the transport problem of the city—even if this means giving these problems precedence over a part of the carefully elaborated plans for the rebuilding of Warsaw.—Robotnik.

### Poland and U.N.O.

Interview with Professor Oscar Lange, Polish Delegate to the Security Council of U.N.O., on Polish activities during two years in U.N.O.: "We won the support

of the states which sincerely desire to secure peace and support all efforts aiming at an international understanding, disarmament, strengthening of all progressive forces all over the world as well as the isolation and branding of potential war centres. Poland stands for speedy and radical disarmament and prohibition of use of atomic weapons as well as for the destruction of existing stocks. I believe that period of tensions will not last long. The forces of progress and peace are now powerful enough to assure conditions of harmonious and creative co-operation.—Robotnik.

### Polish-British Relations

The normalisation of Polish-British relations was achieved last year, and a trade agreement was concluded although some questions like the return of Poles from Westphalia are still obscuring the Polish-British horizon. Poland tries to lessen friction between the big powers and on various occasions sponsored compromise proposals thus winning sympathy of all true democratic and peaceful elements in the Security Council and at U.N.O.—Życie Warszawy.

### Food Supplies

M. Lechowicz, Minister of Food: Last Year, the first year of the Three-Year reconstruction plan, brought big economic achievements. The investment plan was considerably exceeded, an important budget surplus was reached. The

ROBOTNIK: Organ of the Polish Socialist Party (P.P.S.). PÓLSKA BROJNA: official soldiers' newspaper. GAZETA LUDOWA: voice of the Polish Peasant Party. GŁOS LUDU: organ of the Polish Workers' Party (P.P.R.). ŻYCIE WARSZAWY: non-party Liberal. KURIER CODZIENNY: organ of the Democratic Party. RZECZPOSPOLITA: semi-official, non-party newspaper.

danger of inflation was removed, prices were stabilised and speculation was combated. Compared with the production indices, the level of wages is still low, but it was balanced by putting food supplies fully under Government control. The number of employed rose considerably in all production branches but even bigger was the increase of productivity. The output of non-consumer goods exceeded pre-war level. A similar rise in the production of consumers' goods enabled a reduction of prices by the end of the year. New plants were put into operation, scores of thousands of houses and industrial buildings were reconstructed. A further 3 million acres were ploughed.—Kurier Codzienny.

### Employment Still Rising

On July 1, 1946, the increase of employment in Poland amounted to 681,000 workers in key industries, on July 1, 1947, to 807,000 and in September, 1947, to 837,000. This steady increase of employment is one more proof of the normalisation of our economic life. It shows that rationalisation of industry and increase of efficiency and productivity are not factors which cause unemployment. On the contrary they contribute to the increase of the individual income of the worker and to the rising standard of life, they create the possibility of new investments and of opening new workshops.—Rzeczpospolita.

## THE BRITISH-POLISH SOCIETY

*The Organiser says:*

WITH the Society nearing the end of its first year of activity,\* and with the Annual General Meeting due next month, it is time to take stock of our position and plan for future work in the light of past experience.

It has been a year of trial and error, exploration both in planning and in spontaneous activity and the first lesson is undoubtedly that both forms of work are necessary and should be linked together. For instance, an exhibition or a lecture tour may be organised to a schedule planned in advance, but some new material or the appearance in this country of an interesting personality on a visit from Poland often makes it worth while to vary the schedule or extend the tour.

Another point concerns provincial activities; I have been frequently reminded that London is not England (And I am constantly expecting to be reminded that Glasgow is not Scotland), but it is not easy to organise continuous activity from a long distance unless we have some friends on the spot willing and able to maintain the continuity. We have, therefore, recently adopted the system of organising, say, one week of activity in a certain area—half a dozen lectures, a public meeting and a film show is a good quota—and we hope that out of this we shall obtain members enough to form groups to carry on regular work.

This is, of course, where you come in. We must have some knowledge of local conditions, personalities, interests and opportunities. How can we get this? Only by our friends on the spot writing in and telling us about the conditions and opportunities in various parts of

the country. We want to know things like: what organisations of an educational character are there in your neighbourhood who would be interested in hearing our lectures, and how can we contact them; is there a good public hall, theatre or cinema available, to what extent would local authorities co-operate; is there a bookshop which would help with a decorative display of books, pamphlets and pictures of life in Poland; is there an art gallery in the town, and would it show Polish photographs or paintings; would the local music society like to put on a performance of Polish music for its own members and our friends? Given this sort of information we can do something good—without it we cannot even start, so you see it does depend on you.

One thing Britain has learnt, or should have learnt, in the past year is that British-Polish accord is not just a matter of friendship, it is something of vital practical importance to both countries. The extent of Britain's dependence on supplies from abroad, especially foodstuffs, has been brought home to us with blunt directness: the necessity to look for sources of supply which are also markets for our exports is now a grim factor in the everyday lives of the British people.

The Society has not only an interest, but a responsibility in this sphere. Our work of promoting and furthering friendship between the peoples of Britain and Poland will be greatly aided by the development of commercial relations between the countries, but at the same time we must give publicity to the fact that such relations are necessary for our mutual interests.

What the New Year will bring forth we do not know but, with the experience we have gained and with the co-operation of our members, it will be a year of bigger and better activity for the British-Polish Society.

F. L. FARR.

\* This was the first year for the B.-P.S. The earlier organisation "Friends of Democratic Poland" differed, not only in name, but in personnel and activities. There is now little resemblance.

FEBRUARY 1948

## POSTBAG

Dear Editor,

I very much appreciate your excellent magazine and the work that it is doing for closer understanding and friendship between our two countries. I was, however, astonished to read in Herbert Marshall's article (January issue) that "practically all (dogs) had been eaten during the Occupation."

I am sure that Mr. Marshall, whom I know to be a great friend of the new Poland, has obtained a wrong impression on this point during his stay in my country.

As one who was in Poland during the whole course of the war and Occupation, I can assure him that even during the Warsaw Uprising, when food was extremely scarce, it was never necessary to use dog-meat.

Apart from any other considerations, Poles are great animal-lovers and this fact alone would suffice to prevent the dog population from sharing the fate of its bovine relations.

Z. JANCZEWSKI

London, W.1.

### Mr. Marshall replies:

Mr. Janczewski is taking the whole matter rather too seriously! It may be that my informants in Poland were being slightly facetious; but let us face realities. Even in Britain, during the war, people found difficulty in providing food for their pets and many were got rid of for this reason. Also many animals were affected by air raids and bombardment, and therefore had to be destroyed. It is not unreasonable to assume that these factors had an even more decisive effect upon the animal population of Poland. Whether or not some people in Poland were obliged to eat animals normally considered as pets may well depend upon how difficult conditions were at any given time. If the maintenance of human life was in danger from starvation, it is reasonable to assume that dogs and cats took the place of rabbits and other more usual meats. This, at any rate, was what I was told by a number of people in Poland.



PLI-221  
1948

# SERVICES for Goods to and from Central Europe and Overseas by SEA - RAIL - AIR

*for prompt service and economical rates consign through*

**PSA**  
and their



**Transport Ltd.**  
Organisation abroad

*Additional Specialities: Chartering and Passenger Service*

**PSA TRANSPORT LTD.**

**Coventry Court, 47 Whitcomb Street, London, W.C.2**

Telephones: WHItchall 9161/5

Travel WHItchall 7561 (Ext.42/43)

Telegrams: Polsteam, London

## C. & H. PRODUCTS, LTD.

Manufacturers of Herring Delicacies

Famous for its Smoked Herring Spread

136, New Kent Road, London, S.E.1

(and at Great Yarmouth)

*The Sign of Quality . . .*

*a C. & H. Product*

*Trade enquiries invited.*