

Poland
(1948)

Poland Today

by

ALEXANDER WERTH

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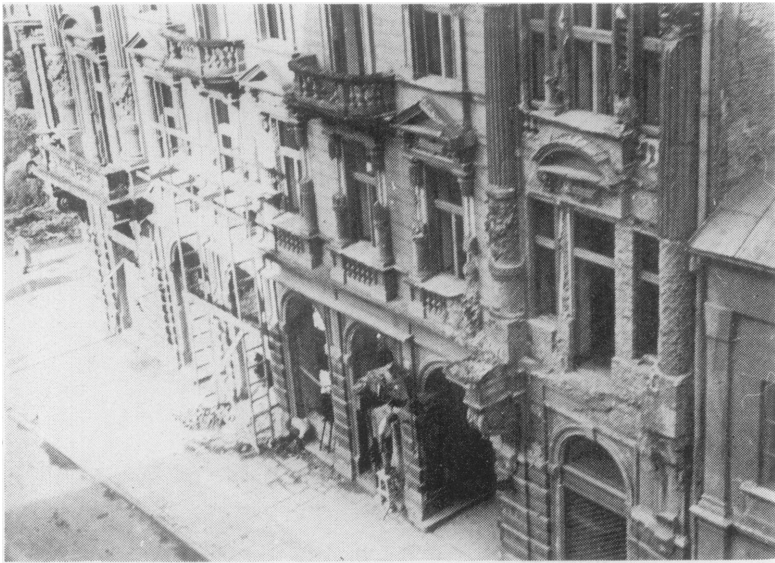
1948

POLISH RESEARCH AND INFORMATION SERVICE

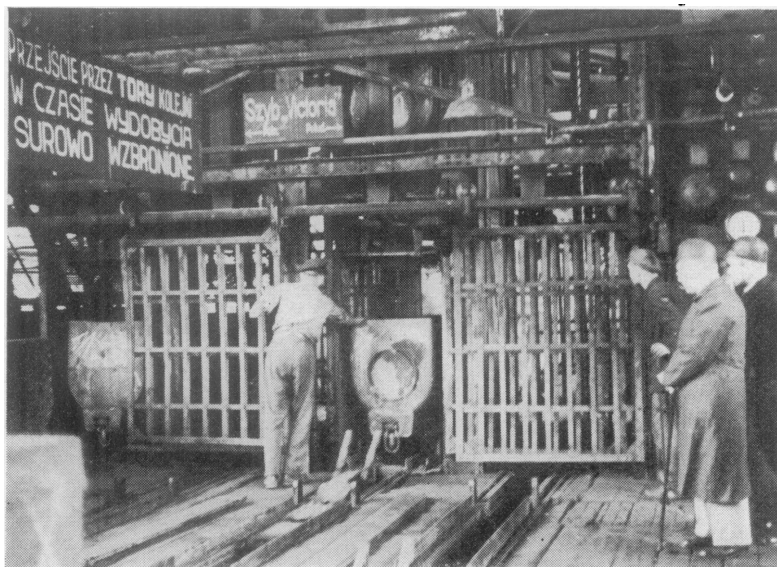
250 West 57 Street • New York 19, N. Y.

Mr. Alexander Werth is a well-known British journalist. A correspondent of the Manchester Guardian, he was assigned to cover Poland, a country he was familiar with from previous visits. He gave his impressions in a series of articles which were also reprinted in The Nation. We publish them by courtesy of The Nation.

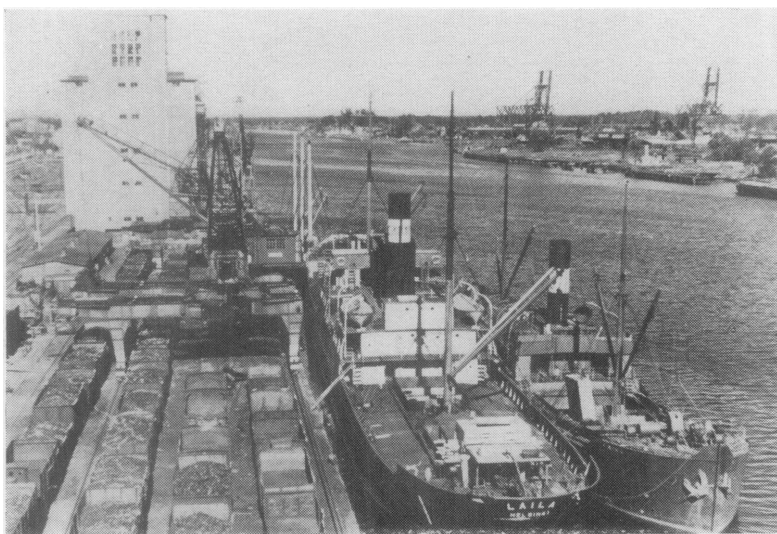
WARSAW — 1947



***"The reconstruction of the big cities . . .
will be a long and arduous task . . ."***



"... the greatest asset was coal ..."



"... Danzig harbor has been brought back to life ..."

Poland Today

By Alexander Werth

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I. RECONSTRUCTION AND PROGRESS

Warsaw, August 1

OF ALL THE WAR-SCARRED COUNTRIES OF Europe, Poland has made the most remarkable recovery. It is the more impressive because the destruction in Poland was greater than in any of the other occupied countries, with the exception of the occupied parts of the Soviet Union. Moreover, Poland has been "shifted" several hundred miles to the west, and has had to assimilate large new territories. The loss of the non-Polish territories in the east is not greatly regretted—except for Vilno and, especially, Lwow. Few Poles really felt that the Ukrainian and Byelorussian lands—the areas of the great estates—were an inalienable part of Poland. But Poles today are unanimous in agreeing on the excellence of the Oder-Neisse line. Poland "looks good on the map"; it forms almost a regular circle; it is compact and, with the loss of the eastern lands and the expulsion of the Germans from the west, it has no longer any of those minority problems which weakened Poland between the two wars. The westward shift has changed the whole basis of Poland's economy; it will no longer be a great grain-growing country. Instead, it will become one of the major dairy-farming, stock-breeding, industrial countries of the Continent; and it is felt that, in the balance, Poland will have gained.

The people have a sharp urge to make a success of their coherent and economically harmonious country. Six years of the most humiliating and brutal occupation have demoralized Poland less than almost any other nation in Europe, Russia not excepted. In France, the occupation, though shorter and less horrible, had a deeper and more pernicious effect. This Polish vitality and a sort of innate optimism are among the factors that explain Poland's recovery. Another is the indisputable efficiency

of the government. Thirdly, UNRRA's \$500,000,000, and Swedish and other relief activities, have been important aids.

Not that the Poles were not demoralized, at first. When I was in Lublin in 1944, nearly everybody was leading as degrading a black-market, hand-to-mouth existence as during the occupation. I saw Poland again in the summer of 1945. The country was still in a state of deep political ferment and near economic chaos, though order was gradually beginning to take shape. But Warsaw was a heap of rubble; so also were Gdansk (Danzig), Poznan, and the newly acquired Wroclaw (Breslau); the railroads were almost entirely out of commission, due to the wrecking of bridges and the lines themselves, and the lack of rolling stock. Even the miners of Silesia were very poorly fed, not to mention the urban population generally. There was still a powerful underground, and little internal security. There was some banditry then, even in the streets of Warsaw and Cracow, and the country was just beginning to face the baffling problem of what to do with the large western territories from which most of the Germans had been expelled. At that time, I saw the first Polish settlers on the Neisse; they had come from around Lwow, and with little or no cattle or inventory, they looked wretched and bewildered. All around them, for miles, there was nothing but abandoned German farms. Today, five million Poles have been settled there, and the area has become perhaps the greatest show-piece of post-war Europe. The ports of Gdynia and Gdansk, then completely wrecked, are now almost restored.

ALTOGETHER, THE CHANGE IN TWO YEARS has been striking. Traffic of goods on the railways is greater than in pre-war Poland; though passenger carriages are still short, freight cars are more numerous than before 1939. Many of these are German, but many others—along with the locomotives—have been built by the great rolling-stock works at Wroclaw, the restoration of which was, somewhat in the Russian style, proclaimed to be the proudest achievement of Polish industry in 1946.

You see feverish reconstruction activity everywhere: the miners and railwaymen and textile workers have labored with immense devotion; land reform has passed off quite smoothly. There are still food shortages and, worse still, the after effects of past food shortages of the 1939-46 period. Seven per cent of Warsaw's population is tubercular. But though many people are living most miserably, especially in some of the large towns, Poland does not rank as one of the very hungry countries of Europe. (Even so, the State Department's decision to stop post-UNRRA relief is a severe blow.) And perhaps most important of all, there is today almost complete internal peace in Poland.

I traveled in a car all over Polish East Prussia and large parts of Białystok province—areas which a year ago were considered highly dangerous. Now, seldom anything unpleasant happens there. The amnesty in February virtually ended the activity of the rightist bands—that underground which for a long time was being encouraged so foolishly by certain Allied diplomats in the name of “democracy.” Nearly 60,000 men laid down their arms and went back to civilian life. The government believes that most of them have given up the struggle for good—though the police no doubt continue to keep an eye on some. The amnesty was decisive in putting a formal end to the bands, but their disintegration was already foreshadowed by the rapidly diminishing support they were receiving from the peasants, who had grown more and more tired of the civil-war atmosphere the bands were creating in many parts of Poland. There was also a growing consciousness among the peasantry, as among all other Poles, that the government was “getting things done.” Though the government may not be loved—indeed it is disliked by the greater part of the peasantry, the small shopkeepers, and, of course, the “disinherited” classes—it commands very great respect.

Some will say that Poland has recovered “in spite” of the people in power, but everyone knows that the organizing ability of the government and its clearness of vision have been just as important as the hard work done by the workers and peasants. A striking feature is also the relatively high efficiency of the

bureaucracy. Poland's new planned economy has created many difficult problems, but the officials I interviewed never showed any signs of vague fumbling. They were precise, to the point, and produced facts and figures at a moment's notice. I was struck by this even in small-town cooperatives and among minor officials working under the *wojewoda* (provincial governor). Many of these were young men who had more or less wasted their time during the occupation. The Poles have a natural quickness, and intelligence well above the average. The Communists are particularly hard-working and efficient—on the whole, a good deal more so than their Russian opposite numbers.

And it must be said that Polish Communists give the impression of being Poles first and foremost, Communists only next, and pro-Russians last and sometimes not at all. Many say that they want Poland to acquire certain but by no means all of the features of Soviet economy. A large number of Poles are attracted to the P. P. R. (Communist Party) because it has the best organizing brains at its head. It is significant that many of the P. P. R. ministers were at first as eager as the others to respond favorably to the Bevin-Bidault invitation to come to the Paris conference on the Marshall plan. But that is another story.

Of course, the Polish Government is not strictly democratic, according to Western standards. Although no government spokesman will admit it, many a government supporter will confess that the election was not "quite straight." But he will use this argument: "It was a question of whether Poland was to rise from its ruins or not. Were we to leave the decision to a few million ignorant, priest-ridden peasants? Were we to have a Mikolajczyk government, followed before long by a completely reactionary government, which would have inevitably bred internal strife? There would have been no planning; there would have been chaos similar to what you have in Greece; and, in the end, the Russians, for their own protection, might have brought irresistible pressure to bear on Poland, if not actually occupied it. We had to seize the chance to show what we would do with Poland, and before very long we are going to be gratefully accepted by the majority of the people."

II. TRADE AND PLANNING

Warsaw, August 3

SOVIET COMMUNISM IS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE to the Polish people, and the Polish Communists know it as well as anybody. But there are certain features of Soviet organization and economy which they—and not only they—consider valuable in the process of rebuilding Poland. Large-scale nationalization was, in any case, inevitable in Poland, with immense amounts of all kinds of industrial property left ownerless after the war. Planning also was essential, and the planner-in-chief, Hilary Minc, Minister of Industry—who studied Russian methods during the war, adopting what was best and casting aside the more objectionable features of Soviet economy—is generally considered, even by his political enemies, one of the first-class brains in the Polish government.

The Three-Year Plan is harmonious, coherent, strictly within the limits of practical possibility, and neither too doctrinaire nor too rigid. Poland's economy is a blended economy, a combination of three "sectors"—the state sector, the cooperative sector, and the private sector. The transition to socialism is taking place by degrees; the government is not forcing the issue. Wholesale trade is largely in the hands of the cooperatives, and retail trade is in private hands; in both cases abuses are being fought. For example, when the government found that Społem, the principal cooperative organization, was not coping adequately with grain purchases, a government body was set up which proceeded to deal directly with the local branches of Społem and no longer with its central body. Similarly, in order to fight against excessive profiteering on the part of the private shopkeepers, the government has been setting up its own department stores in various towns—less as a socialization measure than as a warning

and a price-regulating agency. As a result, there is a certain feeling of insecurity among all kinds of property holders: shopkeepers who dread price control or the competition of a government store, and house owners who fear requisitioning and billeting. But on the latter point full reassurance has been given, and, to encourage the private rebuilding of houses, landlords have been guaranteed against forced billeting. If you have the money, you can rebuild a six-room house in Warsaw and live there all by yourself.

On the whole, however, the consumer and not the shopkeeper or house owner may be considered the government's favorite. In dealing with the peasants the government has been very cautious; the highly unpopular forced-requisitioning system of 1945-46, painfully reminiscent of German occupation days, was abandoned at the first opportunity, and the peasant now receives the free-market price for his produce. It is impossible, however, to generalize about the peasantry. Some of them are very prosperous (partly as a result of years of profiteering); others, such as those I saw in the northern part of Warsaw province, scarcely make ends meet.

In an interview with Mr. Minc, I learned that, according to his estimates, the most of living had gone up only about 30 per cent since 1945, and that the sharp speculative rise in prices last spring had been checked by drastic government action. He indicated that large-scale inflation had been avoided, but that, for the present, one could hardly speak of an "official" currency rate; the present rate of 100 zloty to the dollar—in contrast with a black-market rate of 700 or 800—had little relation to the price level. He said there would be no really official rate until stabilization was decided upon; this, it seems, will be done fairly soon.

THE MINISTER ATTACHED CHIEF IMPORT-
ance to industry. One of Poland's proudest achievements is its
output of railway carriages at the rate of over 1,000 a month

and of railway engines at nearly 20 a month. Poland's steel production was still small at just over a million tons a year, and some steel and iron ore would continue to come from Sweden and the Soviet Union. With the loss of Galicia (*Eastern part of Galicia—P. R. I. S.*), Poland would also fall short of self-support in petrol. At present the country's greatest international asset was coal; it was already producing coal at the rate of 57 or 58 million tons, and the interesting thing was that, with the growing industrialization and the geographic changes Poland had undergone, its home needs were far greater than before the war.

Russia, under the trade agreement with Poland, was receiving 6,500,000 tons of coal a year. In addition, Russia imported Lodz textiles and other smaller items from Poland, but of Poland's total foreign trade of \$300,000,000 this year, less than one-third was with Russia. The coal margin left for export elsewhere was, Mr. Minc said, over 18,000,000 tons; of this, 3,000,000 went to Sweden, nearly 2,000,000 to Czechoslovakia, and smaller quantities to France, the other Scandinavian countries, Italy, and South America. And 250,000 tons would be sent to Britain. "Since 1945-46, when we traded almost exclusively with Russia and Sweden, the relative importance of our trade with Russia has greatly declined; our natural tendency is to exchange with East and West alike," Mr. Minc said. He failed, however, to mention one important aspect of trade with Russia, namely, that the Polish army is almost entirely supplied with Russian equipment, in the absence—for the present—of an appreciable Polish armaments industry.

That Mr. Minc desired large-scale trade "with East and West alike" he emphasized several times; and since then he has, indeed, gone to Paris to negotiate a new commercial agreement with France, "to make sure of another link with the West" as was widely remarked in Warsaw. When I saw him, he said: "We cannot go to the Paris meeting on the Marshall plan. But our refusal to go does not mean that our economic relations with the West have been severed. Far from it, we have no autarchist tendencies, either in terms of Poland or of some imaginary 'Eastern bloc.' We can contribute to Europe's recovery, but not on

the basis of 'Germany first.' If we get credits to develop our agriculture and our coal industry, it will help all of Europe. We can export—and already have begun to do so—eggs, bacon, and dairy produce to Britain, with which we have a satisfactory though still a rather small trade agreement; we have a hard-working population, and the advantage of our state planning is its great flexibility. Our credit is good; we are essentially sound and credit-worthy."

For all that, Mr. Minc considered trade with Czechoslovakia and other countries of Eastern Europe important in a different way: this was trade based on "joint planning." The Polish-Czech trade agreement, which he had just signed, represented, he said, 10 per cent of all Poland's exports and 5 per cent of all Czechoslovakia's exports. The agreement, or rather agreements (for he had signed more than 600 different documents!), provided not for a simple exchange of goods but for overall cooperation between the industry and agriculture of the two countries, for technical cooperation and joint planning. A body would be set up to control the execution of the agreements. Czechoslovakia would have an outlet to the sea, along the Oder to Stettin. Mr. Minc stressed that what made such an agreement possible was (1) the parallel social changes in Poland and Czechoslovakia, with their emphasis on planning; (2) the alliance of March 10; and (3) the changes in the economic structure of the two countries. Before the war the Czechs constantly feared Polish agricultural competition; now that Poland's big rural areas in the east were lost, the countries were more alike, and instead of competition there could be fruitful exchanges.

III. FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLITICS

Warsaw, August

IF CZECH OPINION, WITH ITS ESSENTIALLY "Western" slant, was upset by the government's refusal to go to the Paris conference on the Marshall plan, Poles received the news that Poland would not go with resignation or cynical amusement. A Warsaw taxi driver remarked to me: "When Daddy doesn't want to go, his son can't go either." Since then the government press has constantly stressed a single aspect of "Paris"—the top priority which the Americans, it alleges, wish to give to Germany. This has not been without effect on Polish opinion. There was also some malicious gratification among government supporters when they learned that the American Congress would not consider the Marshall plan for another six months. That Poland would welcome dollar credits nobody denies, and one of the points made by Mr. Modzelewski, the Foreign Minister, when I saw him, was that if the Americans had not for political reasons held up their \$90,000,000 credit to Poland, Polish coal production would now be much higher.

Many of the principal members of the Polish government, including the Communists, were in fact anxious to go to Paris. But it is significant that both Foreign Minister Modzelewski and Prime Minister Cyrankiewicz, when I saw them, expressed the hope that some new, more acceptable offer would yet be made. Both also were emphatic in declaring that they did not wish to see Europe split into two blocs. But at the same time Mr. Cyrankiewicz insisted that it was vitally important for Poland to "keep in" with Russia—because of the danger of a German military revival—and that Western Europe must recognize this necessity. Indicating that the Slav bloc did not now exist except as a safeguard against German aggression, Mr. Cyrankiewicz said: "We

need the alliance with Russia not for today but for the time when Germany may become a danger to Poland again. Germany may not be dangerous while the occupation lasts, but what will happen afterward? Our first consideration must be our alliance with our neighbors and," he added significantly, "also with France. We want the alliance with Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union to become a Polish political tradition. In America there is too much talk of a "preventive war"; we know that war is neither in Poland's nor in America's interest. . . . American politicians can afford to have a day-to-day foreign policy, but we are bound by geopolitical and historical factors to find a long-term policy which will safeguard Poland's will to live." In reply to my question the Prime Minister said that he did not believe Poland's independence was threatened by the Soviet Union. "There is no 'Russian penetration,'" he declared. "What is penetrating Poland is socialism—socialism of our making."

I asked the Prime Minister whether the Polish government had any ideas on what to do with the sixty or seventy million Germans living next door on a territory little larger than Poland. To this he replied that he hoped something concrete would at last emerge during the November meeting of the Foreign Ministers. From talks with other Polish leaders I gathered that one of the current ideas on the subject is that Germany should become essentially a manufacturing country, chiefly of consumer goods, and depend on imports for raw materials and cheap food; Poland would willingly exchange its agricultural produce for German manufactured goods. The fact that Germany would have to import most of its food would be a safeguard of security. Mr. Modzelewski said that Poland, which wished Europe as a whole to be restored, might produce a general plan.

Naturally the German menace, to which every Pole is highly responsive, is an ever-recurring theme in the press. At an open-air meeting at Olsztyn (Allenstein) in East Prussia I heard a Polish officer declare, amid applause, that Poland "would fight any country that employed German troops as its mercenaries."

IT IS INTERESTING THAT THE POLICY OF THE present government is to "bring all the Poles back," thus reversing the emigration policy of 1919-39. Mr. Modzelewski told me that 80,000 Poles had come back from Britain and the British zone of Germany, 15,000 from each area in May and June, and that inducements were being offered to Polish emigrants of long standing in Yugoslavia and Rumania and also to Polish miners in France and western Germany to come back. "The political conception of an émigré Poland has fallen through," Mr. Modzelewski said. The Poles from Britain, I was told, have become absorbed in the general population, and I might add from personal observation that although many, in principle, are still hostile to the government, they are impressed by the improved conditions in Poland—several recalled to me with a touch of anger the horror stories about Poland they had read in the émigré press in Britain.

While there have been some arrests lately, though not among the repatriates, not even diplomats highly critical of the Polish government claim that they have been numerous. In principle a charge must be preferred within three months of a person's arrest, and there must be a trial. There is no evidence of anyone having "disappeared." Many here argue that in the course of a revolution like Poland's some repression is inevitable, but that it is held to an "absolute minimum" and that there is "very much less of it than in the Pilsudski days."

Lately a number of priests have been arrested for "subversive activity," but though the government is in no doubt about the hostility of the church hierarchy, these arrests may be said to be the first of their kind. Despite an outward semblance of unanimity, the lower ranks of the clergy are in fact divided in their attitude to the government; many are genuinely impressed by Poland's progress in the last two years. The church also considers it to its material interest not to antagonize the government unduly, for its important estates of some 300,000 hectares have not been affected by the land reform. But generally the church is thought to be the government's most dangerous oppo-

ment, with a large influence among the peasantry. Last January the government proposed to the Vatican the resumption of diplomatic relations but has received no reply. Some satisfaction has been derived from the comments on the freedom of the Catholic church in Poland recently made by Cardinal Griffin on his return to England.

MANY OF THE POLES WHO HAVE RETURNED from England have been greatly reassured by the fact that the Russians are not in evidence at all. I have traveled all over Poland and have seen extremely few Russians except on their own communication lines to Germany. It is true that there are still many Russian officers in the Polish army, but this is largely due to the shortage of trained Polish personnel; after the First World War, one is reminded, French officers remained in the Polish army till 1928. The Russians in general are not liked, and the "Russian occupation" of 1944-45 has left some bad memories; discipline among some of the Russian troops, especially after victory, went to pieces completely. A growing number of Poles, however, are beginning to realize that it was the Russians, after all, who drove the Germans out of Poland, and the fact that "they did not stay on" is also put to their credit.

It would take too long to discuss the complex relationship existing between the four government parties, and especially between the Socialists and Communists. The Communists as the tougher and more coherent party tend to capture many of the key positions such as the governorships of the provinces, but without the support of the Socialists and trade unions they could not do much. I shall confine myself for the present to quoting the statement Mr. Cyrankiewicz, the Socialist Premier, made to me on the subject:

We are two parties, each with its own particular "dynamics," and there are therefore inevitable difficulties; but the Communists cannot rule without the Socialists, and since there is no other practicable government formula, we are going to stick together, and relations are bound to improve. This collaboration is important not only for Poland; it is important as an example for the whole of Europe.

Mr. Cyrankiewicz made it plain that while he was all in favor of the united front he was opposed to the formation of a Unity Party. The Communist leader, Mr. Gomulka, has been advocating such a party, though not as an immediate goal.

The Communists, despite a fairly large "bread-and-butter" membership, feel that they are "all bone and no flesh" and that a Unity Party would give them greater physical substance. But the majority of the Socialists will not hear of it for the present. In compensation they tend to condone the repression of the old-line Social Democrats who refuse to cooperate with the Communists at any price, and who frequently display a dangerous sympathy with the right. The coming trial of twenty-three such Socialists should be revealing.

IV. THE NEW LANDS

Wroclaw (Breslau), September

I HAVE SPENT THE LAST MONTH TRAVELING in the new or, as the Poles call them, the "recovered" northwestern and western territories of Poland. An old German Baedeker I have with me explains that the original name for Breslau was "the Old Polish Wroclaw," and innumerable place names in these parts are meaningless German corruptions of descriptive Polish names. Thus the German Kolberg in Pomerania was formerly and is now again called Kolobrzeg, which means "Near the Coast." Pommern (Pomerania) was derived from Pomorze, which means "Along the Sea." The Poles love giving you these little lectures in etymology. Archaeology is also sometimes invoked: for instance, I was shown the eleventh-century Polish foundations under the fifteenth-century German castle at Stettin. I suspect, however, that many Poles who use these etymological and archaeological arguments do so with their tongue in their cheek, knowing perfectly well that but for Germany's total defeat and its earlier decision to annihilate Poland, the question of Poland's "recovery" of eastern Germany would never have arisen. Stettin and Breslau were obviously German cities until 1945.

The Poles do not like the theory that the annexation of eastern Germany was "compensation" for the territories they lost to Russia. Apart from the familiar "historical" arguments, they prefer to regard the annexed lands as reparations, or even as a sort of revenge for the temporary obliteration of Poland from the map of Europe. The Germans are, indeed, getting some of their own medicine, for who if not they started the mass transfers of populations? Were not the provinces of Lodz and Poznan cleared of Poles and formally annexed by the Reich? There is also this: during their occupation of Poland the Germans aroused such passionate hatred that any possibility of a future friendly

democratic Germany struck the Poles as something remote and almost purely theoretical. Whether or not it was "excessive" to take, say, Stettin, whether the Germans hated the Poles 5 per cent more or 5 per cent less, did not matter; they would make war on Poland if they had a chance. It is said that former Vice-Premier Mikolajczyk did not much favor the present frontier but in deference to popular feeling on the subject associated himself with the Polish protest against the Marshall-Bevin suggestion that the question of the border be "reconsidered." The view now held in authoritative British quarters in Warsaw is that since the Polish government has settled nearly five million people in the new territories, it would be futile to start pushing them out again; Poland would only be driven farther into the arms of Russia.

The fact that Russian strategic considerations had much to do with the fixing of the new frontier is not overlooked by the Poles, but that does not lessen their determination to keep what they have. It seems clear that the Russians will maintain some forces in the trans-Oder bridgeheads. In Swinemünde, for instance, which used to be something like a Coney Island for Berlin, I found their troops solidly established, with wives and families. They were living a strictly segregated existence in a part of the town separated from the rest by barbed wire, but I noticed that the soldiers' wives were pushing little German-made prams—in Russia babies are carried in the arms—and enjoying other products of Western culture. The Poles may not like the presence of the Russians, and occasionally there are anti-Russian incidents, but in general they feel that the Russians are there to protect them against the Germans or against anyone who would use the Germans against them.

The completely easy and natural attitude of the Poles in the new territories made a strong impression on me. Already they seem to feel completely at home. On a Saturday night Stettin resounds with Polish songs—some of them toughly anti-Russian—and Polish rowdyism. Railroad trains are packed with Polish school children and working people going to rest homes and bathing resorts in Pomerania for their paid holidays.

ONE OF THE GREAT QUESTIONS AFFECTING the whole European economy is whether the Poles, with a population of twenty-four million, will be able to integrate the new territories into their own economy. After traveling for a month in these parts I can say that they have made remarkable progress toward that end. Everywhere I saw evidence that not lack of settlers but lack of housing was the great obstacle to development of the new lands. Where the fighting had been heavy and many villages were destroyed, there were many fallow fields. "We can't expect new settlers to live in dugouts," say the Polish resettlement authorities. There is also a great shortage of work horses and stock. Some tractors have been provided by UNRRA.

Between Kolberg and Köslin, where hardly a house is left standing, I traveled through miles of thistles. On the other hand, around Stargard and Naugard, east of Stettin, I saw hundreds of prosperous farms of ten to twenty acres well run by farmers from central Poland and beyond the Curzon line. They were living in good solid German houses and seemed thoroughly contented. There may still be some reluctance to settle too close to the border—partly for this reason the border zone is being "reserved" for soldiers still to be demobilized from the Polish army—but a little farther away there seems complete confidence that this "is and will remain Poland." One Pomeranian farmer, originally from Vilno, said to me, "The roads and houses are better than around Vilno, though the soil and climate are not so good; but if I thought the Germans would come again, I'd not take the trouble to breed these pigs."

Stettin province, which constitutes the greater part of Pomerania, had nearly two million inhabitants before the war; now it contains 800,000 Poles and 120,000 Germans. The Germans, most of them women and children, are being sent to Germany at the rate of about 2,000 a day. While 72,000 Polish farms have been set up in the province, state farms still hold about 40 per cent of the arable land. Most of these state farms will in due course be split up among the peasants; two-thirds of the total arable land of one million hectares will have been distributed

by the end of next year. It is claimed that by 1949 there will be no land left fallow.

To revive important industrial cities like Danzig, Stettin, and Breslau much new machinery is needed. The destruction here was far worse than in Upper Silesia, and many of the factories that survived the bombings were dismantled by the Russians. You could not find two more lively and cheerful cities than Gdansk (Danzig) and Gdynia. The Poles revel in being "on the sea again." They recall "all that nonsense of the Polish corridor and the Free City of Danzig" and rejoice that "it is all Poland now." The beautiful old city of Danzig is dead, but the harbor has been brought back to life. Gdynia, after being almost completely wrecked, has also been largely rebuilt. The capacity of the two ports is now 70 per cent restored.

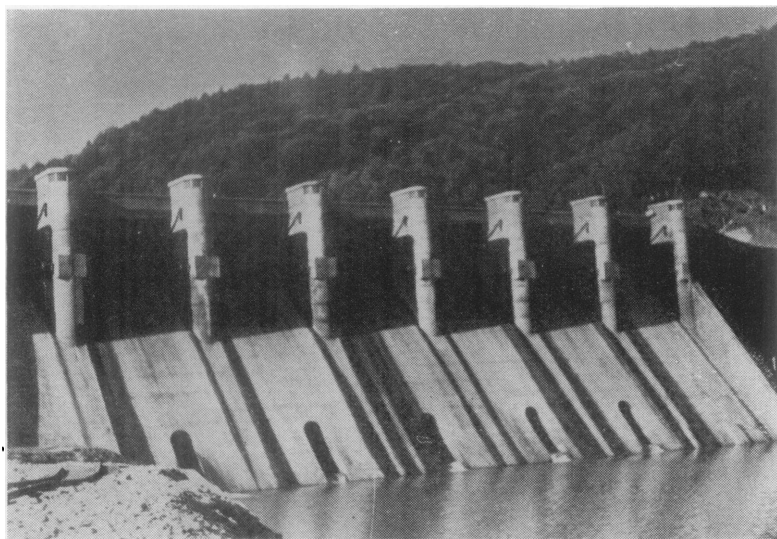
IN LOWER SILESIA RESETTLEMENT HAS BEEN on an even greater scale than in Pomerania. Breslau is 70 per cent destroyed and Glogau and other towns 100 per cent, but a new life is rising from the ruins. Already 200,000 people are living in Breslau, as against 600,000 before the war. Some 7,000 students are attending the university and the celebrated Polytechnic Institute which was moved here bodily from Lwow; factories are turning out 1,000 railways carriages a month; an excellent opera company and several theaters, one of them playing Shaw, attract large audiences. Incidentally, I heard Poles speak of the Russians with greater warmth in Breslau, for which the Russians and Germans fought so furiously for three months, than anywhere else.

If half of the country north of Breslau is fallow, it is because so many towns and villages have been destroyed. The latecomers from Lwow who have settled here in the few intact houses are living rather miserably, though not without hope. One of the men spoke nostalgically of his two hectares of black soil near Lwow, which he said "were worth more than ten hectares here." But such conditions are not typical. In the less devastated areas near the Czech border every inch of ground was cultivated, and

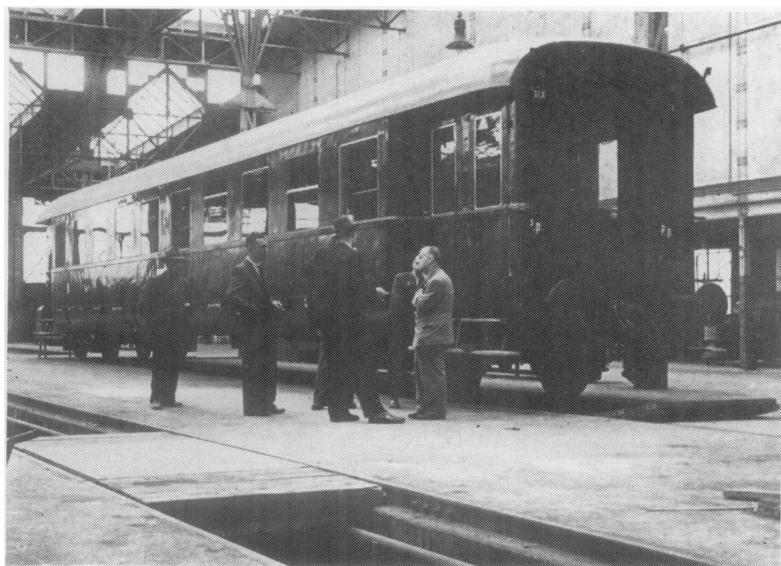
the people were living in good houses in picturesque towns and villages. Over a million and a half Poles live in Lower Silesia now. The 100,000 remaining Germans, like their fellow-countrymen in Pomerania, are being sent to the Soviet zone of Germany.

There are three forms of land tenure in Silesia, apart from the state farms: the individual farm; the cooperative farm of ten families or more—after five years it must be divided up among the members; and the group settlement, which combines a system of instalment payments with a state grant—20 per cent of the peasant's earnings go into the group fund, the state puts in 25 per cent, and at the end of five years the peasant receives the capital he needs to equip his plot of land.

Silesia is not quite the show place I was led by some in Warsaw to expect. There is much hardship still among the new settlers, and many difficulties must be overcome before the country can produce anything like its possible maximum. But when I recall the desolate stretches of Silesia in 1945 and compare them with the present scene, I am convinced that the Poles have not wasted their first two post-war years. If this economic progress continues at the same rate, and no internal or external political complications intervene, Poland should be on the high road to prosperity in two or three years. The reconstruction of the big cities, however, especially Warsaw, Wroclaw, and Gdansk, will be a long and arduous task which can only be hastened by large foreign credits.



"... the growing industrialization . . ."—A New Power Dam



*"One of Poland's proudest achievements
is its output of railway carriages . . ."*



In the Recovered Territories



"... the Polish Government has settled nearly five million people ..."

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