

Verbundkatalog Kalliope

Poland.

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The visa was granted within two days. With it, I received a letter from the Polish Embassy at Prague, warmly recommending me to all Polish authorities enroute, as well as the assurance that I could cross the boundary by car wherever I saw fit.

According to my road map, a point near JELENA GORA (formerly Hirschberg) was the logical spot for the crossing. On the Czech side, the usual formalities were quickly disposed of. My Czech visa (valid for a single journey) canceled and my tryptik withdrawn, I covered four kilometers of weed infested no-man's road before arriving at what looked like a minor Maginot Line. From behind a triple barbed wire barricade, half a dozen heavily armed - if sloppily dressed - Polish soldiers sternly refused to let the car proceed. Unwilling to take their veto for an answer, I matched my letter against their bayonets and demanded to see the commandant. He came - an elegant chap in black and silver - and, having perused my credentials, observed, these were fine diplomatic papers (which they were clearly not). Unfortunately, however - he said - nobody, and if he were an ambassador, could cross the frontier at this point. The place to go was FRYDLAND, some 70 kilometres from here.

At FRYDLAND history repeated itself. Once again I left Czechoslovakia, my visa duly canceled, only to be ~~beaten~~ ^{BEATEN} back by the ~~same~~ ^{POLISH ARMY}. And once again a crop of frustrated Czech custom officials had to be talked into re-admitting the visaless traveller. Asked, why on earth they were sitting here invalidating visas that had to be re-validated half an hour later, the Czechs explained that, as far as they were concerned, this boundary was open and while no one had yet succeeded in getting across, someone might eventually do so which faint possibility necessitated their presence. On the second day of what began to look like a hopeless venture, I encountered a Czech police patrol who regretted to state that the Poles had failed to re-open even one of 25 frontier-establishments in this district. In fact, according to the officers, only three crossing points had been made passable for cars along the entire 758 kilometer Czech-Polish border. The nearest authorized frontier, they said, was at Nachod, some 90 kilometers distant.

After an hour's wait, the Nachod effort succeeded and I entered what Poland calls her "Recovered Territories".

If and when peace is finally to be concluded with Germany, Poland's "Recovered Territories" are likely to be among the most hotly disputed issues. Is the land exchange agreed upon at Potsdam to be considered permanent? The Poles say yes; most emphatically so. The Russians, too, will not hear of any further changes. Germany, on the other hand and with her Poland's Anglo-American allies, incline to question the finality of the Potsdam settlement which granted Poland 61,000 Square Miles of formerly German land in compensation for 104,000 Square Miles East of the Curzon Line which were ceded to the USSR. Said, at Potsdam, to represent a capital value of 9 billion dollars (as compared to an estimated 3.6 billion, the equivalent of which went to Russia) the regions in question are rich in raw materials, developed industries and agricultural assets. In the face of the destruction wrought there, the actual value of Poland's gains is hard to assess and probably lies below the Potsdam estimate. Even so, the values acquired are certain substantially to exceed those of the lost lands behind the Curzon Line - so much so that, potentially at least - Poland is today one of the wealthiest countries in Europe.

In defending her claim to what constitutes one third of her entire post-war territory, Poland will stress the following points: 1) These territories are ancient Polish soil which in the course of 8 centuries the Germans acquired illegally by means of aggressive warfare. 2) They are indispensable to Poland, whereas Germany can manage without them. 3) While Germany never derived the greatest possible benefit from her Eastern and North-Eastern possessions, Poland is eager and able properly to develop and exploit these lands to her own advantage as well as to that of Europe.

For the first couple of driving hours "recovered" Lower Silesia does little to justify the latter claim. Although villages, farm houses and country inns in this border district are comparatively intact, they seem all but uninhabited. Abandoned hamlets, untilled fields and roads disfigured by pits rather than holes mark the

face of this landscape the spookiness of which is all the more striking if one recalls that more than two years have passed since its inhabitants' flight. All German street names and signposts having been replaced by Polish connotations which bear no similarity to corresponding markings on available maps, you got easily lost in the silent maze where thoroughfares looked no more promising than side roads and where whatever lone wanderer might be encountered failed to inspire a great deal of confidence.

Having gone hopelessly astray, I waited for some uniformed official to show up and tell me where to turn. Night had fallen and I felt none too cosy.

The officer, whom I finally hailed, was not entirely sober. Having squeezed the upper part of his body through the car-window, he presently busied himself opening my coat and investigating what was underneath. Like many Poles he spoke French - brokenly but with a handsome accent. It was late, he stated truthfully, and I had better come and join him in his quarters. I declined and since on his part he refused to withdraw from the interior of my vehicle which he filled with alcoholic fumes, I took off rather abruptly. Unavoidably, he got slightly hurt in the process which would have been quite alright, had it not been for the unhappy fact that the road on which I sped ahead came soon to a dead end, necessitating my turning around and once more passing my uniformed friend. He had called for reinforcements. There were nine of them now. "Stop!", they shouted, - "stop, or we shoot!" As I'd long since stopped, I didn't like the nervous, trigger-happy way in which they kept pointing their pistols at me and finally decided on a small offensive of my own. I jumped out of the car. Raising THE LETTER like a shield and yelling at the top of my voice, I pictured for the surprised comrades the dire consequences of any action by which they might hurt or delay this particular traveller. "Watch out for yourselves" I screamed in French, "or you'll be exceedingly sorry!" Rather taken aback, they lowered their pistols and once THE LETTER had taken effect, everything seemed under control. They would not, however, let me proceed alone. "Danger",

they said, - "no safety around here at night!" Then four of them manned the running-boards of my car, while the remaining five marched enterprisingly at my side. I felt anything but secure and it was not before they had gone - suddenly, at the entrance of a forest - and I was once again alone with the car and the darkness that I considered myself safe.

When the dog emerged from the woods, I wondered whether some human habitation might not after all be near where one could spend the rest of the night. Stopping in front of the car and hypnotized by its headlights, the dog snarled disagreeably - and turned out to be a wolf - the first "free" wolf of my acquaintance.

What with numerous detours and errors it was breakfast time when I arrived at Walbrzych - first sizable town this side of the border - and I was very hungry. According to the Embassy Poles, I'd be well fed wherever I went. If, however, this prediction proved as reliable as had the boundary information, my chances were dim.

"Eggs?" I asked doubtfully - in English first, then in French and finally in German.

"Jawohl", said the waiter, - "ham, too?"

And he brought three eggs and a portion of ham equivalent to the weekly ration of a large English family.

At the neighbouring table two men were reading the morning papers. Secretary Marshall figured in the headlines. We got to talking. They spoke German without an accent and, when they'd learned that I was a newspaper-woman, wanted to know what kind of a paper I was working for.

"A conservative one", I said, curious, how they would take it.

The two smiled nostalgically.

"Conservative, - oh, beautiful!" one of them finally said with great feeling. It sounded rather like the beginning of a hymn.

They were no Germans, they stated, slightly hurt at the thought. They were "autochthones", - Polish by ancestry and blood, although, like their parents and

grandparents, born under German domination and hence as German nationals.

More than one million "autochthones" live in the "recovered territories", - Germans, that is, who, owing to some remote Polish background, have been nominated Poles.

Of the 32 million Poles whom Hitler set out to enslave a mere 24 million form today's Polish population. 6,5 million civilians, (including 3,5 million Jews) perished under German care. The remaining 1,5 million fell in battle; failed to return from the West; or were absorbed by the USSR. An acute manpower shortage prevented the government from depriving the "recovered territories" of their entire German population. The majority was expelled according to the provisions of the Potsdam agreement. But an admitted 400,000 - specialists, mining engineers, technicians, etc. were allowed to stay. Together with the "autochthones" they form about one third of the present population of the reclaimed areas.

My neighbours didn't like their government and said so fairly soon, if in very low voices. Nor, for that matter, did they like the Russians whom they considered beasts, rather than human beings. "But we are at their mercy", they lamented; "Look at the Marshall Plan and the chances it offered our country. We wanted to go - even the government knew that we'd better; but then the Soviets said no. And not it was, whether we liked it or not."

It deserves to be noted, though, that while in the early days of the Marshall talks this attitude was wide-spread among thinking Poles, including socialists, it altered quickly and radically. By the end of August most Poles seemed to feel that the re-industrialisation of Germany was America's real objective and that whatever aid - if any - non-German Europe might eventually receive would be too little, too late and too dearly paid for by a German power-renaissance.

Figured at the official exchange rate, breakfast was expensive. The dollar rates 117 zlotys and I paid 380 for my meal. Inofficially, you get up to 700 zlotys for one green back, provided you are ready to break the law and to search at great

length for one of the few spots where such transactions take place. If caught, Poland's currency black marketeers may be sentenced to death and are consequently none too easily found.

Except for a few beer drinking soldiers, the "autochthones" and myself were the only guests in the place.

"People can't afford these prices", I was told by the waiter; "as a skilled worker you make about 9000 zlotys a month, - just enough to buy yourself some twenty decent breakfasts."

Things, however, were not as simple as all that.

Take my "autochthones", for instance, one of whom professed to be working as an accountant for a nationalised factory, whereas the other ran a private law practice. As a state employee, the accountant was one of 8 million entitled to ration cards. Apart from government functionaries, this third of the population includes "nationalised" workers, scientists, intellectuals and others considered essential. By and large these people are able to cover about 65% of their minimum needs on the "controlled market" where food is exceedingly cheap (11 zlotys for a pound of butter). Another 15% of their requirements is filled on the "free market" (200 zlotys for a pound of butter), whereas the remaining 20% remains unsatisfied.

The lawyer belonged - theoretically at least - among Poland's hungriest citizens. One of 3 million non-essential workers, business men and private employees, he received no ration cards whatever and depended entirely on the "free market". He was making fair money, though (up to 20,000 zlotys per month) and while he, too, spent most of his earnings on food, other commodities were still scarce and there wasn't much you could buy anyway.

Other non-ration card holders are Poland's 13 million peasants who are expected to feed themselves. On the whole they succeed in doing so and profess no dislike of the current system.

Polish life, it appeared, begins at Walbrzych. Here the spook seems to end and from here on "recovered" Lower Silesia, though studded with ruins, looks like a going concern.

When the car started to boil, I stopped at a medium sized family farm for some water and talk, and received both from the old lady of the house.

"They're all out in the fields", she said in French, "even the children. There's too much to do for anyone to be idle."

Like everyone here, the family had received their slice of "recovered" land with the compliments of the state and were not, thus far, paying any taxes. Nor did the government tell them what to grow. While the Polish farmer has to meet his quota and surrender a part of his crops at ceiling prices, he never deals directly with the authorities but delivers his share to a local agency composed of peasants. However, in spite of what sounded like an extremely friendly and liberal arrangement, my rustic hostess spoke no more highly of the government than had the urban "autochthones".

"Half of Poland", she said reproachfully, "half of our country has been given to the Russian arch-enemy. He took our farm too, and sent us packing. The soil is richer here, - that much I grant you. But we don't belong here; I, for one, don't, although the children feel quite at home."

She had lived in Paris in her early days, as a domestic servant; and she liked the West; and she didn't like the Russians or anyone who gave in to them.

She was one of many. If the average, historically minded Pole finds it hard to overcome his nation's traditional distrust and even hatred of Russia, the people of the "recovered territories" have - almost all of them - their special and additional axes to grind when it comes to the Soviet Union. The evacuees from East of the Curzon Line (1,689,000) are automatically and fiercely anti-Russian. So are the Germans and "autochthones" (almost 1,5 million); and as for the repatriants from the West (1,700,000), - the ex-slave labourers, or ex-London Poles,

they, too, have had their share of anti-Russian propaganda and feel far from friendly towards the USSR. Only a small minority, composed of government officials, non-political treasure hunters, adventurers, born pioneers from Central Poland and Jews, many of whom owe their lives to Russian protection, deviates from the anti-Russian rule.

My next stop was Breslau (now Wroclaw), capital of Silesia and once a blooming metropolis of 750,000. I had known the place in pre-Hitler times but hard as I looked, there wasn't one landmark, not one familiar sight to assist me in finding my way through this gigantic accumulation of rubble. Soviet artillery account for only 30% of the destruction wrought here during 80 days of siege (Breslau fell 3 days after Berlin). The rest was done by German demolition squads in what was probably the most colossal "scorched city" operation of the war.

Today rubble heap Wroclaw shelters some 200,000 persons, most of whom seem to speak, or rather whisper, German more fluently than Polish. Virtually everybody here appears frightened of something or other. No sooner had I sat down for dinner in a ground floor restaurant which was all that remained of a four story building, than the main cause of this general anxiety became clear to me. Having addressed the waiter in English, I was joined, almost presently by an English whispering couple who asked if they could be of any assistance. The waiter who had only just gone to fill my order, returned hastily and, glancing at the table in my back, muttered: "Achtung! Geheimer!" ["Attention! A Secret one!"]

The individual in question, a shabbily dressed man of no distinction, looked bored and sleepy. Having cleared the incriminated table, the waiter demonstratively carried a set of clean cutlery and an unused glass past our group.

"That's how he knew", whispered my female visavis, formerly a nurse with the "London Poles"; "they rarely consume anything - can't afford to, I ^{SUPPOSE} ~~must~~ - but simply sit and listen. We ^{HAVE} ~~are~~ a disgusting lot of them around here. But then, there are also a lot of people whom we can't quite trust."

Her husband nodded. "I despise these methods", he said; "and yet they may be necessary - at least for the time being."

They had only been here for a few months. ^{YET} The man, a physician, proved quite well informed on most of the facts and figures concerning their city.

"The place looks awful", he said; "and I should wish - even from a sanitary viewpoint ^{THAT} - they'd start cleaning up. Factories, however, are held to be more important than living quarters, - and perhaps, they actually are".

According to him, 70 industrial establishments had thus far managed to re-open in, or near, Wroclaw and employed today some 25,000 workers. In fact, as I was eventually to discover, the industrial picture was even brighter, although local officials would not say so. There was practically nothing that they would say when it came to issuing any factual information.

"Go to Warsaw, - there, they'll surely know!" - that is all you'll get out of the highest and most co-operative functionaries outside the ruined capital.

I did as they said.

To demonstrate her disapproval of any such strenuous venture, my car, a 1932 German "Adler", broke down in ever shorter intervals. She boiled; she spat; she coughed; she jerked; she whistled; she kept losing water, oil and gasoline and time and again simply refused to move at all. Moody but essentially chivalrous by nature, she usually spared me the misery of a total collapse on the road but folded up right in front of a hotel, though often in the middle of the night.

On one of these occasions I came to understand that neither fear nor dislike of the powers above is exclusive with the "recovered territories" but that many a citizen of Central Poland shares the feelings of his Western brethren.

It was 1:30 A.M. and the car would not move a further inch. The hotel looked pleasant enough. Its owner, however, resented having been aroused from his sleep, all the more so since there wasn't an empty bed in the house. Two surplus guests - Poles, both of them - sat sadly on a couple of hard chairs in the corridor, vainly trying to get a little sleep. Tentatively, I produced THE LETTER. And on a sudden all was different. Having dashed up to his room, the elderly owner dragged his own bed across the hall and into a tiny office

which had to be emptied of all its furniture before the bed would fit in.

Meanwhile, the car proved to have collapsed on the wrong side of the street and a young policeman came to say that she must be moved. Even while the officer and myself were pushing the car where she belonged, he breathlessly professed to be a very unhappy man. "I shouldn't say so", he said, - "not with this uniform on. But then, I've been with the British during the war and I've seen what democratic liberty is." - Asked in what respect his liberty had been encroached upon here, he failed to answer. ^(Para.) Whatever justified complaints he might have made, his religious freedom, for one, had not been interfered with. This I discovered when - thanks to a burnt-out distributor - I spent a couple of days in CZESTOCHOVA. Famed for its 13th Century monastery, that city shelters among other godly treasures the miracle working Black Madonna, - a picture of very great loveliness and unknown origin, credited by catholic chroniclers to the art of Luke, author of the Third Gospel. Twice a day hundreds of faithful come to pray before the portrait which each Sunday attracts an average of ten thousand worshippers from all parts of the country. Four times a year, high catholic holidays prompt up to one million Poles to convene at Czestochova which clerical headquarters resemble a continuous pious fair with market stalls, refreshment booths and open bazaars where zlotys buy the "Black Madonna" (in countless reproductions), as well as black dollars (in relative safety). Only too conspicuous in most worldly places, the police keep religiously away from the domains of the clergy and not merely in sacred Czestochova. When - at Krakow - I'd run out of zlotys and wished to purchase a picture of the famous dome, the lady in charge cheerfully and openly changed a 10-Dollar bill at the current black market rate. There was, she stated, no reason for me to be nervous. "They never turn up around here!", she said.

The continued power and glory of the Catholic Church is by no means the only feature which prevents Poland from being a "red" country in the accepted meaning of the term. Polish socialism, too, is a far cry from Soviet socialism. Whereas in Russia all industry, trade and agriculture is owned by the state, Poland retains a

mixed economy with a mere 20% of her manpower employed in nationalized industries and 60% working on the land they own.

In Warsaw - and only there - I found civic reconstruction in full swing. After the ill-fated insurrection of August 1944 and the "punitive action" that followed, virtually nothing remained of the capital which kept burning for 13 days. Now she must be re-built, as quickly as possible and at any price. On this point, if on few others, the average Warsawer sees eye to eye with his government.

"It's a matter of pride" I was told by the elderly owner of a small pub. "They didn't want us to have a capital anymore; however, we'll show them".

Oddly enough, his reference (in French) was not to the Germans but to the Russians, who to his mind had deliberately failed to free the city at the critical moment. "They don't want us to prosper" he went on; "yet things are far better now than they were last year". At this point he was interrupted by a Polish customer, who seemed to resent our French conversation. "Speak German, everybody!" he demanded drunkenly; "German, most beloved tongue in Poland".

When I left, he, too, departed - incidentally without paying his bill. Dripping with subversive remarks, he kept staggering beside me and wouldn't even quit when I had arrived at my destination.

The boys in the garage (there wasn't a whole spring left in the car) politely refused to rid me of my escort. Warsaw, they muttered, was full of people whom one had better not offend and since this gentleman (he looked like a bum) seemed to like my company, they'd rather not interfere. It was not before THE LETTER had been produced that the "gentleman" - now entirely sober - took his embarrassed leave.

If there are things which the Polish government wish to hide, the facts concerning the "recovered territories" are not among them. A prodigious amount of relevant material has been, and keeps being, issued and is readily available to foreign observers. According to these statistics, 53% of Poland's entire coal output comes from formerly German mines; so does 50% of her railway wagons; 25% of her iron and 10% of her steel. After the realization of the all-embracing three year plan (now in its

second year) the relative importance of the reclaimed areas will be greater still. By the end of this year, 3,200,000 hectares of "recovered" land will be under cultivation, as compared to the 832,000 hectares tilled in 1945. If all goes well, Poland will be an exporter of food by 1950. Even today she is an exporter of coal, - the only coal exporting country in Europe. Of the 58 million tons of coal which represent this year's estimated extraction, 28 million are marked for export.

While stressing the great importance of the new territories to Poland, Warsaw officials are quick to assert that even in 1939 - at the height of the Reich's preparations for war - they yielded a mere 10% of Germany's industrial output. It is stated, moreover, that - according to German specifications - food exports from these areas covered less than 3% of Germany's total needs. Though doubtlessly correct, this latter figure admittedly pertains to the pre-Hitler era when Germany was not yet bent on rendering herself "autarch" and much may have been done subsequently to increase the agricultural productivity of the Reich's Eastern possessions. The German assertion, however, recently quoted by Secretary Marshall, that these lands ever supplied Germany with between 20 and 25% of her entire food requirements, is hotly contested by every responsible Pole.

While in Warsaw, I listened to dozens such Poles both within the government and without. Among ordinary citizens communists are hard to find. By and large, people profess to a non-political, or even anti-political attitude which resents "socialism" as a manifestation of Russian influence rather than as an economic or political doctrine. Nationalism proved a passion with virtually everyone I talked to and the very tangible successes which the nation achieved under the present regime somewhat mitigate the latter's unpopularity.

Seemingly unaware of the sentiments they arouse, top ranking officials appear cheerful and confident. When I went to see front line General Victor Grosz, Director of the Press Department of the Foreign Office and senior spokesman for the government, the "Harrison Report" had just resulted in an American refusal of aid to the Poles.

"While we are, of course, most disappointed", he told me, "the report had its pleasing sides, too. What could be more satisfactory than this official American admission that we are doing well?"

Even so, according to the General - and not to him only - help is badly needed. A detailed and fulsome UNRRA study on the subject fails to see how Poland's economy could possibly develop much further unless it is aided from the outside.

"Without industrial investment from abroad", says the report, "Poland cannot expand her industrial production appreciably beyond present levels"; and it concludes that she "must receive 600,000,000 Dollars from the International Bank".

For this amount the Polish government have applied. Qualified observers agree that from an economic point of view the loan would be as sound an investment as any. If it were to be refused for political reasons, the consequences would be severe - not only for Poland, but also for freezing Europe. Nor would a refusal seem to hold great political promise. Russia has not thus far seen fit seriously to interfere with Poland's internal affairs and is unlikely to change her attitude in the face of continued Polish success. Any Polish failure resulting from a rejection of her loan application would make the Poles completely dependent on the Soviet Union's meager offerings, while possibly causing the latter to "assist" Poland in running her affairs. At present, these affairs are being run efficiently. Prices have been stabilized; the Polish treasury shows a surplus for this year and while Polish trade with the Soviet Union is higher than ever before, it represents only 43% of the nation's total exports, with 57% going to other countries. Only the communists ^{CLAIM} that "democratic freedom" has had ^{MUCH OF A} part in the successes boasted by the government. But then, Democracy, as understood in the West, has no roots in Poland where a mediievally feudal society was succeeded by a fascist one and where the vast majority of the people were never permitted to decide for themselves. This was pointed out to me by a non-communist intellectual in Warsaw who added that "liberty", though duly rationed, is more readily available now than it was at any time in the past."

We had been talking for hours. It was strictly a private party with no officials present and while one of the guests was a communist, nobody seemed afraid of him. Perhaps it was the Wodka that loosened people's tongues. Made of potatoes doomed for human consumption, the fearsome liquid was by no means weak. The "intellectual", a university student and ex-partisan, did most of the talking.

"Freedom!" he exclaimed; "Democratic freedom! But we simply can't afford it. Our people are patriotic and hardworking, provided they are told what to do. Since they want Poland to thrive ^{THEY} ~~and~~ do not - and couldn't possibly - want the return to power of the gentry under whose feudal regime millions of Poles had to go to work in foreign countries, while other millions were left to starve at home. If those seasoned anti-democrats were offered a nice democratic chance; if they were 'free' to stage a comeback, they'd most certainly do so and that would be the end of freedom."

Another guest - a girl employee of a privately owned paper mill - protested. Democracy, she said, hadn't been given a try. Free elections would have shown that the communists weren't really popular in Poland and should not, consequently, be permitted to rule.

This, our lone comrade refused to let pass. "We couldn't have forced those elections", he declared, "even if we'd tried. Look at the Soviet Zone in Germany. There, our people keep losing like crazy although the occupying power is sure to tell the voters what's good for them."

It was neither the first, nor the last time that I listened to a bunch of Poles discussing their problems. In the course of five crowded weeks, I covered some 1100 miles of Polish ground and came in touch with scores of persons of all political - or unpolitical - shades. Wherever I stopped, I found people busy, friendly and healthily ambitious. I found them, moreover, almost incredibly optimistic. Unlike most Western Europeans, they seem happily oblivious of the threat of another war. When I was there, the "Information Center" set up by the communists of nine countries including Poland was not yet existent but it is a safe guess that the average hardworking Pole has

little time and less love for any such Soviet sponsored affair. Nor, on the other hand, is he likely to grasp the seriousness with which "the West" - and especially the United States - views this "New Comintern". That Polish communist participation in the Belgrade venture might be deemed an unfriendly act by the country as such, is surely beyond him. An emotional rather than a rational thinker, he can hardly imagine that anyone - except the Russians - should fail to love Poland - any kind of Poland - or wish to contest her claim to the "recovered territories". He would not, in fact, even use the term "claim", since he considers the land exchange a historical fait accompli. To his mind, Silesia, Pomerania and one half of East Prussia have long since become an integral part of Poland - a part indeed in which the nation has invested an irretrievable amount of work and faith. In the industrial and mining centers of Silesia, the chimneys smoke 24 hours a day. The "recovered" Baltic ports of Szczecin (Stettin), Gdansk (Danzig) and Gdynia (Gdingen) which in 1945 seemed wrecked beyond repair, operate today at 70% capacity with 60% of their quays and 30% of their machinery repaired or replaced. And anywhere in the re-claimed areas, except for the far Western fringes, you may drive from dawn to dusk without passing an untilled field.

Privately and off the record I was told much that was ugly and repulsive - stories of innocent men and women who disappeared (but whose names were never given!) and of legal insecurity, poverty and fear. Officially and on the record, I heard many a claim that made me laugh. Thus Poland's "historical right" to her "recovered territories" is upheld with a fervor hardly justified by historical facts. To establish this particular title, government historians and propagandists journey clear back to the year 1100 when Polish tribes had penetrated to the Oder and Neisse rivers and "Poland's" Western frontiers were identical with those agreed upon at Potsdam. As for her present Northern boundaries, they, too, are alleged to be historically prescribed. The Polish state reached its greatest expansion along the Baltic coast in the 12th century only to lose most of its Western and Northern territories in the two centuries that followed. The remainder was seized by Prussia (during the three partitions of Poland in the late

18th Century) and it was not before the end of World War One that a modest slice of her "lost lands" fell back to the "mother country". These facts make the very term "recovered territories" appear somewhat silly, and render Poland's historical title to these areas more than disputable. Dependent as it is on foreign investments, her ultimate success in fully exploiting the regions in question may also - as yet - be open to doubt. Three relevant points, however, can even today be made with finality:

- 1) Having lost - or "ceded" - almost half of their entire pre-war territory to the Soviet Union, the Polish nation and state could not possibly survive without the "re-claimed" lands.
- 2) This being the case, the Polish nation and state will shun - and are shunning - no effort to demonstrate to the world their resolution and ability to solve all problems at stake.
- 3) Nor will they ever agree to return, wholly or in essential parts, the acquisitions on which they base all their hopes for a happier future. Nothing short of successful military intervention (from the West) or a super-Munich (abetted by the Soviet Union) could sever the "recovered territories" from a Poland who, after untold sufferings, is seen grimly determined to recover.