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9 Apr
III-2763POLANDAGRICULTURE (200)
PGR (213)Conditions On The PGR Farms In PUSTAMINÓW (PUSTAMIN) And
PENKOWO (PENNEKOW,) Kreis SLAWNO (SLUPSK).

SOURCE BERLIN: A 62-year-old German from PUSTAMIN. He was a postal employee before the war, fled with his family before the Russians, and returned to find himself dispossessed. They moved into a room in the nearby manor house; he and his 12-year-old daughter got jobs on the large farm run by the Russians. They applied for a migration to Germany, finally received permission in January 1953, left in February. Source speaks practically no Polish.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Until beginning of February 1953

EVAL. COMMENT: This is one of the many reports about PGRs (State farms). Everyone of them tells the same story of incompetence, waste and bureaucracy with the resulting low production ratio.

Although the local news brought by this report presents little interest in itself, it gives a very good picture of the living conditions of a typical PGR worker.

Source owned his own house in PUSTAMIN (PUSTAMINÓW), Kreis SCHLAWA (SLAWNO,) which he had built for himself during the time he was employed by the postal service. He was forced to evacuate this house after the Russians occupied the village, and as in the case of the other natives, moved into quarters on the large village manor-farm with his family. He got work on this farm together with his daughter, who was 12 years old at that time. The farm was managed by the Russians. Not until 1 November 1951 was this farm, just as all of the large farms in the surrounding area, given over to the Poles. The latter made the estate into a PGR. This switch of authority did not greatly effect the fate of the German population working on the farm. The change was one of degree; under the Poles they were treated slightly better and the old people, such as Source, and the children were no longer required to perform heavy work.

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Complete - 11 April

(1)

About 1 km west of PUSTAMIN lay the large farm PENNEKOW (PENKOWO) where the administration of the PGR association (zespól) was in the castle "Seehof." Thirteen large farms belong to this PGR association, one of which is PUSTAMIN. Almost all of the workers on these farms are Germans. "In the whole district there were not more than 3 or 4 Polish families employed as farm hands on PGR farms."

The PGR farm PUSTAMIN had about 875 hectares of land. (Pastures and 75 hectares of woods are included in this figure.) The top soil is very fertile but it is not a very thick layer; underneath is clay. For this reason it is advisable to sow only grain and to grow only very few potatoes and root vegetables, because at the onset of the fall rains the field become impassable. The planting of the winter crop must be done as quickly as possible.

There is a large pig raising section on the farm where about 1,000 hogs are fattened. The pigs to be fattened are supplied by the farm PENNEKOW, where there is a big breeding section. In addition the PUSTAMIN farm has about 150 dairy cows and 22 to 25 horses. The reason for the relatively small number of horses is that the farm has four tractors and most of the work is done with the latter.

About 60 to 70 men and women worked on the PGR in PUSTAMIN. "This sounds like a lot, but actually it was not enough man power for the farm, because most of the men were over 60 and some even over 70, and then there were many young girls under 20. All of them were workers who were not able to accomplish very much in a day's work. The reason for this situation is that the men in the in-between ages were drafted and the younger women fled to the west at the approach of the Russian troops. Neither of these two groups returned and the economy feels their absence."

In order to bring in the harvest on time, soldiers came there to help. They came at the time of the grain harvest and then again later for the harvesting of the potato crops. During these periods about 50 men were quartered on the farm.

The farm hands had officially-established working hours, but the official plan was only respected in the winter time. The work plan was as follows:

December and January	- 6 hours per day
February and March	- 8 hours per day
April	- 9 hours per day
May until September	- 11 hours per day
October	- as long as it was light enough to work
November	- 7 to 8 hours per day

(2)

During the summer, however, they often worked as many as 12 to 13 hours per day and sometimes even longer.

The former German landowners of the large farms in this district raised grain primarily; potatoes and root vegetable were only planted for the private consumption of the estate owner and the workers. They knew their soil and realized that if the fall rains, usual in that part of the country, began early, the vegetables would remain in the fields because the clay layer doesn't allow any water to soak through and the top soil becomes so muggy that the wagons would get stuck up to the axle. Any work was impossible at this time.

The Polish director, too, was aware of this fact and tried to get certain changes made in the seeding plan made up for his farm at the central office of the PGR in STOLP (SLUPSK); he was not successful. He had to plant about 40 hectares of potatoes and just as many hectares of root vegetables (mostly rutabagas and turnips.) After the grain had been harvested, the order came to immediately thresh a certain amount of it and deliver it. "A lot of wheat in particular had to be threshed and delivered at that time." (Source is not able to quote any figures as to the amount.) The director is supposed to have said in the presence of Source that he had tried at the central office to get a postponement of the delivery date, but in vain. He first wanted to have a chance to plow the fields, sow them, and harvest the potatoes and root-vegetables, but instead he had to see to the threshing. He allegedly said the following to Source, "I know that this whole business is madness, but I have my deadline and if I don't meet it I'll be accused of sabotaging the economy."

This short-sightedness on the part of the central administration was paid for dearly. The fall rains began earlier than usual and it rained continuously until the first frost. They only succeeded with great effort in plowing eight hectares with a horse drawn plow and then sowing these fields by hand. The rest of the fields remained untouched. They were not even able to harrow the fields. The turnips remained in the fields and were not taken out until January 1953 "when the earth thawed for a few days," because the farm needed some feed for the cattle. The farm was very short of feed and the cows had to eat mostly straw. Potatoes too, remained in the fields and froze - about 20 hectares.

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(3)

In the summer and fall the cows had to be put to pasture even if the pastures were already thoroughly eaten away. It was forbidden to feed the cows fresh clover, "peluska" or other green feed (feed-plants). Everything had to be mowed and set out to dry on wooden racks according to the orders of the central office. There the plants were soaked by the rain and all was spoiled. Thus almost 25 hectares were wasted.

On the other hand the grain harvest was better than average. The cereals and particularly the wheat bore fully and also the hay was very long. (Source does not know how much was harvested in all nor the amount per hectare.) All of the grain which was threshed immediately after harvest was brought to the harbor of RUEGENWALDE.

In December they began the threshing of all the rest of the grain. (In the fall after the harvest only a part of the crop was threshed.) The threshing was done with a machine attended by 20 workers. They worked six hours per day. The grain was poured into sacks, some of which were loaded immediately, for delivery; the rest was brought to the silo. The straw and the chaff were stored in the barns and in the lofts over the cattle stalls to be used for feed. "But this was the practice only under Polish administration. The Russians made haystacks of all of the hay each year - the barns were left empty - they apparently didn't have any idea what they were for - and the hay -stacks are still standing behind the barns, foul and useless.

Source, himself, with two other workers used to drive to RUEGENWALDE with a tractor nearly every day in December 1952 and January 1953 with 200 cwt. grain. By presenting their identity cards they each received entry permits to the harbor area and were then allowed to unload the grain directly into the silos. These silos were there even before the war and were not damaged during the war and are now being used to capacity. As far as Source could observe all of the farms in the whole surrounding district have to bring their grain there.

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(4)

As brigadier on the farm PUSTAMIN worked a native PUSTAMIN dweller named VOELKNER Willi. He was brigadier even during the time that the Russians administrated the farm and remained in this capacity when the Poles took over. Although he was a German, he threatet his fellow-country-men very badly. In pouring rain, he forced the workers back to the fields if, completely soaked, they had dared seek shelter. When the threshing was going on, 12-year-old children had to haul sacks onctaining 50 kilo of grain into the silo or to the tractor. The adults had to carry sacks containing 75 kilo although most of them were old men and women. They had to keep on carrying them until they finally collapsed under the load and couldn't get up again. VOELKNER is about 50 to 52 years old, a native of the village and married; his 22-year-old daughter has never needed to work. Until the end of the war he was manager of the silos on the farm PUSTAMIN. During the post-war years he learned to speak Polish well. It is said among the workers that he is in the Party "and besides, when a UB man would come to the village, he always had friendly chats with them, where as the other people always avoided such a visitor."

" VOELKNER oppressed the workers very much, but when the Polish director was around, he didnt dare drive them as hard as he usually did, because the director was an entirely different kind of person. This fact didn't help the situation very much however, because the people were afraid to complain to the director about VOELKNER.

During the last year - 1952/53 - Source worked mainly in the truck-garden of the neighboring farm PENNEKOW. The administration of the PGR association is also located there in the socalled castle "Seehof". Source does not know the name of the Polish director, but he often encountered him and noticed that this man was very kind to the workers. The director, as well as his wife, always made an effort to speak German to the German workers.

The truck-garden in PENNEKOW existed before and during the war. The truck-garden had over 20 hectares. About 10 hectares were planted with white cabbage which thrives on this soil; on the other hand one could not grow red cabbage; the leaves simply didn't form a head at all. On two hectares they planted carrots which grew very well but half of them stayed in the ground and were frozen because the fall rains had made a full harvest impossible there too. In addition to the carrots the following

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(3)

plants remained outside: about 2 hectares of parsley and about 2 hectares of onions (however most of were already spoiled so the damage due to freezing was not so great.) On 3 hectares cucumbers were planted but grew very poorly because the spring of the year was very dry.

Tomatoes were raised in two large hothouses. They were also planted outside on about $\frac{1}{2}$ hectares, but almost all of those outside were spoiled by the rain. Cucumbers were cultivated in two small hothouses. Most of the produce of the truck-garden was sent to STOLP and KOESLIN.

There were six regular workers in the truck-garden, but at the time of planting and harvesting the field workers helped out. The garden workers were also assisted with the hoeing and weeding. However, when there was not much to do in the truck-garden, as during the winter, the truck garden workers had to help on the farm in PUSTAMIN or in PENNEKOW. Most of the workers in the truck-garden were paid according to norms, but Source cannot say just what the system was. He only said that when ever the wages were paid (around the 6th or 9th of the month) there was always a row - usually among the young people. They had all done the same amount of work during the whole month and yet their wages showed a variation of from 10 to 30 Zloty.

Several of the worker's wages were figured by the hour. The wage-per-hour groupings were -.90 Zloty, 1.30 Zloty and 1.60 Zloty. However, the workers never knew which jobs were paid according to which hourly wage group. Source himself sometimes received -.90 Zloty and sometimes 1.05 Zloty as hourly wages, but he, too, cannot say for which jobs the differing wages were paid.

Source's immediate superior was the Polish chief gardener COBUS Marian. He treated the workers very badly so that they were all afraid of him. In contrast to him, the other bosses, some of them also gardeners or those that came to check on the work from the management, were always very nice to the workers. It is the opinion of Source that COBUS did a considerable amount of pilfering. Source claims to have observed various strangers coming into the truck-garden from time to time, who always left with full shopping bags, Source knows that officially it was not allowed to sell the garden produce.

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(6)

The farm PENNEKOW had about 1,000 hectares, including about 250 hectares of woods. In addition the farm used to have a large modern brick-works, a steam mill and a sawmill, which were in operation during the year around. Shortly before the farm changed hands, that is before 1 November 1951, the Russians dismantled these three works and sent the machines away. Today these buildings stand empty, deteriorating at the hand of the weather. No one troubles about their upkeep and no attempt is made to rehabilitate them.

There was a repair shop and a smithy on the PENNEKOW farm for the service of all of the PGR farms in the district. Source was well acquainted with the mechanic and the black-smith and the two of them often complained to him that they received almost no material and no spare parts, yet the repair work was supposed to be done. They could only make provisional repairs. This often meant simply binding the broken part with a piece of wire. The old scrap iron supply was completely used up and finally the craftsmen had to try to salvage what iron they could from the old rusted, useless machines, in order to be able to go on with their work at all. The mechanics realized that the machines which had been repaired in this make-shift fashion would only function for a short time and then break down again, but they sent them back, as if they had been put into good working order, because they would get into trouble if they didn't meet the deadline. Such an occurrence would automatically be considered sabotage of the economy.

The PENNEKOW farm also had a carpentry shop but there were no experienced craftsmen to do the work. A few of the more gifted workers were periodically sent to a carpentry course in STOLP (SLUPSK) which lasted three months, "but it is obvious that after such a course one still does not understand much of the trade. They couldn't build even the simplest thing well."

There was a similar lack of skilled roofers. "On the farms in the district there was hardly a single barn, stall, or dwelling house that had a whole roof. The rain came through everywhere. The people themselves could not repair their own roofs, because there was no material available. Source himself had a small apartment on the BUSTAMIN farm, consisting of livingroom and kitchen. The roof was leaky in the first place and because it

(7)

was not repaired it became increasingly bad. Naturally the apartment ceiling suffered under the constant dampness and the wood of the rafters rotted. One day a part of the ceiling caved in. Source tried to cover the whole with planks, straw and a blanket. In the wintertime the cold came in through the hole too. "In the other apartment it was perhaps not quite so bad as with us, but in our apartment the rain came through on to the beds, when it was a heavy downpour or when it rained for days at a time. We were sometimes afraid that the whole roof would cave in."

During the time of Russian administration so much on the farms was meaninglessly wasted; things which still make themselves felt. The Russians used to stack the hay into large forms instead of bringing it into the barns. The barns stood empty. Therefore the Russian Commander in PUSTAMIN ordered a new barn (built in 1939) to be torn down, because he didn't have any wood for fuel. The same thing happened to several dwelling houses on the estates in the district. If they were empty, the Russians had them torn down and if there were no empty houses and they needed wood, two houses of families would have to move into the one and the other was evacuated and demolished. The wood was burned and the stones were left exposed to the elements. The result is that today the people have to live in very crowded quarters and in such poor dwellings, as in the case of Source, because there are not enough houses. The people are of the opinion that it will take decades before everything can be reconstructed which the Russians destroyed because the Poles have no means of speeding up the rebuilding and because the farm managers are robbed of every possibility of initiative in this direction through the constant pressure of meeting the production quotas.

The farm workers - Poles as well as Germans - received no fuel allotment, neither coal nor wood. Therefore, they used to go into the woods at night and chop down a tree, saw it in pieces and bring it home. Here it was chopped into pieces and hidden away. They always dried out behind the stove only a few pieces at a time. There was a large pile of coal on the manor house yard. Every time the workers had a chance they would put a few pieces of coal in their pockets," because each little piece of coal was a help for us." This was of course strictly forbidden.

As far as Source knows, the Polish farmers in the village didn't receive any regular coal allotment either; that is, only when they had delivered one hog or one head of cattle did they receive a certain amount of coal (Source does not know what the amount was.)

(8)

The whole district had electric light. 1 kilowatt hour cost -.30 Zloty and there was no limit as to the amount that might be consumed. However, the electric power was often cut off. This shutting off of the current was not announced ahead of time, although the power house was in "S eehof." Sometimes they might be just in the process of threshing on the farm when the current was cut off. The work had to be interrupted. For this reason Source assumed that the command for cutting off the current must have come from STOLP or SCHLAWA and thus was also unexpected by the farm management. Otherwise the work would certainly have been planned accordingly. In addition there were often short circuits, especially when the weather was stormy. The poles supporting the electric wires had not been replaced for years and were partly rotten. Thus they would break down in strong winds and cause a short circuit.

Many of the farm workers raised sheep in order to have wool. The women spun this wool in the winter and knitted jackets, skirts and underwear with it. This was a great help for the workers and their families because they could not afford to buy any clothing. The Polish farmers in the village kept sheep as well, because wool was very expensive for them too. However, most of them had no spinning wheel and they used to bring their wool to the wives of the PGR workers to be spun. Source's wife too, spun wool for others in order to earn a little extra. She also did a lot of knitting for others. The Polish farmers were very short of money and they preferred to pay for the spinning and knitting with food, - meat, lard, or butter, - because this they could sometimes spare.

From November, 1951 on, the farmers were supposed to pay to the PGR 84.- Zloty per month feed money for one cow and 26.- Zloty for one sheep. Some of them could not afford this and had to sell their animals at that time. However, in October 1952 the order came that it was forbidden for the farm workers to raise their own animals. All of them should be butchered immediately. But the farmers hated to part with the beautiful animals, especially because of the wool in the case of the sheep, and so they brought their sheep to the Polish farmers in the village. The Polish farmers received their remuneration for the care of the sheep partly on money and partly in feed for the animal - incidentally they much preferred the latter. At least in this way the PGR workers were able to save their sheep.

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(9)

Each of the PGR workers is allowed 1 1/2 morga of land for the raising of vegetables, potatoes, etc, for private consumption. They are free to do what they want to with the harvest from this piece of land. This produce was not bound by delivery quotas. They had to pay 20.- Zloty rent per year for this land.

In addition to this piece of land, the workers were allowed to buy from the PGR each year 6 cwt. rye, 1 cwt. wheat, and potatoes (source does not know the amount of potatoes because he never bought any,) for each working member of the family. Since they were officially allowed to keep chickens, they could also buy chicken feed. The amount was limited, but source does not know the number of kilos. Source, himself, always kept from 6 to 10 chickens, but the feed for them usually came from his own piece of land.

Neither the PGR farm in PUSTANIN nor the one in PENNEKOW had a community kitchen. The workers had to go home at noon for dinner. Source and his daughter used to come home daily to eat although they lived in PUSTANIN and worked in the truck-garden in PENNEKOW. Therefore noon-time was no period of relaxation for them because they had to hurry to make it home and back within the allotted time. Source's wife did not work. She cooked and did the housework at home.

End.