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POLAND

Escapes /0406/

They Can't Be Stopped.

SOURCE BERLIN : A 17-year-old boy. He worked as an industrial guard in SZCZECIN; in August 1953 he applied for a job in BIELINEK District CHOJNA in order to flee abroad. He arrived in BERLIN on 14 August 1953.

DATE OF OBSERVATION : until August 1953

EVAL. COMMENT : This is an excellent report. About the Gravel Works at BIELINEK see Item Nos. 8443, 8970, 9408/53 and 8117, 11526 and 10767/52.

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All applications for jobs with the Szczecinskie Zaklady Eksploatacji Kruszywa /SZCZECIN Gravel Works/ including all of the associated pits, were scrutinized at the SZCZECIN office on Kazimierza Debiaka street /formerly Pocztowa./ Most of the applications were for work at the gravel pit in BIELINEK, which is situated right on the ODER. It is not an easy thing to get a job there. They prefer to employ somewhat older men, particularly men with families, as there is less danger of such men attempting flight after a short time on the job. The gravel works in BIELINEK has had a hard time hanging on to its employees. During the summer of last year the foreman of one of the dredgers fled with two men who had been working under him, and in this year there have been five flight attempts among BIELINEK workers.

The first three, who fled last year, have been in the West for a long time. Their flight went smoothly. The next three who set out in the summer of 1953, did not have the same good fortune. Only one of the three arrived in the West. Reference is made to the source of report which appeared under Item Nos. 8443, 9408, 9409, 9410/53, who during the adventure not only lost
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his two friends but his clothing too and walked through the whole East Zone to BERLIN in his swimming trunks. After he arrived in our office he told about how afraid the firm administrators and the WOP were that the flight of the three in 1952 would be a bad influence on the other workers. He told of several mass meetings at which the three were condemned as traitors to the country and the others were warned against similar action.

The fears of the firm administrators were not unfounded : many others began thinking about flight at this time. But things were quiet until summer of this year.

At the time our most recent refugee from BIELINEK /source of this report/ finally succeeded in getting permission to work there from the administration in SZCZECIN, the personnel chief gave him a long lecture. He told source that many persons want to flee but none of them succeed; should he perchance have the same idea, his attempt would fail as have the others. To illustrate his point he spoke of the three who had taken flight about three months previously. "Two were arrested, and the third one was shot while trying to flee," he said.

The sixteen-year-old boy /source/ was not to be frightened by this. He grabbed the first opportunity /together with a friend/ and swam across the Oder; he reached BERLIN safely and was most delighted to be able to shake the hand of the "third one, who was shot" who is here in BERLIN awaiting the completion of arrangements for his emigration.

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