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POLAND

COMMUNICATIONS

Railways
City Traffic

Transport Means In Poland.

SOURCE ROME: No information available

DATE OF OBSERVATION: 1951 - 1952

The transport system in Poland can be divided in three groups:

- 1) The State Railways (P.K.P.) and the secondary railway lines to the suburbs (EKD)
- 2) The Polish Pulmann-lines
- 3) The Communal transport lines (trams, buses etc.)

From 1949 until fall 1951 the Polish railways went through a very critical period, caused partially through the inefficiency of undernourished technical personnel (i.e. engine-drivers, assistants, stokers,) and partially owing to the very low quality of coal employed, which developed insufficient heat and was difficult to burn.

The technical personnel, undernourished, was quite unfit to attend their jobs efficiently. Therefore, the trains went very slowly, and delays of three to four hours were quite a matter of fact. No time-table was observed, insofar, as the delay of one train blocked others in the various railway stations. For instance, if the KRAKOW-GDYNIA train was delayed, the POZNAN-WROCLAW had to wait in a small station, until the former was through. This chaotic state of affairs rendered the work of the traffic managers even more difficult than it was already.

Within the railway stations, enormous crowds of people were obliged to line up for long hours, sometimes even sleeping on the floor, in the waiting rooms.

As soon as a train arrived the crowd assaulted the carriages, getting inside even through the windows and using all possible means to get a place. There were continual casualties among the crowd who tried to jump onto the moving trains and injured themselves.

Also today the trains are still crowded, owing to the great number of travellers in comparison to the inadequate number of trains. The waiting-rooms - even the most modern ones -

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are in undescrivable conditions. The filth and stench in these waiting rooms reek to high heaven so that many of the travellers prefer to wait outside, no matter how bad the weather might be...

All major railway stations in Poland have installed centers for assisting young mothers and children, and special waiting rooms for the youth. These centers are decorated with red flags and with portraits of the Communist leaders in addition to newspapers and periodicals at the disposition of the travellers. Nobody is allowed to sleep within these waiting halls. The rooms for young mothers and children are exclusively for expectant mothers or such with small children.

The waiting rooms as well as the railway carriages are infested by insects. While the waiting rooms are the fleas' headquarters, the railway carriages are infested by bugs.

Our source on a trip from JELENIA GORA to LODZ - in 1951 - travelled in a carriage here all the other travellers were obliged to spend the night standing up and burning whole armies of bugs which were populating all the seats.

As the Polish railway personnel has to observe certain norms but above all tries to make a maximum number of kilometers without any repairs - it happens quite often that the engines through lack of adequate supervision at the right time break down during the voyage.

It must be pointed out, that the engine-driver who is subjected to cover a certain distance in a certain time limit, and cannot fulfill this obligation through a broken-down engine, is personally responsible for this before a tribunal. If the damage is only a small one he gets away with a fine only - but if repair of a certain importance has to be made, he will be accused of sabotage and tried by a Military Court.

Railway tickets are, generally, expensive. A third-class ticket for the ordinary train from GDYNIA to JELENIA GORA - a little more than 600 km - costs about 32 Zloty.

JELENIA GORA - WROCLAW (120 km) costs 12 Zloty
JELENIA GORA - LODZ (450 km) costs 26 Zloty
SZCZECIN-JELENIA GORA (600 km) costs 32.70 Zloty.

The through train from JELENIA GORA-GDYNIA costs 46 Zloty.

Generally a third class ticket on a through-train costs 1½ times as much as the same ticket on an ordinary train.

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The price of a II class ticket costs one third more than a III class ticket (both in ordinary as well as in through-trains.)

For long journeys II and III class sleepers are available. Nobody but the Polish Travel Agency "ORBIS" can sell these sleeper tickets. The price for a berth amounts to about double the cost of an ordinary ticket. The III class sleepers enjoy great popularity.

On the international lines there are also 1st class sleepers, which are not existing on the national lines. First class sleepers are mostly for diplomatic representatives, as their cost is far too high for the average citizen.

There is also a restaurant service where excellent food is served costing however, double the price the same food would cost in a restaurant. A pork chop, for instance, costs 12-15 Zloty, which would not be more than 4-5 Zloty in an average restaurant.

The Polish railways have their own security service (SOK); the agents of which are equipped with machine-guns, pistols, and rifles. They are on duty in every railway station and are doing, practically, Police service.

Manufacturers of railway carriages and railway machinery are the following:

Factory STALIN - ex CEGIELSKI - at POZNAN
Enterprise STALIN - ex PAFAWAG - at WROCLAW

At the POZNAN factory railway engines and Pullman carriages are built.

At BYDGOSZCZ there are the great workshops for repairs and reconditioning.

At about five km distance from BYDGOSZCZ, the carriageable material is concentrated on dead railway lines - and from here the BYDGOSZCZ factories get the material for reconditioning.

The railway administration's set-up is similarly to the voivodship's organization. WARSAW became an important railway center after the construction of the SLASKO-DABROWSKI bridge, which connects the right and left bank of the Vistula river. The number of railway lines was considerably increased lately.

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All military transports take place, in most cases, during the night, especially in summer. Convoys, if travelling by day-time, stop at small stations only.

The coal transports from Silesia are directed through POZNAN: BYDGOSZCZ to GDYNIA, or else through POZNAN to STETTIN - but these latter are rather seldom. At GDYNIA some four to five coal trains, composed of 50-60 freight cars arrive daily. The major part of these trains arrive at night-time.

The traffic of freight cars on the POZNAN-GDYNIA line is very vivacious.

Part of the coal convoys goes from POZNAN to the GDANSK harbor, where there are bigger coal-wharves. From the Soviet wharf of GDANSK there is a Soviet vessel with a cargo of Polish coal leaving each day, for the RUSKA golf every other day. The Soviet barge "Omega" is permanently in GDYNIA harbor (1.500 BRT).

The Soviet coal-wharf at STETTIN is very important. Coal is shipped in great quantities, but not regularly. There is no regular transportation like at GDANSK and GDYNIA.

After the installation of a mechanical advice for loading and unloading operations at STETTIN harbor, the shipments were speeded up to such an extent that the Silesian mines cannot keep up with the deliveries. The construction of a special line with two rails, exclusively reserved for coal transports will be indispensable.

Communal means of Transport.

WARSAW. There are old and new trams in WARSAW. The new cars were built in WARSAW or in Upper Silesia. Besides those, WARSAW has also tramcars imported from foreign countries (Holland.)

During the rush hours the existing transport means are quite insufficient. People travel hanging onto the platforms and casualties occur quite frequently.

Neither the tramway service nor the buses are regularly supervised and controlled by competent technicians, and they are exploited irrationally. For instance, the buses are lacking in adequate isolation, and, therefore, it quite often happens that the unfortunate passengers during rainy weather get an electric shock whenever they touch a metallic door-handle, while they are still standing on the wet street, and are incapable of taking their hands off the handle, so that the others have to push them in or drag them up to avoid casualties.

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Prices for Communal Transportation:

Tram: normal ticket 25 gr - soldiers....15 gr.
Autobus: normal ticket 50 gr (one sole ticket for everybody).
Trolley Bus: normal ticket 30 gr. - soldiers....15 gr.

These prices are the same throughout Poland.

GDYNIA:

The Communal transport means at GDYNIA consists only of trolley buses, with old carriages. Only on the GDYNIA-SOPOT line are new carriages. There is a busline between the town and the harbor, with a bus going each 15 minutes, during the day and each 30 minutes during the night.

In 1951, a circular Trolley-bus line GDYNIA-OKSZYWIE was introduced.

State Pullman-lines.

The state-owned Pullman lines PKS are all FIAT or SCODA cars. They travel all over the territory of Central Poland, covering distances up to 300 km.

Besides they are doing Tourist service and run along the coast and through the mountains.

They are in good conditions. A ticket for a ride of about 18 km costs 11 Zloty. They are very well frequented.

State-Taxi cabs: there are two types of taxicabs: private ones and those owned by the State. The State-owned cabs are only in WARSAW. They are made in Russia, PABEDA brand. The drivers are paid by the State. A state cab charges 1 Zloty per one km, while private cabs charge 2 Zloty for the same distance.

In the other Polish towns all taxicabs are private. There are a good many of them, but nobody makes such use of them, considering their high price.

EVAL. COMMENT: The general situation of Polish Railways and other means of communications finds confirmation in many other reports.

EKD-stands for "Elektryczne Koleje Dojazdowe." Railway fares in line with other reports. The existence of railway security service, SOK ("Sluzba Ochrony Kolejowej") confirmed.

"Zakłady Przemysłu Metalowego im. J. STALINA" former CEGIELSKI in POZNAN and BYDGOSZCZ railway workshops ("Zakłady Naprawcze Taboru Kolejowego") - confirmed. The fact of renaming of "Pafawag".

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factory in WROCLAW to "STALIN" works finds, so far, no confirmation.

Details of coal shipments to USSR and Sovietbargo "Omega" -
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Tram fare was given by several other sources as 45 gr (uniform for all Poland,) 25 gr. for men in uniform and school children and workers (restricted to 70 to 100 tickets a month.)

Details of bus communication in GDYNIA-SOPOT unknown.

PKS stands for "Panstwowa Komunikacja Samochodowa."

Exact fare UNCONFIRMED but in line with other fares.

Existence of State-owned taxicabs confirmed. The fare of a private taxi (in SZCZECINO was reported lately as about 4.40 Zloty for 1,2 km. Perhaps it related to night-fare which counts double.