

BS
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POLAND

DESCRIPTION OF COUNTRY /3800/
Villages /3803/

PRUSSIAN MEMORIAL PRESERVED.

SOURCE OSNABRUECK: Confidential source.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Up to September 1955.

EVAL. COMMENT: As this is the first information ever received about this memorial, we are unable to confirm or deny it.

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One of the few memorials from the time of the German administration of Upper Silesia which has not been destroyed by the Polish authorities, is to be found in ROKITNICA near KOZLE. The memorial is erected at the crossroads to KEDZIERZYN and commemorates the year 1807 when the Prussian Chancellor, Baron vom Stein, liberated the farmers from serfdom.

The memorial is in the form of a small chapel. Inside is a plaque bearing a sentence in gold letters reminding readers of the important event. Formerly, the inscription was in the German language but since 1952 /in accordance with Communist party instructions/ it is in Polish. The contents of the sentence remain the same "From the Grateful Silesian Farmers in Remembrance of Their Liberation in October 1807."

Before the inscription was changed to Polish, a heated discussion took place between the Communists in ROKITNICA and

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KOZLE as to whether the memorial should remain at all. One party was of the opinion that the memorial commemorated Prussian history but the other said that to commemorate the liberation of the farmers from the feudal system of the Junkers by the pre-revolutionary Stein was a recognition of the progress of socialism. In addition, if the memorial was removed, the farmers would be resentful and the newly developed collectives would suffer.

End