

LL  
25 Feb  
VII/ET/N.658 C

POLAND

INDUSTRY (1700)  
Meat Industry (1703/1)

LABOR (1900)  
Life in Factories (1904)

The Butchery And Canned Meat Factory Of CRACOW

SOURCE TRIESTE: Confidential source.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: August 1952.

EVAL. COMMENT: The most interesting parts of this report are those referring to the attitude of workers toward Socialist competition and toward Communist Party members at the factory. Also deserving attention are the passages, which deal with embezzlements and petty theft.

The described canned meat factory at CRACOW existed before the war ("Rzeźnia Miejska.") The names quoted in the report appear for the first time and, therefore, cannot be confirmed. Prices and wages as given in the report correspond to the 1952 level.

"Exports to East Germany" mentioned in this report are possibly meant to read "Exports to West Germany."

\* \* \* \*

The butchery and canned meat factory (in Polish Rzeźnia) of CRACOW is situated at Rzeźnicka street no.28, on the banks of the river Wisla. It is one of the largest canned food factories of southern Poland, surpassed only by that of TARNOW, about 40 km away from CRACOW.

Having been partly bombed during the last war, this factory was rebuilt and is working at full speed. The tins produced in the factory are exclusively destined for exports.

The factory is divided into four sections: i.e. the beef butchery, the pork butchery, the section for manufacture of meat, (removal of bones and grinding of meat) and the

(Over)

(cont'd)

1

section where the meat is canned. In port PLASZOW, about four kilometers away from CRACOW there are some modern refrigeratory warehouses depending on the tin factory.

The town's former 150 (approximately) private butcheries were absorbed by the abovementioned factory and are managed by the latter. Private butcheries do not exist any longer. There is one single management for all butcheries. The director general of this plant is a certain LAHMAYER (fnu), a well-known Communist from CRACOW. The factory has some 2,500 dependants, of whom the factory itself employs about 1,000, i.e. 500 employees and 600 specialized workers (almost all of whom are former butchers from CRACOW) while the rest are simple workers.

The factory slaughters about 600 to 700 pigs and 1,000 to 1,500 oxen a day, except during the summer season. Most of the cattle is supplied to the factory directly by the farmers as part of their quotas due to be delivered to the collection centers. (It is noted here, that farmers who refuse to deliver the cattle to the State do not get any coal for heating in the winter.) Only a small part of the cattle slaughtered in the factory comes from the state farms of TARNOW.

The factory mainly produces canned ham and bacon as well as lard. Ham is canned in 4.5 kg cans, bacon in 8 kg cans and lard is packed in 10 kg blocks, two of which are packed in every box. The first quality meat is used exclusively for ham and bacon cans. The second quality meat is used for sausages destined for exports, while only the third quality meat is used for sausages for the local consumption, or it is sold as fresh meat in the butcher shops of CRACOW. The only kind of sausages made for local consumption is the "Grysik" type which is really a mixture of 50 per cent of meat and 50 per cent of wheat. These sausages are smoked. But even the "grysik" sausages are rarely sold to the population and is sometimes only available on the eve of one Communist holiday or other, for example, the 1 May or the 7 November. Besides it is rationed. The butchery shops are only supplied with cans and sausages which were rejected for export purpose. All the rest is exported to England, East Germany and Czechoslovakia. The workers of the factory enjoy the privilege of buying 2 kg a week of the factory's products at the following prices:

First quality ham	45.00 Zloty per kilo
Second quality ham	32.00 Zloty per kilo
"Grysik" sausage	11.50 Zloty per kilo

(Over)



Fresh pork	15.00 Zloty per kilo
Lard	15.20 Zloty per kilo
Fresh Beef	6.60 Zloty per kilo

These goods are sold at the same prices to the rest of the population except that they are rationed.

Since it occurred during the years from 1947 until 1949 that the specialized workers who were dismissed in the summer season found work elsewhere and therefore did not come back to work at the canned factory in the winter, the factory management was obliged to change its employment system. In fact, since that time all specialized workers have been engaged all through the whole year and during the summer season they work on building and repairs in the factory itself. Furthermore, slaughtering is sometimes also continued through the summer and the meat is stored in the refrigerated warehouses of port PLASZOW. And since frozen meat cannot be canned it is only used for sausages or is sold directly to the population.

In the summer of 1951 a 55-year-old specialized worker (NU) engaged in repair work, was killed under the weight of a boiler which fell on him when he was trying to move it around. His wife tried to sue the factory because of this accident accusing it of having abused of its right by making her husband do work for which he was not fit and under unsafe circumstances. But since the factory is a state concern, the whole matter went up in smoke. The only representative the Communist Party condescended to sent to the funeral of the unlucky worker was the secretary Jan SZCZEPANIK who exalted the poor victim in his commemorative speech, calling him a "hero of the country and of socialist work." SZCZEPANIK, who is a fervent Communist is still the Party secretary at the canned meat factory.

There are eight hours of work per day at the factory. The only section with three eight-hour shifts is that in which the lard is prepared. The workers of all the other sections start working at 0700 hours and finish work at 1600 hours. There is a break of 30 minutes for breakfast and an equally long interval for lunch. Since the canteen is too small, the workers have their meals in four consecutive shifts.

A specialized worker draws a salary of 2.30 Zloty per hour, while a simple worker receives 1.55 Zloty per hour. Overtime work is paid at a rate of 1.10 Zloty per hour. Since the payment for overtime work is really too low (it should be

(Over)

(cont'd)

3

recalled that a pack of ordinary cigarettes costs 3 Zloty) none of the workers likes to work for more than the normal eight hours a day. Therefore the factory management has to force the workers to do overtime work, i.e. the dressing rooms are simply locked and the workers are threatened with imprisonment in case of their refusal to work.

During the summer of 1951 - it was a Friday - it happened that some 45 slaughtered pigs went bad and had to be used for soap manufacturing. The chief of the section, Boleslaw ZASADZKI was immediately arrested under the accusation of sabotage although he was not altogether responsible and guilty. But since he was one of the most hated Communists the other workers were greatly pleased about his bad luck. At the date of observation he was still in prison without having been tried. A few weeks later another act of sabotage was discovered: i.e. a lot of 90 tons of lard sent from CRACOW to WROCLAW in wooden boxes was completely rotten by the time it reached its destination. One of the factory managers of CRACOW (NU) and the respective section chief (NU) were arrested. A trial condemned the former to four years of imprisonment (at present he is the cook of the jail on the Kamienna street in CRACOW) while the chief of the section committed suicide before the trial, i.e. he cut his throat with a razor blade. Both of them were Communist Party members.

It must be admitted that work accidents are rare. Only once, at the beginning of 1952, one of the workers (NU) started a work competition with another worker and cut his stomach, but without any serious consequences. As to competitions between the various sections they have been decreasing constantly since the workers are not interested in them.

The greatest worry of the factory management are the thefts which have indeed become quite alarming. Generally, however, workers who are discovered to have stolen for the first time are only admonished, and are handed over to the judiciary authorities if they are surprised a second time. In fact, if everybody who steals would be denounced only very few workers would be left at their work. At present about 30 former workers of the factory are doing forced labor in the coal mines of ZABRZE, serving terms from 6 to 12 months for thefts committed at the factory. It is known that sometimes more than 100 to 200 kg of meat were taken away from the factory at a time and that also the drivers of the factory took part in these thefts. And since the control on the part of the management is not very efficacious, it can easily be avoided and the stolen goods can be taken to the court yard of the plants, and then outside the premises.

(Over)



(cont'd)

4

According to the official statistics of the management at least 500 kg out of 10,000 kg of meat are stolen by the workers, while an additional 150 to 200 kg of this quantity go bad and cannot be used for the production because of negligence on the part of the workers.

Of the 2,500 factory dependants, only 150 are members of the Communist Party and most of these members do not carry out any political activities. In a section there were only four Party members among the 80 workers of that section. And out of these four Party members only one, a certain Leo BOHM was a passionate Communist while the other three had only become Party members out of opportunism.

End.