

# Between the ash tray and the sugar bowl

by H. H. MacKAY

During July and August, I was fortunate in spending six weeks in Poland as representative of Dalhousie University with a group of Canadian University students sent by WUSC for the purpose of making a comparative study of life in Canada and in Poland. To try and share with you in three articles all of my impressions would, of course, not be possible. Thus it was that, in thinking of my principal impressions of Poland and its problems, my first thought went to the title of this article.

### The Match Box

In the very small hours of an August day, a middle-aged man, slightly the worse for the effects of the incomparable Polish vodka, made his way through the streets of Poznan. Upon seeing three of us standing on a corner and upon discovering that we were Canadians, he insisted that we accompany him to his apartment for tea. The man, a dentist with twenty years of experience in his profession, lived with his wife and two sons in three large rooms in one of the innumerable apartment buildings in Poznan. The story which he told us was a sad, yet typically Polish, tale. Taking a large ash tray and setting it on the table, he said, pointing to it, "Russia". Placing a very ornate and heavy green sugar bowl beside the ash tray, he said, "Germany". And then very softly he whispered, as he set a tiny match-box between the other two pieces, "Poland".

Thus was told the basic fact of the existence of Poland today: the struggle of a small nation geographically situated between two powers historically ambitious for greater territory. Indeed, despite the existence of a unique Polish language and culture, Poland had no legal existence as a state prior to the Versailles settlement after World War I, its territory being held prior to that time in part by Germany, in part by Russia, and in part by Austria. Recreated as a nation in 1919, the Polish borders were altered after World War II, Poland ceding a large portion of her eastern territories to Russia. In return, Poland received a similiar area of traditionally Polish territory held for hundreds of years by Germany and containing the large German city of Breslau. These "western territories" were resettled by Poles, the great Western Powers aiding in the evacuation of Germans from the area in the post-war period.

### FOREIGN POLICY

It is these "western territories" which form the focus of Polish foreign policy in 1962. West Germany has not yet recognized the Polish right to the territories. Indeed the Poles profess to see in east Germany a dangerous neo-Nazi movement - a movement which will again place in jeopardy the Polish frontiers. Thus, while Poland is a Communist nation and as such she almost inevitably accepts the Soviet position on international matters, the attitude within Poland reveals a significant difference from the Russian attitude. The Poles to whom I talked saw their real enemy as West Germany and not as any one of the Big Three Western Powers - although it is generally felt in Poland that the U.S.A. is being duped by the Adenauer government.

### EMPHASIS ON GERMANS

Evidence of this Polish emphasis on Germany as the much feared enemy is to be seen everywhere. In Warsaw, for example, a city of one million persons, 85 percent of which was intentionally and maliciously destroyed by the Nazis during the latter stages of the war, the Poles have painstakingly reconstructed, brick for brick, most of the old medieval town. Each building has been given precisely the same lines, the same facade, and the same

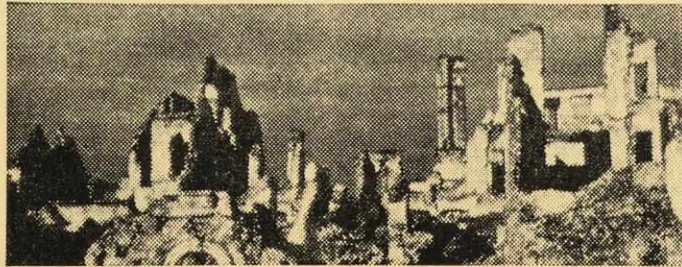
colouring as existed before the war. But in the center of all of this the former Royal Palace remains a heap of rubble. The official explanation is that the reconstruction of the palace has been delayed for financial reasons, but in the private opinion of some Poles, the ruins may be left for many years as a silent reminder of German misdeeds.

Even more dramatic is the Polish preservation of the Nazi death-camp at Auschwitz in South-

diern, it is not possible to have a new war."

### ECONOMIC STRENGTH

The merits of the Polish fears of the West Germans, I would hesitate to assess. It is true that even a casual visit to West Germany is enough to convince one of the tremendous economic expansion presently being enjoyed there. It is also easy to see that the Germans have lost none of their national self-assurance. But is is quite another thing to equate



WARSAW - WAR RAVAGED

ern Poland. This camp, at which between three and four million persons (most of them Jews or Poles) met their deaths during World War II, has been left intact with its gallows and its barbed wire, its crematoria and its pits of lye. Our guide at Auschwitz, himself a former prisoner in the camp, led us through groups of small children, standing in line awaiting their turn to be "educated" by a visit to the vaults containing great mounds of teeth, hair, eye-glasses, and other personal effects of murdered prisoners. In fact, the camp, preservation, which is probably desirable insofar as it stands as a memorial of man's inhumanity to man, now serves an entirely distinct and unworthy purpose in Poland. For it is used as an instrument to generate fear of and hostility towards the Germans - in part because of the genuine Polish fears of the aims of the West German regime, and in part as a means by which the Polish government may divert the attention of the Polish citizen from the very real limitations on his standard of living at home.

Out of an average salary of 2,000 zlotys per month, (\$80 at the official exchange rate, \$30 at a realistic rate) the worker must allocate funds to articles bearing very high prices. For example, a can of orange juice costs 20 zlotys, the salary of two hours; a low quality sports jacket costs about 500 zlotys, the equivalent of three years' salary. Thus, few families own cars or, for that matter, refrigerators. Indeed one Polish student, although fluent in English, had no notion of what an "ice-cube" might be. However, most families do own television sets, which have been priced at a low level by the regime because of their value in the spread of propaganda.

### BUT NOT UNHAPPY

I must say that the average Pole does not seem unhappy with this living standard. "At least", he will say, "things are better now than ever before. If only... there could be peace." For Poland has known the story of war all too well, fully six million of her citizens having perished at Nazi hands from 1939 to 1945. And thus it is that the Pole-in-the-street of today has been conditioned to look upon West Germany as the one fly in the ointment of world peace. A Polish law professor told our group with deepest sincerity, "without West German sol-

economic strength with militarism as is so often done in Poland.

From the Nazi misdeeds of the past, all that the Polish Communists have attempted to do is to draw the lessons of fear and hate-towards dangerous lessons in days of world crisis. And so in Warsaw last month, a Polish girl was told by her mother something she had been told many times before: "Remember what the Germans did, my dear; remember, remember, never forget!"

This fear of the West Germans is not the entire Polish riddle; for coupled with it is a deep distrust of and hatred towards the Russians. No Pole has yet forgotten the massacre during World War II of 10,000 Polish officers by Russian soldiers - a massacre apparently designed solely to allow the Moscow-trained Communists to assert their authority in Poland after the war. Nor have the Poles forgotten the events of 1956 in Hungary when Russian tanks splashed the blood of the freedom fighters over the streets of Budapest. At that time, the Poles themselves had just concluded their own semi-revolution, obtaining in the bargain a significant measure of freedom from Moscow.

### HEAVY HEARTS

In the words of one young Communist in Poland, a country in which Party members appear to be Poles first and Communists only secondly: "our hearts were heavy when we saw what the Russians had done."

Thus, although the Poles feel compelled by the West German threat to seek solace in the Russian orbit, they fight hard against any tightening of Soviet control. Out of this has come a feeling of personal and national despair - a difficult feeling to avoid when caught between the ash-tray and the sugar bowl.



WARSAW - REBUILT AFTER WAR

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

Mr. H. H. MacKAY, third year law student, was Dalhousie's delegate to the World University Service of Canada Seminar held in Poland this past summer. Views expressed are those of the author and not the responsibility of WUSC, nor The Gazette. This is the first of those articles.

## Treasure Van is on the road again

OTTAWA — WUSC officials are hoping that Carleton University has set the Treasure Van off on the road to riches.

A record-breaking \$4,719 was collected there during the first sale of the year. Last year, the sale amounted to \$3,973. On the first day more than \$1,300 was grossed on the sale of incense, wood carvings, knives, blankets, fertility images, black magic drums, sacrificial swords and the more than one thousand other items.

Last year, Treasure Van took in better than \$80,000 from the 35 campus sales which were held. The top vendor-campus was the University of Alberta at Edmonton where close to \$8,500 was collected. This was more than \$2,500 over second place McGill University. Dalhousie made \$3,138.54.

The second Treasure Van opened its doors at Sherbrooke University October 1, and the third an will be hawking its wares commencing October 10. The latter tours Western Canada, while the former visits the Atlantic region.

Almost every campus in Canada will be visited by the World University Service money-raisers on wheels before Christmas.

## Next WUSC Seminar in Pakistan

TORONTO — Did you ever want to spend a summer in the foothills of the Himalayas?

The World University Service International Seminar participants will be doing just that next August at the conclusion of their stay in Pakistan. Before travelling there, the 35 student delegates will visit such places as Hyderabad, Quetta, Dacca, Lahore and the famed Khyber Pass.

The Seminar, which is designed to give Canadian students the opportunity to meet and study with students in another land, will deal with the theme: "The Influence of the Orient and the Occident in Pakistan."

Canadian Co-Director is Dr. C. L. O. Glass, Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Bishop's University. He will be assisted by five professors from across Canada, as yet unchosen.

Application forms for the seminar can be obtained from the local WUS committee. Deadline for application is November 26. The applications are processed at each campus, then forwarded to the National Committee for final selection.

Increased costs for this seminar mean that fewer delegates will be able to participate in 1963. The average cost per student will be at least \$1,200. A good portion of the total cost is contributed from business sources but provincial governments and some universities make grants to the seminar.

This is the 14th international seminar. Poland was the site of the 1962 study tour, and before that it was Sweden, Israel and the West Indies.

### ARMSTRONG-JONES BREAKS TRADITION

When Antony Armstrong-Jones married Princess Margaret of Great Britain he became the first man of non-noble birth to marry into the British royal family since the 15th century reign of Edward IV.

## Finnish Paper Blasts World Youth Festival

OTTAWA (CUP) — A Finnish newspaper, the Helsinki Youth News, has come out with an entire edition blasting the communist-sponsored 8th World Youth Festival held at Helsinki in August.

The Festival was boycotted by the Finnish national student union and many national unions in the Western world. The Finnish government agreed only under pressure from Moscow to allow the Festival to be held in Finland, the paper says.

The Festival, which cost its communist organizers an estimated \$25 million, failed on four counts the Youth News says.

- it was either unwilling or unable to conceal the onesidedness of its political criticism.

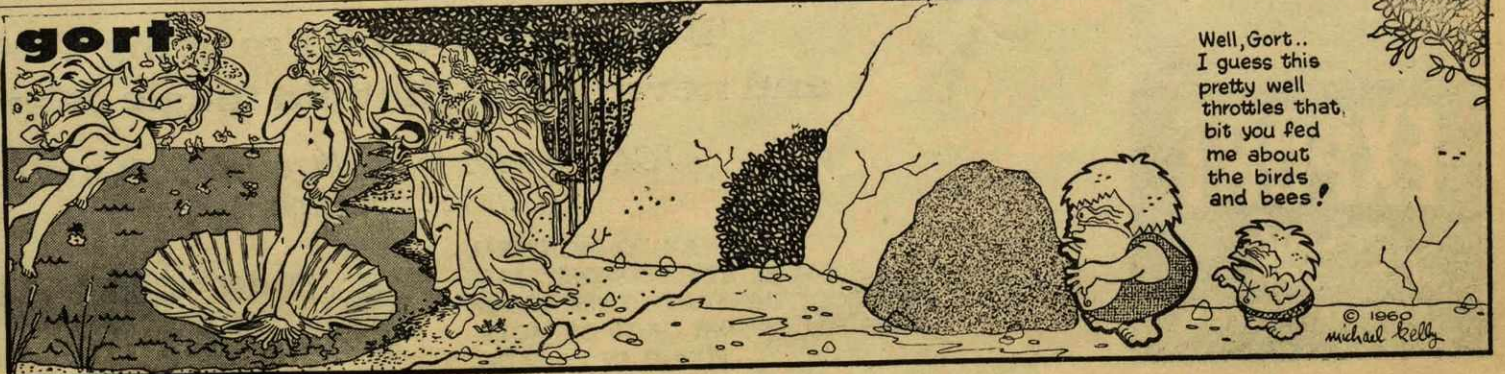
- the Finnish people, though realizing the difficult position of its government because of threats by the Soviet Union, responded coldly to the event. Four nights of rioting in protest of the Festival were staged by the "teenage, irresponsible element," the paper says.

- the local Festival organizers, members of communist parties from 15 countries, were prevented by Finnish politicians from taking the hard line desired by the financial sponsors.

- Festival organizers were unable to generate continuing enthusiasm beyond the opening day parade. The boredom and inattention were shown in early departures and the statements of what the paper calls "obviously disillusioned" young people.

The paper backs up its charge of disillusionment in its report of the walkout of 44 members of the Ceylonese delegation who withdrew "to register our protests and also to draw attention of the world to how the organizers of the Festival, taking advantage of young people's genuine desire for peace and friendship throughout the world, utilise the occasion to put through the communist line and make it seem far more representative than it really is."

In another story in the eight-page edition, the paper examines, in detail, the background of the 19 Festival organizers. All are either members of the communist party or active members of communist youth organizations, the paper claims.



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