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INFORMATION REPORT

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COUNTRY Poland

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

SUBJECT Information on Wloclawek, Zabłudow, Bialystok, Hainowka, Chelm Lupelski and Hrubieszow.

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1. Wloclawek

"The town of Wloclawek [REDACTED] belongs to the County (voivodship) of Torun, and militarily to the Command of Military Area Bydgoszcz (DOW - Dowodztwo Okregu Wojskowego). The town still has a number of old monasteries: Franciscan, Jesuit and Capuchin orders.

25X1C Opposite the cathedral is a building which was probably formerly a school. It is now [REDACTED] used as the UB headquarters.

Normal traffic is maintained on the Vistula River. I saw a number of paddle steamers, two of which were called 'Jaroslaw Dabrowski' and 'Pstrowski'.

The railway station is unmanaged. There is a large coffee factory opposite the station, which is presently [REDACTED] producing coffee from corn. Other important local establishments are: A porcelain factory, a plywood factory, cellulose and paper factories, and a manometer and electric meter factory. The town also has a large freezing plant for meats. In Autumn 1953 there was a fire here. Instead of the usual fire department personnel being called, military troops were called to extinguish the fire, because the store was full of meat and meat preserves, of which there were severe shortages in the shops. The authorities were afraid that if the ordinary fire brigades were called in, the news of these meat stocks would spread through the town and provoke the popula-

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tion to anger.

The town has two picture houses, one of which is called the 'Baltyk'.

In 1953 the town acquired a new school, the Higher School of Paper Industry (Wyzsza Szkola Papiernicza).

There are large stores of explosives hidden in the woods near the highway from the town to Kowal. These stores are surrounded by triple fencing and are carefully guarded by soldiers. In the immediate vicinity of the town, in the Moderowo area, there is an exercise ground (polygon) for engineer troops. [redacted] regiment was trained in bridge building. But one of the most important military polygons of Pomorze province is in the neighborhood of Drawsko Pomorskie. Training of units is continual there. The regiment from Wloclawek did not operate only in Pomorze. In 1952 or 1953, some detachments [redacted] were sent to Hajnowka for a while; it was said that the troops were going to help with the harvest, but actually they were engaged in some work in the huge local ammunition stores.

2. "Zabludow:

Zabludow is [redacted] in Bialystok county.

[redacted] The whole town is in ruins, though the surrounding area is in better condition. The town was destroyed by fire set by withdrawing Soviet troops in 1941, and no reconstruction has been started. The rubble has been cleared away, but in the town's center there remains only the Catholic and Orthodox churches, one inn, two shops (all operated by the Samopomoc Chlopska), and a vocational school for mechanics.

3. "Bialystok:

[redacted] Bialystok, the capital of the county, has not been destroyed, but the railway station is still in ruins, and only temporary barracks have been erected in its place. The old Branicki family palace, which was seriously damaged, is now restored. Before World War II, it lodged the Voivodship office; now it houses the Voivodship National Council (WRN).

The best building in the town is at No. 5 Mickiewicz Street; it is the county UB headquarters.

The municipal gasworks was damaged during World War II but has since been reconstructed.

Near the Central Park, a vocational school for mechanics has been built.

Town transportation is provided by the municipal bus service. The vehicles are new, and of Hungarian production.

Some industry is being developed [redacted] in Bialystok. The local brewery is under reconstruction and, [redacted] is to be considerably enlarged. Apart from that, a sweets factory, tannery and some mechanical factory (producing tools, [redacted]) are operating. There is also talk of industrial development around the town. [redacted] extensive construction going on in Fasty

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and Zambrow. [redacted] happening in Wally. The factories in Fasty, Zambrow and Wally are to constitute three parts of a large cotton textile combine. Some sections, it is said, have already started production [redacted]. However, people in Bialystok and its environs say that whatever industry is developed there now by the Communist regime does not profit the country, since production is mainly for the Soviet Union, the frontier of which is only a stone's throw away, and the transport of goods very convenient. The combine in Zambrow, Fasty and Wally will allegedly produce materials for the equipment of the Soviet Army, such as cotton drill for summer uniforms, etc.

In all of Bialystok County there is an extensive exploitation of timber. However, this also is largely exported to the USSR. The population has no firewood to heat their dwellings in winter, and a special type of stove for heating with woodshavings is very popular with the people.

[redacted] brick kiln is under construction [redacted] in Woszczele, near Bialystok.

Crude oil deposits have been discovered somewhere in the Bialystok and Brzesc areas as well as in Polesie (now incorporated in the USSR).

The farming population of Bialystok County looks very poor. With the exception of the near frontier belt, there are comparatively very few kolkhozes in that area, owing to the staunch resistance of the peasants to collectivization. On the other hand, the authorities find certain difficulties in fighting these peasants as 'kulaks', since most of them have very small farms, some of only two or three hectares, which does not even suffice to maintain their families; still they do not want collectivization. They usually manage by sending some members of the family to work in nearby factories.

4. "Hajnowka:"

All the local population has been evacuated from Hajnowka, probably due to its proximity to the frontier, which is guarded with the utmost strictness. In Hajnowka there are huge ammunition dumps under military administration.

No longer is anything heard of Partisan activities in the Puszcza Bialowieska forests; it may be concluded that the Partisans have been nearly eradicated. In the Hajnowka area, a large timber exploitation is in progress.

5. "Chelm Lubelski:"

This town is still in ruins. Even the railway station has not been reconstructed. Chelm was destroyed by the Ukrainians who set fire to it during World War II. There were official promises that Chelm would be reconstructed for the 10th Anniversary of the formation of the Lublin Committee, but when [redacted] I did not observe any large scale building activities.

The town has a fruit preserves factory.

A strong WOP unit is stationed in Chelm Lubelski. I heard that it is the Seventh Brigade of the WOP. The UB occupies two adjoining buildings at the corner of Ogrodowa and Reformacka Streets. There is a UB prison in the cellars of these two houses.

6. "Hrubieszow:"

In this small town, there are many uniforms. A WOP unit (probably the strength of a battalion) and an infantry regiment are quartered here in the local militia barracks which date from before World War I.

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Near Hrubieszow, in Nielezew, a new fruit preserves factory is under construction. But the greatest point of interest in the neighborhood is a large concentration camp situated east of Hrubieszow at a short distance from the Soviet frontier. The area around the camp, so near the frontier, has been evacuated of civilians. The prisoners are former soldiers of the Polish Home Army (AK) and also those who served with the Western allies during World War II. The camp is allegedly administered by the Soviet MVD which is engaged in the 're-education' of the reactionaries entrusted to it. Everyone in Hrubieszow knows about the existence of the camp which, they say, holds several thousand prisoners. Although they have hard labor sentences for a definite period of years, most of them are kept much longer, probably depending upon their response to the 're-education'. They are engaged in the construction of a new military airfield and some other works of strategic importance."

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