



# The Seasonal Emigration of Polish Agricultural Workers to Germany : II<sup>1</sup>

by

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## THE RULES AND THE PRACTICE OF RECRUITING AND PLACING

In this section of the article the various phases of the complex operation of recruiting will be discussed, followed by an account of the process of placing, which includes the whole process of conveying the worker to his place of employment. Incidentally, the standard contract regulating the conditions of work of Polish seasonal workers in Germany will be analysed. The article will conclude with a few words on repatriation and some figures showing the volume of the migration movements under discussion.

### *Recruiting*

The question of recruiting is not mentioned in the Treaty, beyond the statement in Article 1 that the public employment exchanges in Poland and the competent authorities in Germany—i.e. the German Central Office for Workers (*Deutsche Arbeiterzentrale*)—are alone authorised to recruit Polish agricultural workers for employment in Germany. The methods of recruiting are specified in a Supplementary Agreement of the same date as the Treaty. The three chief phases of the operation are the fixing of the annual quota, the preparations for recruiting, and the selection and engagement of the workers.

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<sup>1</sup> For the first part of this article cf. *International Labour Review*, Vol. XXV, No. 2, Feb. 1932, pp. 213-235.

At the moment of going to press information has been received that the German Government, as was anticipated in the introductory note to this article, has decided to suspend all immigration of seasonal agricultural workers for 1932.

*Fixing the Quota.*

This operation falls into three parts : (1) by a procedure to be described later, Germany determines each year the amount of Polish labour required for agricultural purposes during the coming season ; (2) this estimate, accompanied by proposals for the geographical distribution of the quota over the various recruiting areas in Poland, is communicated to the Polish authorities for their consideration ; (3) an annual conference of representatives of the competent authorities in both countries finally decides on the size of the quota and its distribution.

The operation of fixing the provisional quota (the number proposed by the German to the Polish authorities) serves at the same time for the granting of the permits which, as we have already seen, the German law obliges every employer who wishes to employ foreign labour to obtain. In other words, only employers who have applied for and received permission may employ Polish agricultural workers, and the quota proposed is the total required to meet recognised needs.

The method of fixing the quota is as follows. Early in October the employers are asked to submit to the public employment exchanges (*Arbeitsämter*), before the end of the month, their applications for permission to employ foreign workers. Each application must be accompanied by a statement covering the following points : (1) the number of foreign workers required ; (2) the number of German and foreign workers employed during the previous season ; (3) the number of workers who remained at the place of employment during the winter with a residence certificate ; (4) the area (with particulars of the various crops) which the employer had under cultivation previously and the area which he intends to cultivate during the coming season ; (5) the number of dwellings occupied by German and foreign agricultural workers and the number of vacant dwellings. These applications are first examined by a joint committee chosen from the board of management of the competent employment exchange, which verifies, on the spot if necessary, the information supplied by the various employers. The main criteria by which this committee is guided in coming to a decision are : the area under different crops, the nature of the crops (with special attention to the needs of sugar-beet cultivation), housing conditions, and the state of the local labour market.

After this preliminary examination by the local or regional employment exchanges, the applications are submitted to the higher authority, the State Employment Office (*Landesarbeitsamt*), whose competence extends over a wide area. The procedure before this body is the same ; it takes decisions on applications which are doubtful or have been rejected by the lower body, and, with due regard for the state of the wider labour market it has to deal with, fixes the total number of applications for foreign labour for the district within its competence.

The figures thus fixed are then transmitted to the Federal Institution for Employment Exchanges and Unemployment Insurance, where they are examined by a Technical Agricultural Committee composed of equal numbers of representatives of employers and of workers in agriculture. The report of this Committee is submitted to the Federal Ministry of Labour, which takes the final decision with the approval of the Federal Council (*Reichsrat*), whose duty it is to consider the political aspects of the proposed recruiting.<sup>1</sup>

As will be seen in the account of the preparations for recruiting, the whole procedure is then reversed so as to allocate to each employer the number of foreign workers for whom he is authorised to apply for the coming season.

The chief factor taken into consideration by the German authorities at the various stages of this process is the state of the national labour market. Their agreed policy is to meet the needs of agriculture as far as possible with German labour and to authorise the employment of foreign workers only as far as absolutely necessary. It is part of this policy of restricting the immigration of foreign workers that the proposed quota is only an estimate of the probable needs and in no way binds the authorities or individual employers to use the whole of the quota assigned to them. On the contrary, before actually recruiting foreign workers up to the authorised limit, the Central Office ascertains exactly how far it is possible to employ foreign agricultural workers who are already resident in the country under exemption certificates. The number of these workers, a list of whom is kept by the Central Office, was estimated at 30,000 at the beginning of 1930, but the majority of them are in regular employment and are therefore not available for seasonal work.

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<sup>1</sup> The total quota of foreign agricultural workers authorised by this procedure was 125,400 in 1929 and 106,000 in 1930.

A further measure taken by the German authorities with the aim of adjusting the number of foreign workers actually recruited to seasonal fluctuations of the labour market was the issue in 1929 of regulations prohibiting employers who are authorised to employ foreign agricultural workers from engaging the whole of their quota at once. They must do so in two stages, 60 per cent. of the quota before 15 April and the remaining 40 per cent. after that date.<sup>1</sup> This measure, which aims at reserving all possible openings for German workers who may become available as a result of fluctuations of the labour market, has, in the present writer's opinion, the defect of very much complicating the actual operations of recruiting. This point will be referred to again later.

The procedure described above applies to the recruiting of all foreign agricultural workers, and the quota ultimately fixed by the Ministry of Labour represents the total number of nationals of States with which Germany has concluded treaties and from which it proposes to recruit seasonal agricultural workers for the coming season. It is at this point in the procedure that the Central Office for Workers comes into action as the executive authority for recruiting; a few words must therefore be said on its activities.

It has already been seen<sup>2</sup> that this institution, which was originally private and represented employers only, was gradually granted public functions which now make it a semi-official body. It is entitled to collect fixed fees from the employers who make use of its services so as to cover its expenses, but its rules do not allow it to work for profit.

Its functions include: (1) the recruiting and placing of foreign agricultural workers, in which it has a monopoly under the Order of 19 October 1922<sup>3</sup>; (2) the placing, in collaboration with the public exchanges, of itinerant agricultural workers of German nationality; (3) the issue of identity cards to seasonal workers<sup>4</sup> and of exemption certificates to foreign agricultural workers who are authorised to reside in Germany; (4) the management of the vocational rehabilitation school at Flieger-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. on this point, "Erster Bericht der Reichsanstalt für Arbeitsvermittlung und Arbeitslosenversicherung", in *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, 1929, No. 6, pp. 17 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> See the Historical Survey in the first part of this article (pp. 222 et seq.).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>4</sup> The system of identity cards, which will be dealt with later in connection with placing, is not quite the same in every part of Germany. Its abolition has been under consideration by the German authorities.

horst, where every year a certain number <sup>1</sup> of unemployed young industrial workers are trained for agricultural work. In addition to these tasks it has various other duties which are to some extent part of recruiting and placing operations in the wider sense, and which result from the application of the migration treaties concluded by Germany : the reception and inspection of immigrants, the organisation and supervision of their transport from the frontier to their place of employment and back, the inspection of their places of employment, and, within certain limits, the settlement of disputes.

As the executive authority for recruiting and placing, the Central Office for Workers begins its operations as soon as the annual quota of foreign workers has been fixed by the competent authorities. This quota is communicated to it as a gross figure ; that is to say, it is not divided up among the different countries from which agricultural labour is to be recruited. It is left to the Central Office to determine the share of each of the foreign States with which Germany has concluded migration treaties ; it does this on the basis of the applications for workers, which have to be submitted to it early in December by employers authorised to engage foreign workers, and also on the basis of its general knowledge of the requirements of German agriculture.

This first phase of the initial operation, the fixing of the quota, is a purely German matter.

The second stage is the consultation of the competent authorities in the emigration country. Section 1 of the Supplementary Agreement to the German-Polish Treaty of 24 November 1927 stipulates that during December of each year the German Central Office for Workers shall inform the Polish Emigration Office, which is the competent authority in Poland, of the probable number of Polish agricultural workers, classified by sex and by age (adults or young persons), whom it is proposed to recruit during the coming year. This notification also states how the demand is distributed over the different parts of Germany and how the Central Office proposes to distribute its recruiting activities over the various possible districts of Poland. On the basis of the general state of the national labour market and of the special circumstances of each recruiting zone, a point which will be discussed later, the Polish Emigration Office examines the composition and distribution of the proposed

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<sup>1</sup> About 1,800 in 1929.

quota. Within three weeks of receiving the German figures it informs the Central Office of any changes proposed by the Polish authorities, either in the total or in its distribution over the various recruiting areas.

It is at this point, within a fortnight after the Emigration Office has submitted the Polish counter-proposals and generally about the end of January, that the final stage is reached in the procedure for fixing the quota. This is the final agreement as to the quota, the districts in which it will be recruited, and the districts in which it will be employed. This last item, namely, the distribution of the recruited workers throughout Germany, deserves special attention. It is easy to understand that Poland, in view of its anxiety for its own labour market and the possible effect of even the temporary emigration of large numbers of agricultural workers, should wish to have full control of the distribution of these emigrants as regards their place of origin. But at first sight it is not so clear why Poland should have to be consulted with regard to the distribution over German territory of its nationals whose temporary departure it has authorised. It might be thought that, since the German-Polish Treaty provides for general equality of treatment and stipulates the conditions to be satisfied by Polish workers' dwellings, the question of the actual distribution of its nationals in different parts of Germany would be of no special interest to the Polish authorities. But these conditions, although theoretically the same everywhere, sometimes are not so in fact, or at any rate do not satisfy the Polish authorities. When this occurs—and it is generally at the annual conference for fixing the quota that the question arises—Poland may even prohibit all recruiting for a certain area until the circumstances causing this decision have changed.

In spite of its apparent complexity, this procedure for fixing the annual quota seems in practice to give satisfactory results, and to enable the authorities in both countries to take full account of the state of the labour market, which is an essential element in any migration movement. The only difficulties which arise are perhaps due to the fact that the more or less constant distribution of the annual contingent among certain districts of Poland tends to create or to maintain a class of what may be called professional seasonal emigrants. The restrictive policy of the German Government in recent years has reduced the total

quota,<sup>1</sup> but its proportional distribution over the different recruiting centres has remained approximately the same. This geographical localisation of migration movements—there is localisation for both the point of departure and the destination of the migrants—must be mainly ascribed to the tradition and acquired habits of Polish workers and their German employers. It must be recognised, however, that in some respects the constitution of traditional emigration centres, especially in a seasonal movement such as this, may have grave disadvantages for the country from which the workers come, and the Polish Government has from the outset endeavoured to combat this danger, to which further reference will be made later.

### *Preparations for Recruiting.*

The preparations for recruiting consist of two separate but simultaneous operations in Germany and in Poland.

We have seen that after the quota of foreign agricultural workers is finally settled in Germany by the Ministry of Labour, the procedure is then reversed: the Ministry of Labour communicates the approved figure to the Federal Institution for Employment Exchanges and Unemployment Insurance which distributes the quota, according to the applications for workers submitted by agricultural employers, over the various districts of Germany. A "district" in this sense means the territory within the competence of a State Employment Office (*Landesarbeitsamt*).<sup>2</sup>

When this distribution is complete, each State Employment Office is informed of the quota which has been allocated to it and which it must divide up according to the applications submitted to it by each local employment exchange (*Arbeitsamt*). These exchanges then inform the individual employers who asked for permission to employ foreign labour of the number of foreign workers for whom they may apply.

At this point direct contact is established between the employer and the Central Office for Workers. The employer

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<sup>1</sup> For statistical data see below, pp. 366-367.

<sup>2</sup> It is interesting to note in this connection that while the bulk of the foreign agricultural workers go every year to the same districts — central Germany, Pomerania, Mecklenburg, Brandenburg — there is not one of the thirteen districts into which Germany is divided for purposes of placing in which agriculture can do without foreign seasonal workers.

who has been granted an authorisation instructs the Central Office to recruit foreign workers for him within the limits of his quota. He is not obliged to engage the whole of his quota at once, and indeed, as was mentioned above, recent regulations prohibit him from doing so.

Each application must be accompanied by a standard contract signed by the employer. The text of this contract was drawn up by the Joint Technical Agricultural Committee attached to the Federal Institution for Employment Exchanges and Unemployment Insurance ; the model for it forms an annex to the German-Polish Treaty, and was approved by both Governments. The contract, whose terms will be analysed in connection with the engagement procedure, may be individual, i.e. referring by name to individuals whom the employer is supposed to know and to have had already in his service, or it may be numerical, merely stating the number of foreign workers required and the nature of the work to be performed, and leaving the Central Office to select the workers in accordance with the procedure laid down in the Treaty. Although it is difficult to think of any other alternative, neither method is free from practical difficulties, as will be seen later.

No application for recruiting is considered unless it comes from an employer who is authorised to employ foreign labour and unless the Central Office has assured itself, by enquiry on the spot, that the dwellings in which the workers will be housed satisfy the moral and hygienic conditions specified in the Treaty. Each application must be accompanied by the fees which the Central Office is authorised to charge to cover its expenses. These fees per worker are as follows :

(1) Registration	1 mark
(2) Administrative expenses (post, telegraph, expenses at place of engagement, food for emigrants at frontier offices, etc.)	5 marks
(3) Propaganda, travelling expenses of agents of the Central Office, etc.	3 marks
(4) Permit fee	3 marks

In addition to these fixed fees there are the travelling expenses of the recruited worker from the frontier to his destination. The fees under (2) and (3) above are increased by 1 mark per worker if the application is submitted after 1 March, and by 2 marks if it is submitted after 15 April.



The first task of the Central Office is to decide how far the applications submitted to it can be met from the supply of foreign labour resident in the country under exemption certificates. After coming to an agreement with the Polish authorities as to the amount and distribution of the quota, it gets into direct touch with the Polish employment exchanges concerned, which it notifies of the number of workers it proposes to recruit in the area controlled by each exchange.

On the Polish side, the initial operation is the registration without charge of would-be emigrants by the authorities of rural communes in the districts in which the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare has authorised recruiting. The communes register all who wish to emigrate for the season, with the following exceptions: (1) persons not of Polish nationality; (2) persons liable for military service and soldiers on leave; (3) persons who are not agriculturists or who are suspected of wishing to go to Germany for some purpose other than agricultural work; (4) persons incapable of working on account of old age, invalidity, or pregnancy; (5) unaccompanied young women; (6) members of families with children unable to work.

The registration forms, which are filled up by the mayor of each commune, must contain full personal particulars of each individual and an exact statement, certified by the communal authorities, of his landed and personal property and that of his parents. They are drawn up in the month of January, generally in duplicate; one copy is kept by the commune, and the other is sent to the regional employment exchange, which eliminates all candidates whose family or financial situation fails to justify their emigration. Workers specified by name in contracts from Germany are automatically registered by the communal authorities, who inform them of the place and date of the recruiting operations. All other candidates are registered as they apply and are given a serial number. Within the limits of the quota for each commune preference is given: (1) to persons with no means who were resident in Germany between 1919 and 1925 and who, as a result of the German-Polish Treaty, have been returned to the seasonal movement; (2) to agricultural workers who own no land; (3) to owners of holdings run at a loss who belong to large families; (4) to other owners of holdings run at a loss. The owners of holdings which

provide a living for their families are registered only if the quota for the commune is not complete.

It is on the basis of this collective registration<sup>1</sup> that the Ministry, together with the Emigration Office, examines the quota proposed by the German authorities and its distribution. When agreement is reached, the Emigration Office, acting on behalf of the Ministry, assigns to each district its share of the total emigration quota authorised. The public employment exchange, in consultation with the district authorities, is then responsible for dividing up this number among the various rural communes. In this process there is a fixed element, the individual contracts, and a variable element, the numerical contracts that mention not names but merely a number. So long as the Polish authorities accept the system of individual contracts<sup>2</sup>, they can influence the geographical distribution of emigration only for the contracts in which no names are mentioned. The system of individual contracts means that in some districts emigration is recurrent and is almost a recognised profession; the effects on the whole of a district where this occurs are such as largely to paralyse the efforts of the Polish authorities to arrive at a better geographical and social distribution of emigration, the more so as it is generally to the interest of the German employers that the origin and quality of the workers recruited for them should remain the same year after year.

This practice and the tradition it tends to establish have led to the geographical localisation of emigration already referred to, which must now be considered in more detail. The statistics of the distribution of Polish emigrants by Department of origin show that between 70 and 80 per cent. every year are recruited in the central and eastern Departments (formerly Russian Poland), while the southern and western Departments (formerly Galicia and German Poland) have between them provided only from about 16 to 30 per cent. of the total. The following table shows the figures for the years 1927 to 1930<sup>3</sup>:

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Circular of the Polish Emigration Office of 23 January 1929.

<sup>2</sup> These contracts are expressly mentioned in section 6 of the Supplementary Agreement.

<sup>3</sup> The figures for the years 1927-1928 are taken from Ruziewicz: *op. cit.*, p. 114; those for 1930 are provisional.

Origin of emigrants	1927	1928	1929	1930
Total seasonal emigration to Germany	68,779 100%	85,375 100%	86,905 100%	72,000 100%
Central and eastern Departments (former Russian Poland)	56,665 78.4%	66,805 78.4%	62,445 72.3%	50,125 69.6%
Southern Department (former Austrian Poland)	4,542 6.6%	7,995 9.3%	13,061 14.7%	14,800 20.5%
Western Department (former German Poland)	7,432 10.8%	10,421 12.2%	9,655 11.0%	7,075 9.9%

While this table arranged by Departments in itself shows the concentration of emigration in certain areas, a classification by districts, which are much more homogeneous units from the economic point of view, shows vividly the degree to which localisation is carried. It will be found that the majority of the emigrants (70 per cent. in 1928, 66 per cent. in 1929, and nearly 60 per cent. in 1930) come from a relatively small area, representing only 5.1 per cent. of Polish territory and with a population representing 6.5 per cent. of the total. This area includes almost the whole of the Department of Lodz and the district of Czeszochowa in the Department of Kielce, both of which border on Germany. In 1928 the seasonal emigration to Germany took 3.3 per cent. of its total population and 4.2 per cent. of its rural population.<sup>1</sup> The effect appears to have been particularly acute in the districts of Wielun and Czeszochowa: the former supplied 23,152 emigrants in 1928, 22,006 in 1929, and 17,000<sup>2</sup> in 1930, constituting about 10 or 12 per cent. of its total population; the latter supplied 9,797 in 1928, 8,497 in 1929, and over 5,000 in 1930, or between 5 and 7 per cent. of its population.

It can easily be understood that this concentration of the migration movement in a relatively small area may be harmful to the economic development of that area. The force of tradition and the marked preference of German employers for workers whose abilities and demands they already know, as shown by the number of individual contracts, have helped to create the type of professional emigrant who must in the long run become an

<sup>1</sup> RUIEWICZ : *op. cit.*, pp. 114 et seq.

<sup>2</sup> According to the state of recruiting in April 1930.

economic and social danger ; and the tendency has been increased by the fact that the recruiting agents find their work much easier where they know a district and its population thoroughly.

The Polish authorities, in their efforts to obviate these disadvantages, have in recent years attempted to distribute emigration more evenly throughout the whole country, and in particular to extend recruiting operations to the southern Departments. While they have had a certain measure of success, the proportion of emigrants from this area having risen from about 6 per cent. in 1927 to over 20 per cent. in 1930, their efforts are hampered by the force of the current of migration in those regions where emigration is traditional. If too strict measures had been taken to stem this current it is possible that migration might have been attempted by new and illegal channels.

Such are the various aspects of the geographical distribution of emigration and the way in which the laws of labour supply and demand have been brought into harmony with the rules which the structure of their labour market obliges Germany and Poland to observe. There still remains the equally important question of the economic and social distribution of the emigrants; this point will be referred to later when the actual recruiting operations are described.

### *Engaging the Workers.*

When the quota has been finally fixed and distributed as regards both origin and destination, the recruiting operations can begin. At the point of departure there is a list indicating the available supply of labour in the form of a register of would-be emigrants ; at the point of arrival the demand for labour has been determined and translated into legal form in draft individual contracts.

*The Executive Authorities.* — The two parties responsible for these operations are the German Central Office for Workers, acting on behalf of the agricultural employers, and the Polish public employment exchanges. On the Polish side the operations are further supervised by a special inspector<sup>1</sup> attached to the

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Circular No. 18 of the Minister of the Interior, dated 18 January 1929. The writer would like to express his appreciation of the valuable assistance given him by this official, who accompanied him during the whole of his journey in Poland, and also of the help given by the various agents of the German Central Office, without which the enquiry could not have been carried out.

National Emigration Office, who spends the recruiting season in the centre of the migration area, at Czesochowa. The chief duties of this official are to exercise general supervision over recruiting operations, to see that recruiting is carried out only by the public employment exchanges and to prevent clandestine recruiting, to arrange the technical details in agreement with the agents of the German Central Office, and to keep the Polish Emigration Office constantly informed of the progress of recruiting.

In accordance with section 4 of the Supplementary Agreement to the German-Polish Treaty, the actual recruiting, that is to say, the choice of workers other than those named in contracts, is entrusted to agents of the Central Office<sup>1</sup>, in agreement with and in the presence of representatives of the Polish employment exchanges. For contracts not mentioning names they can choose only from among the persons authorised by the Polish authorities in the manner described above to appear before the recruiting committee. It should be added that even in the case of individual contracts the Polish authorities reserve certain rights and prescribe certain rules, which will be referred to later.

The German Central Office sends to the recruiting areas some twenty of its agents, many of whom have been doing this work for fifteen or twenty years. Each of them is allotted a certain number of districts (*starosties*) as his field of activity. As explained above, the amount of the quota to be recruited from each district is fixed in advance by negotiation between the competent authorities in the two countries. The recruiting agents stay in the recruiting area during the whole period of the operations, generally from February to April. They all know Polish, and to judge by their names they would seem to belong to the districts bordering on Poland, so that they can take an active part in the recruiting operations and have the necessary psychological background. Such at least is the impression gained by an onlooker.

On the Polish side there is the co-operation of the employment exchange officials, who know the conditions of the labour market, and of the local authorities of districts (*starost*) and communes (*voït*); the latter know the local conditions and the

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<sup>1</sup> Under section 5 of the Supplementary Agreement the Polish authorities undertake to issue identity cards to these agents which exempt them from the necessity for a consular visa.

individual situation of their own people, whom they accompany before the recruiting committee. All this is a valuable guarantee. If irregularities—which are severely repressed—still occur this is not altogether surprising in such a vast operation as the selection of some tens of thousands of individuals from among several hundred thousand applicants, on the basis of very elastic criteria and within a period of a few weeks. Cases of real injustice inevitably arise, and the sufferers may be tempted to right their wrongs by illegal means, which are always at hand when wanted.

*The Applicants.* The technical details of the recruiting operations, chief of which are the places and the dates, are fixed by agreement between the agents of the Central Office and the Polish inspector, who communicates the decision to the subordinate authorities. On the specified days all workers who satisfy the necessary conditions and have been authorised to apply as seasonal emigrants, and also all who have been notified that they have been asked for by name, come to the recruiting office accompanied by the mayor of the commune where they live, and wait outside the building until called in. Although these operations, which take place at the chief town or village of the district<sup>1</sup> at a period when agricultural workers have a good deal of free time, are considered by some as a mere excuse for visiting the town, the number who really hope to be engaged is considerably higher than the number of workers wanted. This difference between supply and demand is sufficiently striking even in the southern Departments, where there is no great tradition of emigration to Germany, but it seems to reach very much higher proportions in the traditional centres of seasonal emigration in the Departments of Lodz and Kielce.

It may be asked what are the reasons that urge such great numbers of individuals to leave home for several months every year and sometimes even to have recourse to illegal methods—for there is no doubt that in spite of severe measures to prevent abuses there is still a certain amount of clandestine emigration, which the two Governments are in some respects powerless to prevent. The reasons have already been briefly suggested. Most

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<sup>1</sup> In 1930, for instance, the total quota of 88,000 was distributed over 81 districts (*starosties*), in some of which the number to be recruited was not more than 40 or 50, while the maximum was reached by the district of Wielun (Department of Lodz), which had to supply 17,000 workers.

of the emigrants or would-be emigrants are proletarian or semi-proletarian workers who are forced to emigrate because they own no land or not enough to live on. Others again hope by working abroad to save a little capital which will enable them to add to the land they already have. A small minority merely wishes to travel. These factors determining emigration have an important bearing both on the value of the emigrant as a worker, and on the economic effects of emigration for the country in which the workers are recruited. But interests and therefore also the criteria to be applied differ in the two countries, so that difficulties may arise in the selection of the emigrants, as we shall see later.

*The Scene of Action.* When the would-be emigrants come to the capital of the district (*starostwo*), they are grouped by villages or communes (*gmina*), headed by their mayor (*voit*). The numbers involved are often very large ; it is obvious that the presence of numbers is preferred by the German recruiters because it makes their choice easier, but from the point of view of the emigration country it has serious drawbacks, due to the duration and frequency of the operations, and increased by the fact that they are sometimes repeated more than once. It is easy to understand the German authorities' policy of encouraging the German employer to engage the workers he needs in two or more instalments, and even of prohibiting him from engaging the whole of his quota at once. But the result is that recruiting operations in Poland are extended over the relatively long period of eight to twelve weeks. A further result of this policy is that the employer puts off his application till the last moment, and is then always anxious to have the workers engaged at once. The German Central Office, in its desire to serve the interests of German agriculture, tries to engage the workers as and when it receives the contracts, so that the meetings of the recruiting committee are far too frequent. It is by no means rare for two or three dates to be required for recruiting a comparatively small quota of a few hundred workers allocated to one district. These operations and the consequent movements of workers do not matter much early in the year, when work in the fields has scarcely begun, but if they are prolonged too far into the season they may lead to trouble. One result of the system is to form a class of individuals who go on hoping that they will ultimately be recruited ; they become obsessed by the idea that their only way of making

a living is to emigrate to Germany, and neglect possible opportunities of employment in their own country. The slowness of the procedure also prolongs and increases the feverish excitement to be gone of all the would-be emigrants, which spreads to others who perhaps had not thought of emigrating.

Over and above these disadvantages, the system means that large numbers of workers, nearly all young, and most of them young women or girls, have to assemble, perhaps repeatedly, at the recruiting office.<sup>1</sup>

The recruiting office is generally in the district administrative office or in the school, which may or may not be very suitable for the purpose. In front of this building the workers, always grouped by villages and accompanied by their mayor, wait to be ushered into the recruiting room, with a patience and discipline which impress the onlooker. Many of them must be waiting in vain, for as soon as the contracts for the day have been completed or the local quota filled recruiting operations cease. The period of waiting is spent in the open air, at a time of year when the weather is often inclement. Although the workers are hardened by an outdoor life, and although it may not be possible, in the very small towns where recruiting generally takes place, to find buildings which would shelter everyone, it still seems that some thought might be given to improving this particular detail. The waiting time should at least be made as short as possible. It is often much too long, chiefly because the emigrants arrive long before the hour fixed, but perhaps also owing to a lack of method in the operations. The present writer's impression was that the available premises, which naturally could not be specially adapted to the purpose<sup>2</sup>, were not always used to the best advantage, so that there was a certain amount of confusion and delay. Even if the methods adopted make these assemblages necessary, it would at least be desirable to make them short and speedy, so that in spite of their frequency they should not upset the normal life of the workers.

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<sup>1</sup> The predominance of women and girls agrees with the specifications of the German employers. About 70 per cent. of the workers engaged each year are women, on account of the special nature of sugar-beet cultivation, for which most of the Polish emigrants are engaged.

<sup>2</sup> It must not be forgotten that the methods and machinery of recruiting described above date back only to 1927, and that owing to material difficulties it has not been possible to make all the desirable improvements in the premises used for the purpose.



*Selection.* In the building used for recruiting is installed the recruiting committee, consisting of the representative of the competent employment exchange and the recruiting agent of the German Central Office, assisted by others if necessary. The first step is to examine the orders for workers and to allocate them roughly among the various communes from which applicants have come.

According to section 7 of the Supplementary Agreement, the selection on both sides of the workers engaged must be based on their physical qualities and occupational ability, with due regard for the possibility of forming homogeneous groups. For the needs of the German employers these criteria are both necessary and sufficient, but the interests of the emigration country demand that the choice should be based on quite different considerations, which have been referred to above. A first consequence is the elimination by the Polish authorities, at the preliminary registration, of those whose emigration is considered undesirable. But even among those who satisfy the necessary conditions and have been accepted as possible emigrants, the Polish authorities may, or rather must, in the interests of their own labour market, retain the right to indicate an order of preference for the final selection. The criteria they will apply will be different from those of the future employer or his representative. For the immigration country the quality of the labour recruited is the chief if not the only consideration. For the emigration country, on the contrary, what is most important is that emigration should benefit not so much the individuals concerned as the village or district from which they come and to which they will return. Emigration must at least be prevented from being directly harmful. We shall see later how these divergent interests come into conflict in the application of the corresponding criteria of selection.

The first criterion laid down in the Agreement is "occupational ability". This clearly implies more than the mere fact of being an agricultural worker, which is a condition that all applicants must necessarily satisfy, as otherwise they are eliminated by the Polish authorities at the outset. There can be little doubt that occupational ability is intended to mean knowledge and experience of the work to be done, which is chiefly the cultivation of sugar beet. It is clear that long experience of such work, if possible in the district where it is to be carried out, must in the employer's eyes be the best qualification. Hence

the great number of individual contracts under which the same workers return year after year to the same farm. But this interpretation of the criterion, while in the interests of the employer, is contrary to the interests of the emigration country and its conception of the economic purpose of emigration. If it were accepted, the result would be to confine emigration always to the same group of persons and thus increase the tendency to treat emigration as a regular profession which has already been mentioned and condemned for its bad economic effects. A worker who is accustomed to the idea of going to Germany every year never even thinks of any other way of earning his living and does not try to settle down in his own country. During the few weeks of winter unemployment at home he spends, often for unproductive ends, the savings he brought back from Germany, and when the next season begins he sets off again as poor as before. In this way emigration ceases to be a means and becomes an end. Poland is quite ready to allow the emigration of persons who use their savings to improve their position at home, but is not prepared to tolerate the departure of persons who after several years of this practice are still of no productive value to the country, or are even a burden to it, because they have treated emigration as an end in itself. For similar reasons Poland is opposed to the recruiting of persons who own enough land to keep them, and whose departure would leave their land uncultivated.

All this gives rise to the first clash of interests. Poland sees no advantage in these migration movements unless they help to reduce rural unemployment and enable the emigrants, with the capital they bring back, to improve the economic conditions of the countryside. For the German employers, on the other hand, the first essential is to have a homogeneous and therefore stable supply of competent labour.

The second criterion is physical qualities. On this point there should not be much difference of opinion, for the physique of the workers is tested not only by a brief but adequate examination when they are being recruited, but also by a medical examination when they enter Germany. In recent years, however, it seems that some German employers have complained that the outcome of Polish emigration policy is that the recruiting agents are offered a choice mainly among the poorest and therefore the weakest of the population. It is asserted by these critics that in certain districts money has been offered to

encourage the emigration of such persons. These difficulties do not fall within the scope of the present general survey, but if the Polish idea of emigration has been correctly interpreted here, it is not very easy to see what interest Poland can have in encouraging the emigration of these people who own no land and so have less incentive to save, as it is precisely they for whom emigration can very quickly become an end in itself.

The third criterion is the necessity of forming homogeneous groups of workers. The importance of this principle from the employer's point of view is obvious, since output will be better if the workers have similar tastes and habits, and at the same time conditions will be pleasanter for the individual worker. Perhaps, too, a homogeneous group is better able to defend its rights and interests if necessary. The economic principles on which the Polish authorities base their action in regard to migration lead to a different conclusion. It is clear that a result of the Polish Government's wish to distribute the quota of emigrants more evenly over the whole country will be that even quite small groups of workers will be composed of persons from several different communes, which, in the opinion of certain German employers, means an increase in the number of disputes and a decrease in output. Without studying the question in detail, it may be pointed out that if the groups of Polish workers are really less homogeneous than they used to be, this may be partly due to the administrative steps taken by the German authorities to prevent individual employers from applying for the whole of their quota at once.

Such briefly are the main criteria applied by both sides for the selection of emigrants and their interpretation in practice. It should be added that as a result of friendly collaboration between the recruiting agents there are rarely differences of opinion, and more serious disputes, if any, occur only at the place of employment.

The actual process of selection is based on the draft contracts sent by the employers. These contracts may be individual or otherwise, but generally they are mixed; an employer wishing to engage, say, twenty workers will give the names of two or three, while for the others he merely states the sex and age group desired (boy, girl, man, or woman) and the kind of work to be done.

When a particular contract is being dealt with the workers mentioned in it by name are called into the recruiting room with

a certain number of others from whom the recruiters choose the number needed to complete the group. In general, with a view to satisfying the condition of homogeneity, the recruiters are given the choice of a number of persons coming as far as possible from the same commune. The mayor of the commune is always present at the selection to give any necessary information, but he cannot take part in the actual selection.

In all cases, whether the workers are mentioned by name or not, the first operation is to check the statements they made on registration with regard to their family and financial situation. This is done from the duplicates of these statements, which are kept for each district by the competent employment exchange.

When a worker is applied for by name by a German employer the application has to be examined to make certain that it is legitimate. This is very important, as otherwise persons might emigrate to Germany under cover of a contract in their name who have perhaps never been in Germany and are in any case quite unknown to the employer who has applied for them. Consequently, before approving the conclusion of any contract containing a specific name, the Polish representatives on the recruiting committee require the production of the previous year's contract or identity card so as to verify whether the person in question was really employed by the employer who has applied for him.

It may be asked why this precaution is taken, and why a person who otherwise satisfies all the conditions laid down for emigration by the Polish authorities should not be allowed to accept a contract in his name even when he and his future employer do not know each other. In the first place, the Polish authorities, in pursuance of their policy of distributing the migration movement over a wider area, wish to retain as much control as possible over the applicants for emigration if they cannot control their actual choice. By the Supplementary Agreement they are bound to accept the system of individual nomination, but they wish to restrict its application as far as possible. Further, they know by experience that most of the fictitious individual contracts are the result of illegal arrangements which are prejudicial to the interests of the emigrants and which, if tolerated, would mean a first step back towards the old system of uncontrolled and unprotected emigration. The way these fraudulent individual contracts come into existence is generally as follows. An employer who is dissatisfied with the quality of

the workers previously supplied, or who wishes to have others whom he has seen at work on a neighbouring farm, asks a group leader to recruit workers clandestinely for him. The group leader goes to Poland, selects the workers and sends the employer their names, which the employer has merely to enter in his application. The Polish authorities are of opinion that this fraudulent method, which naturally involves the payment of a fee by the workers concerned and makes the employer's agent into a labour contractor, is at the back of a very high percentage of the individual contracts.

It is needless to say that these abuses are very severely dealt with. There are also a certain number of abuses in connection with the non-individual contracts. In this case the group leader, who is generally a Polish worker permanently resident in Germany under an exemption certificate, is asked by the employer to select workers belonging to his own commune. The agent of the employer, perhaps with the help of a suborned mayor, follows the whole normal procedure and arranges to have the workers he has chosen accepted by the recruiting committee. But he exploits the ignorance of the workers, and extorts a fee from them on the ground that the recruiting has been done clandestinely.<sup>1</sup> As a rule, therefore, the recruiting agents do not accept the recommendations of the mayor or of former emigrants and they even distrust them.

Besides these deceptions practised by the employers or their direct agents, there are others for which the would-be emigrants are themselves responsible. One already suggested is the bribing of the mayor so as to obtain a false declaration with regard to the applicant's financial situation or induce him to recommend an applicant to the recruiting committee. Another method is the attempt to substitute one person for another in the case of an individual contract. The person named in the contract may be unable or unwilling to accept it in person: a young woman, for example, may be ill or pregnant and may send in her place a relative or friend. As a rule deceptions of this kind are quite easily detected by examining the registration cards for the preceding year, which must have a photograph of the owner, and, if necessary, by questioning the worker and comparing signatures.

For contracts naming specific workers all the recruiters have to do is to determine, as described above, whether all the legal

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<sup>1</sup> These proceedings, which the writer had naturally no opportunity of observing, are described in the Polish review *Wychodźca*, 1928, No. 25, p. 2.

provisions concerning this kind of contract have been observed. For all other workers an actual process of selection is necessary to satisfy the special requirement as regards sex, age, etc., mentioned in the contract and the criteria laid down in the Supplementary Agreement (occupational ability, physical qualities, and the constitution of homogeneous groups).

Occupational ability is generally determined by the detailed statements made by the applicants, and confirmed when necessary by the mayors of the villages, who know them personally. In addition, a question may be asked with regard to residence in Germany, and the writer had the impression that the agents of the German Central Office had a tendency to give the preference to workers who had already been in Germany. It is obviously difficult to avoid this preference and the question leading to it, but it must be noted that the method tends to narrow the circle within which recruiting is carried out.

For physical qualities a preliminary selection is made by the Polish authorities when registering the applicants, since they do not in fact register persons of poor physique. During the recruiting process there is a cursory and non-medical examination by the recruiting agents, whose long experience enables them to do this very rapidly. Women are rejected for goitre, visible pregnancy, or obvious debility; for men most importance is attached to muscular strength. A glance is generally sufficient, and will also detect obvious cases of trachoma. More serious defects and those not visible to the eye are discovered later at the medical examination which all emigrants must undergo on entering Germany.

There remains the question of homogeneous groups. The criterion is primarily in the interest of the employer, but it also has a certain advantage for the emigrant, whose conditions (moral if not material) of life in Germany may be improved by it. One method of taking this criterion into account is to choose all the workers engaged under one contract from the same commune, as their similarity of tastes and customs will constitute a certain guarantee that they will get on well together. But this is not always enough. It may happen that for all sorts of purely personal reasons the fact of belonging to the same commune, or even the same family, may be a reason for rivalries or incompatibilities, which break out later on at the workplace. Here again the recruiting agents are enabled to proceed quite rapidly by their experience, their knowledge of the psychology of the people with

whom they are dealing, and if necessary the help of the mayors. A not unimportant item in their task is the choice of the person or persons who will do the cooking for the group in Germany ; nothing, indeed, contributes more to the efficiency of the group than well-prepared food which suits their tastes.

Besides these criteria, for the application of which the recruiting agents are left a considerable degree of freedom, there are others, imposed either by Polish legislation or by the Supplementary Agreement itself, which very much restrict their freedom of choice. The first of these conditions, which applies to all applicants, is the accuracy of the statements regarding their financial situation ; this has already been mentioned. The others refer to minors and women. According to the standard contract, no minor or married woman may be engaged without the permission of the parents, guardian, or husband, as the case may be. The Polish authorities also object to the engagement of any woman under 25 years of age if it appears from the contract that she will be the only Polish woman on the farm in Germany.

With these reservations the representative of the Polish public employment exchange and the agent of the German Central Office for Workers are free to select the emigrants. As far as the present writer could see, it is really the German agent who makes the selection and then asks his Polish colleague to approve his choice; there seems to be harmonious co-operation between the representatives of the two countries, and the German recruiting agents are given a wide range and considerable freedom of choice. At the same time, the criticisms by German employers already referred to, which appear to be based on the opinions of German agents operating in the districts visited by the writer, seem to suggest either that appearances are deceptive or else that there is some difference of opinion as to the scope of the rights granted by the Treaty and its administrative regulations.

*The Conclusion of the Contracts.* When a complete group has been selected the contract has to be formally concluded. This contract, which must follow the model given as an annex to the Treaty, is drawn up on a printed form supplied to the employer by the German Central Office, and signed by the employer when submitting his application. All contracts are collective : the whole group is engaged on a single contract covering all the workers. This is drawn up in quadruplicate ; one copy is sent to the employer and another is kept by a member of the group selected for the purpose by the Polish official present—generally the

oldest or most highly skilled worker. The other members of the group receive a special form certifying that they have concluded the collective contract mentioned in it. The other two copies of the contract are sent to the Central Office and the competent Polish employment exchange.

Before asking the various members of a group to sign the contract the German recruiting agent must, according to the terms of the contract itself, read out these terms in Polish and in particular inform the workers of their destination, the date of departure, the frontier station at which they will have to appear, etc. As a rule only an extract to this effect is read; this would be quite satisfactory if all the workers could read, because the Polish authorities give each worker, with his passport, a pamphlet<sup>1</sup> containing all the information they need, and the contract itself is in Polish and German. It may be mentioned in passing, without expressing any opinion, that certain German employers complain that this pamphlet, which is drawn up by the Polish Emigration Office, insists too much on the rights of Polish workers on German farms and not enough on their duties.

Lack of space prevents a detailed analysis of the standard contract, which would moreover be out of place in an article which does not propose to consider its practical application. Its chief provisions may be briefly summarised. The contract runs from the date on which it is signed until the agricultural work is finished, the final limit being 15 December. The workers to whom it applies must certify that they are in good health and familiar with agricultural work. Wages are paid at fixed daily rates, which are to be the same as those laid down in the local agreements for German workers of a similar category, or at piece rates. The actual rates are not mentioned in the contract, but it is understood, by agreement concluded between the representatives of the two countries in January 1930, that the remuneration for piece work must be at least 30 per cent. higher than that paid for work on daily rates. It is outside the scope of this article to consider whether the rates are adequate or are strictly applied, but it seems to be regrettable that the rates are not actually specified in the contract, so that the emigrant is left in ignorance of one of the essential conditions of his engagement until he reaches his destination.<sup>2</sup> It should

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<sup>1</sup> *Wskazowski dla Sezonowych Robotników Rolnych*, etc.

<sup>2</sup> Statistics published by the German Central Office for Workers with regard to its intervention in disputes between German employers and Polish workers in 1929 show that questions of remuneration were an issue in more than half of these disputes (391 out of 756).



not be impossible for the recruiting agents operating in Poland to be given sufficiently complete information to enable them, when a contract is being concluded, to state the terms of remuneration, not merely by reference to an agreement whose details are often unknown even to them, but by an exact figure for each member of the group. It would also seem desirable for the competent authorities in Germany to bring pressure to bear on the agricultural employers' associations to pay more uniform and stable rates, at least within a single district. In Pomerania, for example, the writer heard of a case of two farms five minutes away from each other where different rates were paid because the farmers belonged to two different employers' organisations.

The contract does not specify the kinds of work to be paid for at time and piece rates respectively; the decision on this point is left wholly to the employer. The contract also does not fix hours of work, but merely states that they will be in conformity with the collective agreement in force in the district. The workers are allowed two hours for their meals, which are not included in hours of work. The time taken to go to and from the fields is on the contrary included in hours of work and paid for as such. The contract also mentions the deductions which the employer is authorised to make from wages during the initial period to cover himself against the risk of breach of contract by the worker (3 marks a week for the first six weeks and 2 marks for the following nine weeks). The housing conditions, allowances in kind, etc., are also specified. The contract further states that it is the employer who pays the worker's travelling expenses from the frontier to the place of employment and back. It also sets out the causes and conditions for termination of the contract<sup>1</sup>, and the rights and duties of Polish workers with regard to social insurance, and states that the German labour courts are competent to deal with any disputes.

When the contract has been read (or summarised) to each group of workers in their own language, each worker makes his signature or mark on the contract in the presence of a representative of the Polish authorities. The reading of the contract must be certified by the signature of the recruiting agent.

Each worker recruited, unless he has already been an emigrant and consequently has a passport, must hand two

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<sup>1</sup> Section 16 of the Supplementary Agreement provides that if any Polish agricultural workers are dismissed before the termination of their contract through no fault of their own the German Central Office will try to find them work with another employer who is authorised to employ foreign labour.

photographs to the representative of the district administration and pay half a zloty for the issue or renewal of the passport. He is then informed of the date and place of departure. The passport is generally issued on the day of departure.

The emigrants have now nothing to do but to return to their villages and prepare for the journey. If any of them fail to appear at the appointed time and place the Polish authorities, according to section 11 of the Supplementary Agreement, must find substitutes.

This is the normal method of recruiting and the one by which the great majority of the contracts are concluded.<sup>1</sup> But there is another method by which the employer and his Polish workers conclude a contract at the end of one season for the next. This procedure has the advantage that the employer has no fees to pay. The worker or workers thus engaged in advance come in person to any frontier office of the German Central Office for Workers on prescribed dates and are sent on by it to their place of employment. No contract of this kind is valid unless it has been submitted to the competent authorities in both countries and prescribes conditions at least as favourable as those of the previous contract.

### *Placing*

We now come to the various stages of the actual process of emigration, comprising the departure from Poland, the inspection and registration formalities at the frontier, and the journey to the place of employment.

With regard to these operations, the German-Polish Treaty and its administrative orders contain only two quite general provisions. The first (Article 1 of the Treaty) states that the placing of Polish migrant agricultural workers in Germany is to be effected exclusively through the offices duly authorised for that purpose, namely, the Central Office for Workers and its agencies.<sup>2</sup> The other provision (Article 6 of the Treaty) is that the contracting parties undertake to grant special facilities to Polish agricultural workers for the purposes of emigration,

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<sup>1</sup> It may be added that no charge is made to the workers by the Polish authorities, but the German Central Office, acting on behalf of the employers, has to pay the Emigration Office in Warsaw 1.20 marks for each worker recruited (section 13 of the Supplementary Agreement).

<sup>2</sup> These agencies, which are described later, are the frontier offices and the regional agencies set up in different parts of Germany where Polish emigrants are employed.

immigration, and return to their country. Section 18 of the Supplementary Agreement states that the German Central Office and the Polish Emigration Office shall negotiate directly with each other on all technical questions relating to migration.

### *The Departure from Poland.*

After the emigrants have signed their contract and complied with the passport formalities there is in general an interval of three to five days (exceptionally as many as ten) before departure, according to the date arranged for the journey on German territory.

It is generally on the day of departure that the workers receive the special passport for seasonal emigrants, which is issued by the district authorities (*starostwo*). Section 10 of the Supplementary Agreement provides that this passport shall be issued free of charge, shall be valid for one journey in both directions, and shall not need a German consular visa. Externally it is the same as ordinary passports, except that it has a special emigration seal and contains a slip for statistical purposes which is detached when the worker crosses the Polish frontier. It is valid only in conjunction with the contract of employment, or, to be exact, the certificate given to each emigrant on engagement.

With the passport the emigrants receive a voucher entitling them to travel at half fare on the Polish railways. This part of the journey is at their own expense. They have already been provided with the pamphlet published by the Polish Emigration Office containing all the information they can need on the journey and while they are in Germany.

The emigrants leave in groups, each consisting of workers covered by one collective contract and going to the same employer. In making up these groups every effort is made to keep members of the same family together and to see that women and young persons are employed only in the company of older persons who can if necessary help and protect them.

These groups often travel separately on Polish territory, and as they come from widely different districts it is neither possible nor necessary to run special trains. But the 50 per cent. reduction mentioned above is not available on fast trains, and on the main lines the emigrants, at any rate those coming from the southern provinces, must as a rule use certain night trains. They usually leave their villages early in the morning, so that this

means long waits in stations where there is not always accommodation for them to put down their bulky luggage and rest. As most of them are travelling for several days before reaching their destination<sup>1</sup>, it would seem desirable and possible to avoid this useless fatigue at the outset by speeding up the journey and making the waits more comfortable.

It may be added that in actual practice the part of the journey made on Polish territory is perhaps only relatively important, because a large proportion of the emigrants are used to it, and most of them have only a short journey to the frontier. But if Poland continues its policy of distributing recruiting over a wider area, then it would seem desirable to make some improvements in this initial stage of the emigrants' journey.

### *Control and Registration at the Frontier.*

After crossing the frontier and until his arrival at his destination, the emigrant is in the charge of the German Central Office for Workers, which has a number of special agencies for this purpose.

The first of these which the emigrant meets is the frontier office, where various formalities have to be complied with. There are eight of these offices at different points on the German-Polish frontier, and it is only at these stations that emigrants can legally cross the frontier. Originally, as we have seen, these offices acted chiefly as recruiting centres to which Polish emigrants came in order to be engaged by commercial agents or the direct representatives of the employers. Now that recruiting is carried out in Poland itself and each worker arriving at the frontier office has already signed a contract, the task of these offices is quite different. They have now to verify the identity of the emigrants, conduct the medical examination, register them, and send them on to their destination.

As regards equipment some of these frontier offices appeared to the writer to be all that could be desired<sup>2</sup>; others, dating from before the war, consisted of rather poor sheds, but it was intended to reconstruct them by degrees.

The following are the various departments through which the emigrants successively pass :

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<sup>1</sup> For emigrants going to the Rhineland, for example, the journey, including waits, may take four days.

<sup>2</sup> Especially the offices at Rosenberg and Zawisna in Upper Silesia.

(1) *Reception and control.* This department re-examines the emigrants' passports and contracts and verifies their identity. The chief purpose is to ensure that each worker is the genuine owner of the papers he shows and at the same time to prepare for registration. As the actual identity cards are made out later on and distributed to the emigrants at their destination, this department issues a provisional identity card or travel permit (*Reiseausweis*), which is valid for the journey. When all the formalities at the frontier station are completed, each emigrant is provided with a railway ticket by this department.

(2) *Registration.* This department, before which the emigrants themselves do not usually have to appear, receives the duplicates of all the provisional identity cards issued by the reception department and prepares the regular identity cards from them. These cards are sent directly to the police authorities of the district in which each emigrant is employed, and these authorities visa the cards and hand them to the emigrants in person. It is only after being stamped by the police authorities that these cards are valid.

When this registration procedure, of which the Central Office has a monopoly, was first introduced (in Prussia in 1907 and subsequently in certain other German States), it served the double purpose of providing both a numerical record of foreign workers and also a means of identifying them, for most of these workers were Russian subjects and therefore had no passport. Even to-day the procedure is not uniform throughout the whole of Germany, and some of the Federal States do not apply it at all. The intention is to abolish it at an early date because it no longer meets a real need: all foreign workers and in particular all Polish workers now have a regular passport, and social legislation has made it possible to exercise an equally effective control over the labour market by much simpler methods.

For the time being, however, registration is still compulsory for all foreign workers except those who are authorised to stay in Germany under a temporary or permanent exemption certificate (*Befreiungsschein*). With this exception, no foreign worker is allowed to work in Germany until he has been registered, and his identity card is issued to him only for the purpose of working with an employer who is entitled to employ foreign labour.

The identity card for seasonal agricultural workers—the only one considered here—is valid only up to 15 December of each

year, by which date at latest all contracts must expire. During the first four months of the year, the frontier offices and the regional agencies of the German Central Office are entitled to issue identity cards on their own authority, subject to the visa of the competent police authorities. Later in the year the approval of the Central Office in Berlin is required. This Office keeps a complete card index, which it uses to ascertain in each case whether the worker has been guilty of breach of contract or any other offence. The reason why the procedure differs at different times of year is that breach of contract is rare early in the year, when the immigrants are just arriving, but it may occur later on.

Both in its lack of uniformity and in the amount of administrative work it involves this whole system seems cumbersome and would gain by being simplified.

(3) *Medical examination.* All the immigrants are vaccinated and their eyes examined to detect trachoma. The external symptoms of venereal disease are also looked for. Women, who are obliged by the contract to declare when being engaged that they are not pregnant, are specially examined by the doctor in a private room. Any worker rejected for health reasons receives a voucher entitling him to a reduced fare for the journey home. Women are generally rejected if pregnant, except when the contract shows that the nature of their employment (cooking, for example) is compatible with their condition and when the employer on being informed of the fact expresses his willingness to carry out the contract.

The doctors employed by the Central Office for this examination receive a fee of 40 pfennigs for each worker examined, so that on days when large numbers of immigrants arrive they may earn nearly 300 marks. They are financially responsible to the Central Office, which is itself responsible to the employers; for the consequences of any mistake or negligence, such as passing workers who are ill, women who are pregnant, etc., but most of them are covered against this risk by a special insurance policy.

The examination is conducted in a special room in the building of the frontier office; at the frontier station visited by the writer this appeared to meet all hygienic requirements.

In addition to the administrative buildings in which the operations described above are carried out the more modern frontier offices also contain rooms where the immigrants can

wait before continuing their journey. At Rosenberg, in Upper Silesia, where the writer examined the premises in detail, these rooms are remarkably well planned and fitted up. The trains to Germany generally leave late in the evening, so that the workers may have to spend from twelve to eighteen hours in these dormitories, or rather waiting-rooms, according to the time they arrive from Poland. For this period and for their journey in Germany they are provided free of charge (that is to say, out of the fees paid by the employer) with hot coffee on arrival, a plate of hot soup for their principal meal, a three-pound loaf, and a quarter of a pound of margarine. If their journey will be longer than the average, e.g. if they are going to the Rhineland, they are given a supplementary ration of half a pound of bread and a quarter of a pound of margarine. A kitchen and dining-room are also provided for their use. No traders are allowed to enter the rooms in which the emigrants wait, which is probably a useful protective measure. But as the Central Office does not sell the provisions the emigrants may need for their journey, they have to go themselves to the neighbouring town, where they are often charged excessive prices because they have little idea of the real value of the goods. Though it would undoubtedly involve additional book-keeping, it would be in the interest of the immigrants if the Central Office could have stores at the frontier stations where they could buy at cost price certain articles which experience has shown that they are in the habit of taking on the journey. For similar reasons strict supervision of money-changing agencies would be desirable ; this point is referred to again below in connection with repatriation.

It might be pointed out that there is no segregation of the sexes in the dormitories where the emigrants stay until their train leaves. But apart from the fact that from the moral point of view such separation is unnecessary, since many of the emigrants spend only the day there and the electric light is left burning all night, it would be difficult to make it in practice, because the emigrants travel in groups and often have their luggage in common.

Generally speaking, all the agents of the Central Office who deal with the emigrants at the various stages of the procedure know Polish ; they have often fifteen or twenty years' experience of the work. As a result the somewhat complex formalities of entrance into Germany and of the journey usually proceed quickly and smoothly.

When all the formalities are completed, and about an hour before the train is due to leave, the emigrants are given their tickets. As groups of 20 or more are granted a reduction of 25 per cent. on the normal rates under arrangements made with the railway authorities, these tickets are valid only when presented along with a collective travelling voucher. The journey across Germany both going and returning is at the employer's expense.

### *The Journey across Germany.*

While the comments in the preceding pages are based on a number of observations and apply to a matter on which the German-Polish Treaty and its administrative regulations lay down rather definite rules, some of the following remarks deal with a phase of these migration movements which does not lend itself to hard-and-fast regulation, and they are themselves based on the experience of a single journey<sup>1</sup>, so that they cannot have the same general value.

When the tickets have been distributed the emigrants are taken to the station, which is never far from the frontier office. In order to suit the convenience of the railways the trains generally leave late in the evening. Granted that the frontier office is already not far from the station—an undoubted advantage—there would seem to be further possibilities, at little cost, of saving the emigrants the fatigue of walking some hundreds of yards in the dark and heavily laden with baggage, and so making it much easier for them to reach the train. At Rosenberg, for example, there is a siding at the very door of the frontier office on to which it should be possible to shunt the trains.

These trains are of two kinds, according to the number and destination of the emigrants. Sometimes there are special trains carrying from 600 to 800 persons to a distribution point from which the workers are sent on to their destinations in small groups; sometimes the emigrants travel in specially labelled carriages attached to the ordinary trains. A little more than two carriages is reckoned for every 100 emigrants, so that for a normal convoy of about 800 the train will consist of 16 to 18 carriages. According to technical information supplied to the writer and his own observations during the journey, one locomotive can heat 13 carriages at most, so that some of the

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<sup>1</sup> The itinerary followed by the writer was from Rosenberg (Upper Silesia) to Halle (Province of Saxony).



emigrants are bound to be in unheated carriages; this has serious drawbacks in view of the season at which they are generally travelling.<sup>1</sup> The carriages, although of an old type, are sufficiently comfortable and are disinfected after each journey. It is, however, not possible to pass from one to the other during the journey, so that although an agent of the Central Office travels in each train he has no way of finding out whether the immigrants need anything except at the few stations where the train stops during a journey of several hundred kilometres. In this connection it might perhaps be useful for a doctor to travel in every train of a certain size.

When the train reaches the distribution point, which is chosen because of its convenient situation in the area where the workers are to be employed, it is met by representatives of one of the fourteen regional offices<sup>2</sup> which the Central Office has in the different parts of Germany where foreign agricultural workers are employed. These offices have the following main duties:

(1) they receive the applications for foreign workers submitted by employers in their area and transmit them to Berlin;

(2) they are authorised during the first four months of the year to register, without reference to Berlin, any foreign agricultural workers resident in Germany under a provisional exemption certificate;

(3) they attend to the arrival of trains of emigrants for their area and send on the separate groups to their various destinations;

(4) they supervise the working and living conditions of workers employed in their area and investigate disputes;

(5) they are responsible for the placing of foreign agricultural workers resident in Germany and of itinerant agricultural workers of German nationality;

(6) they superintend repatriation.

These offices are very well organised and most of them have a motor-car which enables their employees to reach the various places of employment rapidly.

As soon as the emigrants reach the distribution point they are taken, unless they are to leave again immediately, to a waiting-room where each group leader is given the tickets for

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<sup>1</sup> Most of the Polish agricultural workers arrive during March and leave again in November or December.

<sup>2</sup> Not including the headquarters in Berlin.

all members of his group to their final destination. In order to avoid any mistake the hour and platform of departure are stated on each contract, and in addition a representative of the Central Office is present when each train leaves. Considering the numbers transported, the distances covered, and the frequent changes of trains which these workers, who generally know no German, have to make on the side lines leading to their destinations, it is really surprising that so few mistakes occur. The credit for this is due to the excellence of the organisation and to the methods adopted by the transport companies.

### REPATRIATION

There is little to be said on this subject except that, in addition to the workers who immigrated during the year as seasonal workers, repatriation also includes every year a certain number (recently about 4,000) of Polish workers who had settled in Germany between 1 January 1919 and 31 December 1925 and who, under the German-Polish Treaty, must be gradually returned to the seasonal migration movement. The operation itself requires few comments, as it is much the same as the outward journey reversed. The emigrants are collected at certain central stations from which special trains take them to the frontier office nearest their home in Poland, generally the one at which they entered Germany. The Central Office and its various agencies are again responsible for the whole organisation. They make the necessary arrangements with the railways and inform all employers who have Polish workers of the dates the trains are to leave. According to the weather conditions, repatriation may begin any time in November and continue until about 20 December, since it will be remembered that all contracts must expire on 15 December. In about a month and a half, therefore, this whole operation, which in recent years has involved between 80,000 and 100,000 workers, has to be completed ; on some days several thousand are repatriated.

Generally speaking, this operation seems to proceed extremely well. The only abuse pointed out to the writer is that certain money-changing agencies sometimes make an excessive profit from emigrants wishing to change their marks into zlotys when leaving Germany, in spite of the supervision of the German authorities and of the railway authorities from whom they rent their office in the station.

On the Polish side the organisation of repatriation and the protection of migrants has been entrusted to the Polish Emigration Society (*Polskie Towarzystwo Emigracyjne*), which sends representatives to the various frontier stations and to some important stations in Poland. This Society has organised a special service for assistance to women and children (including the free distribution of milk for infants), a medical service, a travel service, money-changing offices, etc., as well as canteens and dormitories. The activities of the Women's Welfare Work Association should also be mentioned ; this society has a home at Wielun where emigrants going to Germany can leave their babies for a very small sum or even free of charge.

### SOME FIGURES

It is not proposed to give here a detailed statistical study of migration movements from Poland to Germany. Such a study has already been made<sup>1</sup> and would not add anything new to the present discussion. But the picture sketched above would certainly be incomplete without some indication of the dimensions of the movements described in it.

The statistics used are those published by the German Central Office for Workers, which in spite of certain defects of the registration procedure from which the figures are derived are the only ones giving a picture of the movement as a whole. The following table shows for the last normal year before the war and for each year from 1919 to 1929 the number of Polish agricultural workers registered, the total number of foreign agricultural workers recorded by the German Central Office, and the first figure as a percentage of the second ; partial figures are also given for 1930 and 1931, showing the recent slowing down of the movement. The figures refer only to registered workers, as these seem to be the most indicative of the movement as a whole.

The table at once shows that since the war the number of Polish seasonal workers employed in German agriculture has until 1929 been about a third of the number employed in 1913. But as the decrease among foreign agricultural workers in general was still greater, the proportion of Polish workers remained stable at first and then rose, from 76.6 per cent. in 1913 to 89.8 per cent. in 1929.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. in particular the very full data given by RUZIEWICZ: *op. cit.*, pp. 36-121.

Year	Polish agricultural workers registered <sup>1</sup>	Total number of foreign agricultural workers registered	Column (2) per cent. of column (3)
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
1913	304,787	397,768	76.6
1919	112,663	138,343	81.4
1920	126,148	150,927	83.6
1921	113,056	147,413	76.7
1922	127,711	148,086	86.2
1923	103,540	117,567	88.1
1924	96,948	109,937	88.2
1925	125,790	142,694	88.2
1926	114,255	124,031	92.1
1927	110,741	118,547	93.4
1928	116,904	124,708	93.7
1929	103,540	115,298	89.8
1930	77,708	—	—
1931	31,129 <sup>2</sup>	—	—

<sup>1</sup> Not including Polish workers resident in Germany under a permanent exemption certificate.

<sup>2</sup> Provisional figure.

A study of the distribution of these figures over the various States and provinces of Germany shows that the majority of Polish agricultural workers—an almost constant proportion of 75 per cent.—are employed in Prussia, which is the district where sugar-beet is most extensively cultivated.

The preceding figures apply to Polish workers registered; they therefore include a certain number of persons resident in Germany under an exemption certificate which has to be renewed annually. Since 1927 there have been other figures of seasonal immigration in the strict sense, based on the slips which the Polish authorities detach from the emigrants' passports as they cross the frontier. These figures, computed by the Polish Emigration Office, show 68,779 departures in 1927, 85,375 in 1928, and 86,905 in 1929.

It will be seen that there is a marked discrepancy between the two sets of figures. This is due chiefly to the fact that all workers registered have not immigrated for the first time during the year, but it may also be suggested that among the workers registered there may perhaps be some who have emigrated without following the legal procedure.

The distribution by sex of the figures published by the Polish Emigration Office is as follows: for 1927: women 68.1 per cent., men 31.9 per cent.; for 1928: women 68.3 per cent., men 31.6 per cent.