

They'll Do It Every Time

By Jimmy Hatlo

TV ME SLIDE, THIRD-BASE COACH, IS THE TRICKIEST SIGNAL SENDER IN THE MAJORS...

BUT TRYING TO SIGNAL A WAITRESS IN A HASH AND DASH—HE CAN'T GET HALFWAY TO FIRST BASE...



Dignity of Human Being Reduced on German Farms

Editor's Note: John A. Callcott of United Press International's Bonn bureau just completed a three-day tour of Communist East Germany...

By JOHN CALLCOTT

Leipzig, East Germany—(UPI)—One work unit equals one three-day-old calf equals eight marks—\$2—plus three pounds of potatoes and two pounds of grain.

The dignity of the human being has been reduced to this equation by this country's Communist regime. There are 19,368 collective farms in East Germany. Of these, nearly 10,000 were established by force in the first six months of this year.

Asked To Be Objective Gerhard Gruenewald, a candidate for East Germany's Communist party politbureau, said to foreign newsmen at a press conference here: "We ask only one thing of you. We ask you to be objective and tell the world that no force was used here. Our farmers asked to join the cooperative farms."

He received 11 marks a ton from the state. He would have received 30 marks a ton on the free market. His income is now limited to 800 marks a month. Had he been able to keep his 70-acre farm and free to trade as he pleased, the farmer said, his income would have been more than 2,500 marks monthly.

Asked if he had noticed that nearly every person seen working in the field was a woman, asked why the "committees" running collectives are composed of men who get their "work units" without having to put their hand to a hoe, he had no reply.

Nevertheless, collective farms may succeed in East Germany. Production is gradually increasing although there are signs of scarcity, and such things as bananas, pineapples, lemons and oranges are never seen in the shops.

The "Karl Marx" collective a few miles from Eisenberg was established in 1952. Until 1958, not one worker, man or woman, had a holiday, the farm's "chairman," a man of 32, admitted.

"But last year," he said, his face brightening with pride, "two of our women comrades went on holiday to the Baltic sea."

Officials acknowledged that only about 100 of East Germany's more than 19,000 collective farms can exist without state aid—made in the form of "credits" carrying a three per cent interest rate.

Yet one official said that all farms will soon be self-supporting, perhaps in five years. The "Friedrich Engels" collective is near the "Karl Marx" farm.

"Engels" also was established in 1952. Yet it is dingy, the buildings are old and smelly. I saw flies floating in the milk.

Pointing to the skeleton of a cow shed being built, one of our guides said, "You see, we are building fast now."

His face darkened when one farmer said: "Yes, the state was good enough to sell us scrap iron cheaply to build it."

Trained at College Men to head the collectives are trained at Bernburg, an agriculture college, where farmers are trained to run large farms and receive eight hours of "political education" a week.

Next to the college is a "seed research station," which is doing much to improve the quality of farm produce.

The research station has 22 scientists, 50 assistants and 380 people working in fields in which new seed strains are tested.

The head of the station said privately he and his staff are far removed from the constant blare of Communist propaganda.

"If we weren't, we wouldn't be able to concentrate as we do," he said. But the conversation came to an abrupt end when an unobtrusive man came up, a man who had accompanied us on the entire journey without talking to anyone.

"He's one of those, well, you know," a bus driver told me.

No Hope in Faces While the official touring party visited a nearby castle, I slipped away to the little town of Bernburg and spent two hours walking the streets, talking to people and sitting on a bench in the market place.

The square is dominated by a giant picture of Ernst Thaelmann, pre-war leader of the German Communist party, who was killed by the Nazis at Buchenwald.

This town has 16,000 inhabitants and for them, the war has not ended. It might well be 1944. There is no hope in the faces of the people. Their clothes are of the poorest quality. The men still wear the black "muetsze" or peaked caps which was the

symbol of a German working-man during the war.

With the very dinginess of their shops, their complete lack of interest in business, they are fighting a silent, pitiful battle against the regime which is now putting small shopkeepers—butchers, bakers, grocers, shoemakers, even hairdressers—out of business and their concerns under state control.

One grocer had cherries on display. Eleven women were lined up to buy from a stand outside the shop. Inside, there were more cherries.

I asked for half-a-pound. The shopkeeper's wife said I should buy them outside. Told that would take too long, she simply shrugged her shoulders, and continued doing nothing.

In one store bars of chocolate had been lying for so long they were black with dirt. A packet of nylons in another window was thick with dust. They cost 12 marks—more than half a day's work. Packets of film in the window of a camera store was crinkled and black with age.

Storekeepers haven't put a touch of paint to their shops since before the war.

"Why should I," a fishmonger said, "when the shop belongs to me on paper only?"

A mother told me she had complained to her child about the political education he was receiving. The child, an 11-year-old boy, said:

"If you say that again I'll tell my teacher, who told us to report that sort of thing."

Her boy, the mother said, was thrashed by his father. But how could that bring back his mind and heart?

Vegetables Not Fresh In the market place a woman went by, carrying a shopping bag in which there was one cauliflower. It was brown, because by the time a farm has been told where to send its produce, but the time transport is arranged, by the time a shop is told where to get its supplies, vegetables are no longer fresh.

This woman was about 30. Her eyes were sunken. When a truck of Russian soldiers went by, she looked straight ahead.

A pre-war automobile drove up to the rusty gasoline pump. For each gallon the driver paid six marks (\$1.50).

The town idiot joined me down on the bench. Two small children, a brother and sister about five years old, began asking him questions.

He said his name was "Peepi," he wasn't married, had no girl friend and was not an officer in the army.

I asked him if he knew the man on the picture above us, the picture of Ernst Thaelmann.

"Who? Who?" he replied. "Peepi" is, I believe, the happiest man in Bernburg.

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