

THIS FILE IS MADE AVAILABLE THROUGH THE DECLASSIFICATION EFFORTS AND RESEARCH OF:

THE BLACK VAULT

THE BLACK VAULT IS THE LARGEST ONLINE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT / GOVERNMENT RECORD CLEARING HOUSE IN THE WORLD. THE RESEARCH EFFORTS HERE ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DECLASSIFICATION OF THOUSANDS OF DOCUMENTS THROUGHOUT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT, AND ALL CAN BE DOWNLOADED BY VISITING:

[HTTP://WWW.BLACKVAULT.COM](http://www.blackvault.com)

YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO FORWARD THIS DOCUMENT TO YOUR FRIENDS, BUT PLEASE KEEP THIS IDENTIFYING IMAGE AT THE TOP OF THE .PDF SO OTHERS CAN DOWNLOAD MORE!

Baltimore Sun

AUG 29 1958

SIX FROM U.S. VACATION IN RED HOMES

Life Under Communists
in Poland Found
Surprising

Warsaw, Aug. 29 (AP)—Six young Americans sat in a coffee house here summing up a strange vacation. On it they tried to find out what life's like under communism.

For six weeks they lived as members of Polish families, trying to merge into the lives of their hosts. The results: Revealing though sometimes confusing.

"The hospitality has been tremendous," said Ruby Gersten, a petite brunette from Los Angeles and history student at Reed College. The rest were: Carl Brill, a printer from New York; Marie Ten Hoer, a social worker; and three others.

"I'm afraid no Americaner would get the same welcome back home."

The six came here as part of a group sponsored by the Experiment in International Living, a Putney (Vt.) organization that has been doing this sort of thing more than 20 years.

Hosts All Spoke English

Their hosts, chosen by the Polish Students Association, all spoke English; they were mainly better-off professional people.

Most of the American youngsters came as so-called community ambassadors. Hometown social organizations paid their

way and when they got back they will lecture on the trip. They'll have plenty to tell.

One surprise: Poles seem to eat more than Americans.

"I don't think it's just that they were laying it on for our benefit," said Harvey Buegardner, assistant professor of political science at North Carolina State University. "They're just big eaters and like to eat well."

Leftovers For Breakfast

Doc King, who works in retailing at Niagara Falls, N.Y., saw Army service in Western Europe, was surprised to find breakfast made up from leftovers of the evening meal. The reason: Hot weather and no kitchen.

For Marie Ten Hoer, blonde high school teacher from Grand Rapids, Mich., the dietary surprise was that Poles drink sour milk and cream and apparently because they like it.

"And you don't see drinking fountains here," she said. "Instead you buy soda water from a street kiosk."

For Graham Provan, high school teacher from Flint, Mich., and Carl Brill, printer, of

Austin, Minn., the big eye catcher was city transport.

"People pack into those streetcars so tight you'd think they would suffocate," said Carl. "And those that can't get in just hang on the outside, clutching whatever they can."

Home Found Overcrowded

All found Polish homes overcrowded, with six persons to three rooms the average. Of the six host families none had a car and one had a TV set. All were keen radio listeners who tuned in to Radio Free Europe.

All the youngsters came here expecting a lot of questioning and criticism about the American political system. They seldom got it.

"Instead they're much more interested in prices and living standards," said Miss Gersten. "The other girls reported their hosts fascinated by such novelties as liquid shoe polish and drip-dry shirts."

Carl Brill said it seemed the average Warsaw family saw more plays and movies than his counterpart back home.

"And it's surprising the amount of contemporary American literature they've read," said Miss Gersten. "They all know Hemingway far better than I do."

"They certainly read more of everything than we do," said Miss Ten Hoer. "You see books everywhere. They seem quite cheap and they don't have the competition from other things like they do at home."

As for political attitudes, the group produced this analysis:

"It's difficult to find a supporter of the Communist system, even among people such as officials who could be expected to be party members."

People generally feel they are not masters of their own destiny. Some say life in Eastern Europe has been declining for 40 years and will get worse before it gets better.

APPROVED FOR RELEASE
Date 23 Nov 1982

815