

RALLY SPORT

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JERZY LANDSBERG and his Renault 5 are fast becoming worthy successors in Polish rallying tradition to Sobieslaw Zasada and his Steyr Puch: they are both incredibly successful with small cars — and they both make their rallying work notwithstanding all the problems of living under Communist financial restraints. The apparent ease with which Landsberg has made an international name for himself, together with the way that ten years ago Zasada rose to become European champion, shows how determination will still produce results — even in Poland.

Landsberg gained national recognition in 1975 when he was national rally and race champion, in his class, as a driver. Previously he had been a co-driver for Blazej Krupa, a fellow Pole who in 1975 went on to become East European champion driver. His car was a Renault 5, Group 1, one of many western cars seen on the roads of Poland. With his successes behind him he went sponsor-seeking in the west, and found Marlboro. Direct cigarette advertising is forbidden, but indirect advertising, such as stickers on rally cars, is allowed. They have recently built a factory in Poland and were prepared to make a payment-by-results system of sponsorship. This enabled Landsberg to plan his 1976 season, which involved the purchase of a kit from Renault to convert the R5 into a Group 2 5TS: a car with 85bhp and better suspension.

The first rally for Landsberg was the Monte Carlo Rally, which was paid for by Philip Morris (Marlboro) and Stomil, the Polish tyre company. Landsberg is employed by Stomil as a full-time rally driver — yet they do not restrict his use of tyres to their own products. All they want are their stickers! This was his first ever event outside Poland, but there was engine

trouble which appeared to result from some metal finding its way inside the engine. He then came eighth on the German Sands Rally in Bulgaria, probably the most popular of the Eastern events. In the Polish rally he went off the road and then on the Warsaw Rally he finished first on special stage times, only to fall to second when one stage was cancelled.

His usual co-driver is Marek Muszynski, a young professor in the Polish Academy of Science. He reckons that the career of Landsberg so far is nothing particularly special: the only unusual aspect is that he is one of few Poles willing to make their life into what they want to achieve. He stated however that Landsberg's attention to pacenotes is something special — and must go a long way to his fantastic speed in fog. It was on the foggy sections that Lansberg slaughtered the opposition on the Warsaw Rally — and very nearly snatched victory away from Ciecierzyski. 'He goes exactly as I tell him, it is fantastic.' This caused the accident on the Polish Rally in July. The approach to a 150kph corner was sprinkled with a powdery surface which put the car firmly off the road. 'He leaves me to make the notes myself. We use very exact notes, stating exactly where the car should be at every moment,' something that must obviously be useful in fog.

The intention of Landsberg is to continue what he has started. Why stay with Renault, when Polski-Fiat are the national team? Muszynski explained that the Polski Fiat was complete, that Zasada and Krupa had achieved international success privately and that nothing should stop them doing likewise. Renault is achieving a successful competition foothold in Eastern Europe and must be proud of the achievements of Lansberg in his little red 'cinq.'

