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POLAND

Description of the Country (3802)

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RECREATION IN SZCZECIN

SOURCE ATHENS: A 37-year-old Greek repatriate doctor.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Until September 1956.

EVALUATION COMMENT: This is an accurate account of the recreation facilities in SZCZECIN and the information given is correct. All theaters, cinemas and night clubs mentioned in the report were known to us with the exception of the recently established theater "Scena Kameralna." Of the persons mentioned in the report, SŁOTWINSKI Jozef and GORZYNSKI Zdzislaw were known to us.

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Theaters

SZCZECIN with a population of about 300,000 has three theaters: the "Teatr Polski," the "Teatr Wspolczesny" and the "Scena Kameralna." All three theaters are under the management of a State service called "Panstwowe Teatry w Szczecinie," and they have the same actors. As the town's old German theater was ruined, all three theaters are housed in halls which were not intended for theatrical performances; none has balconies or boxes.

The "Teatr Polski" is housed in an exhibition hall of a large building on the banks of the Oder, which the Germans used for exhibitions of all kinds. In the same building is housed now the Museum of Western Pomerania, which is a naval museum, exhibiting old boats and old naval equipment. The "Polski," which has about 350 seats, presents mostly classical plays.

The "Teatr Wspolczesny," which means "Contemporary Theater", presents mostly modern and contemporary plays. It is

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also located near the bank of the Oder and has a capacity for over 400 spectators.

The "Scena Kameralna," which opened in the winter season of 1955/56, is a small theater with only about 150 to 200 wooden seats, presenting also contemporary plays.

Among the plays source remembered having seen in the past two years were Schiller's "Don Carlos," Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night", Molière's "Tartuffe" and some plays of the Polish classics, SLOWACKI and FREDRO. He also saw one or two plays of early twentieth century Polish playwright ZAPOLSKA. Among the contemporary plays source liked best were "Ostry Dyzur" and "Maturzysci" by contemporary playwrights SLOTWINSKI and SKOWRONEK. He also liked a comedy entitled "Imieniny Dana Dyrektora," which satirized the directors of State enterprises and the prevailing bureaucracy. The play was a great success. A Polish doctor told source that he could show him at least seven directors of the type satirized by the play in SZCZECIN.

Source remembered also two Russian plays entitled "For Those Who Fight at Sea" and "Restless Old Age," which were not very successful.

The theaters are as a rule full in every performance, but the successful plays last longer than the others. For instance, "Don Carlos," "Tartuffe" and "Ostry Dyzur" lasted for close to 100 performances. The Russian plays have the shortest run. At an average there was a new play in town once a month. The theaters give only one performance per day, and on Mondays they are closed. The tickets cost 16 zloty for the first rows, about 12 zloty for the middle ones, and seven zloty for the back rows.

The "Panstwowe Teatry w Szczecinie" has about 40 actors, who played in all three theaters. Among the protagonists source appreciated were old-timers (fnu) FOG and (fnu) DASZEWSKI, the first over 50 and the second over 60 years old. He also liked a young actor named (fnu) PIETRUSKI who played the part of Don Carlos in Schiller's tragedy of the same name. There were also some other good young actors whose names source did not remember. Among the actresses source remembered (fnu) REMI-SZEWSKA, who was young and talented. The names of the other artists source did not remember.

Source's general impression of the theater in SZCZECIN was good. The plays were carefully presented, and the artists were good; only the actors in supporting roles were mediocre and at times gave the impression of being amateurs. For this reason, many plays were uneven.

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Cinemas

SZCZECIN has three central cinemas: the "Colosseum," the "Baltyk" and the "Młoda Gwardia." There are also three or four neighborhood cinemas which show the films already presented by the central cinemas. The central cinemas have three performances daily: 1600 to 1800 hours, 1800 to 2000, and 2000 to 2200 hours. The tickets cost from 3.60 to five zloty.

In 1956 many films of Western Europe were shown, mainly French and Italian, but also British, Swedish and Austrian. Among the Polish films, one which was fairly successful was entitled "The Affair of Captain Mares." Russian films are frequently shown, and in the month of September of each year a "Festival of the Russian Film" is organized. The central cinemas present mostly Russian films during the festival. In the 1955 festival a Russian comedy, entitled "Dignitary on a Raft" and satirizing bureaucracy was a success unusual for Russian films, which are not very popular. Source left SZCZECIN before the 1956 festival began, but he remembers having seen advertised the following Russian films: "Gorki's Mother," "Pedagogic Poem" of MAKARENKO, dealing with juvenile delinquents, and "Macbeth."

The central cinemas change films usually once a week, but many Western films continue for a second week. This never happens with a Russian or Polish film. In 1955 "Hamlet" with Sir Lawrence OLIVIER was such a great success that it lasted five weeks.

As the people thirst for some kind of recreation, the cinemas are always full, and the seats must be reserved before the performance.

Music

Source was not interested in music. He heard, however, that the Philharmonic Orchestra of SZCZECIN was quite good. The orchestra director was (fnu) GORZYNSKI, and the orchestra gave frequent concerts in a concert hall in the National Council's building. From advertisements in the streets source knows that frequently soloists, Polish and foreign, came to SZCZECIN.

Night Clubs

Owing to the frequent visits of foreign ships, SZCZECIN had about six night clubs, the best of which were the "Orbis," the "Magnolia" and the "Bajka." These night clubs had a jazz band of four instruments and played Western music to which people danced. The night clubs were usually full on Saturdays

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and Sundays. Many girls frequent these night clubs in search of company. The Poles call them "Mewka," which means little sea-gulls.

Some of the night clubs charge an entrance fee of 30 zloty, which is the minimum a client must spend. Food is served à la carte. The drinks sold are vodka, beer, Polish cider and Hungarian or Bulgarian wine. No whisky is to be found. A bottle of wine costs about 25 zloty and half a liter of vodka about 70 zloty.

As source heard, many people who normally cannot afford to go to night clubs, nevertheless go. An anecdote, relating to the matter, made the rounds in SZCZECIN. The story goes that a Pole living abroad visited SZCZECIN and was invited by friends to night clubs. Impressed by their apparent financial ease, he asked them how they managed it with their meager salaries, and he invariably received the answer "dokladam," which means "I add." He did not make any remark, but when he returned abroad, someone asked him how were the Poles faring. "They manage to live," he replied, "but they forgot to pronounce the 'R's." The joke lies in the fact that "dokradam" means "I steal."

Referring to jazz music, source said that until the destalinization period it was considered as a degenerate pro-American manifestation, but at present a complete change occurred. A jazz festival was even organized in SOPOT during the summer. The best jazz bands of Poland participated as well as bands from foreign countries.

### Sports

Source was not interested in sports and did not follow the athletic activity, which, as he understood, was very animated. A great many Poles bet through a State agency called "Totalizator Sportowy" on the result of football matches. This betting is very popular. Of the proceeds 50 per cent goes to the Olympic Games Fund and the other 50 per cent goes to the winner. There are special betting cards for one game, which cost two zloty, and for five games which cost 10 zloty. These cards are posted at the "Totalizator Sportowy" in WARSAW until a determined time limit.

End

