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POLAND

COMMUNIST PARTY (0600)  
Inner Life (0604)  
Foreign Relations (0602)

Life Sketch Of A Communist

SOURCE MUNICH: Miss Irena BORN, a former Polish Communist Party member for 25 years. She spent 12 years in the USSR, and returned to Poland after the war. She is now in exile in the West.

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Inter-war period, World War II and postwar years up to 1947.

EVAL. COMMENT: Information obtained from direct interview of the evaluator with the source. Attention is drawn to other Items originating from the same source. These are: Item Nos. 2448, 2525, 2527, 2916, 2933, 2935, 3060, 3423, and 4596/53.

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Miss Irena BORN, former member of the KPP (Communist Party of Poland,) spent 12 years in the USSR, enlisted with the BERLING Army in Soviet Russia, came to Poland with that army, was given a diplomatic post in one of the Scandinavian countries, where she chose freedom. Detailed life sketch of Miss BORN follows:

She became member of the KPP in 1922. Before that date she was active in two organizations: ZMPS (Union of Polish Socialist Youth,) and ZNMS (Union of Independent Socialist Youth.)

ZMPS: Miss BORN was active in this union when she was a pupil of a secondary school - up to 1923. Here she knew the following outstanding men: WARSKI, from

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SDKPiL (Social Democracy of the Kingdom of Poland and Lithuania;) SOCHACKI and LARSKI, both from the left faction of the PPS (not to be confused with PPS-Lewica,) as well as two representatives of the PPS (Polish Socialist Party;) ZAKS Stanislaw and BRUNER Wacław.

ZNMS: Miss BORN was directed to this organization when she started her studies at the WARSAW University. She belonged to the Red Fraction (Czerwona Frakcja,) and held various Party posts: she was secretary to the WARSAW branch of the MOPR (International Organization for the Aid to Revolutionaries,) worked with a department of liaison with other worker organizations, and with the Party editorial offices called "Redakcja." There was a sharp factional fight within the ZNMS, and the division was up to the point of breaking personal relations with members of the opposing faction, minority and majority respectively.

In the years from 1925 to 1928 Miss BORN was in VIENNA. She had to go there under the threat of being arrested by the Polish police. Sometime in 1925 a big search action was carried by the police among ZNMS members. Miss BORN was then out of WARSAW. When a lot of ZNMS propaganda stuff was found with one of her colleagues, she was warned not to return to WARSAW. She simply boarded a train to the Czechoslovak frontier, crossed the border on foot, went again by train to the Austrian frontier, crossed it on foot and came to VIENNA. Here she became formally a member of the Austrian CP. There were very few Polish Communists in VIENNA and they formed a Circle of Polish Communists (Kolo Polakich Komunistow,) to which, among others, WERFEL Roman and JEBER Jozef belonged. The circle assembled from time to time for discussions only. Inter alia, PILSUDSKI's coup d'etat of May 1926 was discussed. As a principle, the Communist Party cannot remain idle during riots or any civil commotion. It should take part in these events on the side of the masses. As it is known, the KPP took part in the May events on the side of PILSUDSKI. This was considered later on as a serious mistake, which was called in the Party history "May mistake" (blad majowy.)

When in 1928 the ZNMS arrest affair died out and the police dropped the case, Miss BORN was told to return to WARSAW. Her departure from VIENNA was arranged in a great hurry, and she had no time left even for changing the photograph on the passport lent to her by an Austrian Communist girl, KATHA BECK. With somebody else's passport in her handbag, Miss BORN crossed the border and came to ZOPPOT (now SOPOT) via BERLIN. The only man who was suspiciously embarrassed with the passport and its bearer was the receptionist at a DANZIG hotel, but he took no action.

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Miss BORN was assigned a technical job with the KPP Central Committee secretariat at ZOPPOT. The secretariat consisted of "majority" people, among whom there were such outstanding Communists, as:

KRAJEWSKI Wladyslaw (real name STEIN, son-in-law of WARSKI;)  
 CICHOWSKI Kasimierz (cover name "Arabia;")  
 GROSSEROWA Slawa;  
 PROCHNIAK Sewer;  
 WROBLEWSKI Wacław (cover name "Krysztoff")

She also met WOLSKI Wladyslaw (real name PIOWAR-CZYK Antoni) who was then secretary of the MOPR and used to come for consultations and/or instructions.

Miss BORN remained at ZOPPOT from March until the autumn of 1928, then she went to WARSAW, where she took the job of secretary to the WARSAW MOPR, as already mentioned, which she retained until the majority faction, to which she belonged, was removed on orders of the Comintern. In 1930 and 1931 Miss BORN acted as a girl liaison (lacniczka) for the secretariat of the KC (Central Committee) KPZU, which was then at ZAKOPANE (a health resort in the Tatra mountains.) She met there the following members of the secretariat:

WRZOS (real name HUBERMAN Stanislaw;)  
 KOLSKI (real name CUKIER;) and  
 CZARNY (cover name.)

In her capacity, Miss BORN remained in touch with the KPZU (Communist Party of Western Ukraine, i.e. of the Eastern territories of Poland which were considered by the USSR as part of the Ukraine, which are now incorporated into the Soviet Union.) From the organizational point of view the KPZU was part of the KPP.

In 1931 the police arrested many members of the KC (Central Committee.) Miss BORN, who was a liaison messenger with the KC and FERSZT and KWATKOWSKI Franciszek were also arrested. After a few months, Miss BORN was released on bail and escaped to BERLIN. In May 1932 the secretariat of the KC KPP was in BERLIN. It consisted mainly of the minority faction members, and Miss BORN (a "majorite") was in touch with STEIN only, a "majorite" as well. She was told to go to the USSR. She boarded a Soviet ship in HAMBURG and on 22 June 1932 she disembarked in LENINGRAD, where she remained for two days, and then went to MOSCOW. Here she reported to the Polish section of the Komintern, which section was headed at that time by LENSKI or CZARNY. BRUNOWA Stefania, who is

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now in Poland, acted as secretary. Miss BORN obtained a "pass" (putiowka) to a health resort on the Black Sea shore, wherefrom she returned to MOSCOW after a time, and started to work with the Polish section of the Partizdat (Partiynoye Izdatelstvo,) which was publishing Party literature in all languages in use in the USSR. She worked there until 1933. When in 1934 the Polish section of the Partizdat was wound up, Miss BORN obtained an editorial job with the "Inrab."

"Inrab" is an abbreviation of the "Izdatelstvo Inostrannykh Rabochikh" (Foreign Workers Publishing House.) The Polish section of the "Inrab" was headed by WEBER Jozef (real name SZNAJDER) who was arrested later on, when YAGODA was the chief of the NKWD, and spent five years in CZIBIU camp. WEBER is now in Poland and works as a journalist. Among the people whom Miss BORN met at that time in MOSCOW were:

WARSKI;  
STEIN Wladyslaw (cover name KRAJEWSKI);  
CICHOWSKI Kazimierz;  
WRZOS (real name HUBERMAN Stanislaw);  
RYLSKI Ignacy with wife;  
WOLSKI Wladyslaw, who came to MOSCOW in 1934  
and was soon arrested;  
BERMAN Aniek (in 1946 was editor-in-chief of  
"Zycie Warszawy" and had another name  
in this capacity, BOROWSKI. He had an  
elder brother who was liquidated - no  
trace.)

Miss BORN worked with "Inrab" for about a year. On 1 January 1935 she started to work with the "Izogiz," another publishing house, this one for arts periodicals (among them "SSSR na stroyke.") "IZogiz" stands for "Izdatelstvo Isobrazitelnykh Iskustv," later on "Izdatelstvo Iskustvo." Here she worked until 1938, when she was asked to resign for political reasons. These reasons were explained to her confidentially by the director of the "Izogiz," MALKIN Boris Fedorovich. MALKIN was one of the first members of the Social Revolutionary Party to side with the Bolsheviks. He was a friend of LENIN, from whom he obtained a written recommendation to be accepted in the Bolshevik Party. He preserved the letter carefully, and kept it as a sacred relic. This did not help him, for he was ultimately arrested and liquidated.

The reasons for Miss BORN's dismissal were obvious. She was the only foreigner with the "Izogiz," she was not a member of the Soviet Communist Party, and the Polish Communist Party (at that time dissolved) was viewed by the Bolsheviks as a oracle of Nationalist and Fascist elements. She could have

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been arrested any time by the NKWD. Her presence at the "Izorgis" was embarrassing to her superiors who might be called by the NKWD to account for keeping a foreign spy in such an important institution. Miss BORN resigned.

It should be kept in mind that this happened after two events of decisive importance to all Communists: the first was a general screening, called "chistka" (purge) which started in 1933, lasted for a couple of years and was followed by a general control (check) of Party documents ("partdokumenty;") the second was the great purge arranged by YAGODA and then by his successor YEZHOW.

The general screening ("chistka") was an all-out operation, in which 100 per cent of Party members were checked and rechecked as to their political and personal past, views, deviations, mistakes, character etc. A screening commission ("komisija po chistke") was appointed to deal with the operation on the All-Union scale, with territorial respective commissions dealing with the job in cities, villages, factories, institutions etc. Almost every evening members of the Party gathered to listen to a detailed description of the life, family conditions etc. of a given number of comrades. The attendance at these meetings was obligatory. It was everybody's right and duty to add to the sketch outlined by the "culprit" everything what was omitted by him for obvious reasons, or what was not omitted, but constituted a pure invention intended to harm him. An opportunity had been given for settling personal accounts, and there were exceptions which would not take advantage of it. Everybody was very careful not to disclose the day when his own turn would come before screening commission for his mistakes, deviations, and even for family quarrels; for nothing was secret or private, and the confession had to be full. Not only Party members took part in these meetings (they had to be present.) Non-Party people were allowed in, and they were rather zealous in complaining against any Party man with whom they had quarrelled at one or other occasion. They were careful not to miss the meeting at which a given Party member was screened. The operation was carried on in the whole country, many people were expelled from the Party, many arrests followed. To mark the end of the operation, the All-Union Screening Commission was arrested.

Another operation, "proverka partdokumentov", the check of Party documents was embarked upon, and it lasted another couple of years. Life sketches (written,) all writings, speeches, etc. were submitted again and checked at the Party headquarters. If everything was all right, new Party identity cards were issued, if not arrest warrants were made out.

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Miss BORN was screened as a member of the Polish Party. She did not conceal her "majority" deviation (called by the Stalinists "nationalist deviation,") for the "minority" members were present, and would remind her of her mistakes. She admitted her "fault," and was not expelled.

These two operations, as well as the great purge which followed, caused a sudden stop of volunteers to the Party. During the screening period no admissions of new members were allowed, and after the great purge nobody wanted any more to become a Party member. Party authorities started to appoint "volunteers." Young people were called by Party officials and advised to apply for membership.

When Miss BORN left the "Izogiz" she could not find work for about six months, during which time she lived by selling her foreign dresses and the rest of her possessions. Once she applied for a post as librarian at an experimental botanical station deep in the country. She was promptly accepted, for there were no volunteers for a post outside MOSCOW, and asked to fill in the application forms. Next day she was told that there was no vacancy any more. Apparently the head of the personnel office read that she was Polish, and did not want a foreign "saboteur" in his institution.

Eventually Miss BORN found a job as lowest clerk ("shohetovod") in the financial section of a cosmetics factory. She worked there for about two weeks, fell ill, and was dismissed again.

(NOTE: Miss BORN had no contact with members of the Polish section of the Komintern, with the exception of a woman, wife of Mieczyslaw EHRLICH, since 1935. In 1938 almost all of them were already under arrest.)

In January 1939 a meeting of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the WKP(b) took place, at which it was found that the waves of arrests which had flooded the country had done much harm to the Party and to the national economy. The chief of the NKVD was now BERIA, and he was ordered to release from the prisons and camps all those who were not yet sentenced and to review previous sentences. All Party organizations at factories and institutions were ordered to call back all those employees who had been fired during the great purge. As a result, a limited number of prisoners were set free, and a limited number of sentences reviewed.

Miss BORN was called by the Party organization secretary of the "Inrab" and invited to work again. She accepted readily, and was given the post of an editor at the photo laboratory of the Publishing House. This editing of photo-

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graphs consisted of a thorough check of every negative and liquidating on the negative those who had already been liquidated by the NKVD. When it was possible, the faces were not erased, but changed by adding either a moustache or a beard or spectacles. Photos representing single people, arrested by the NKVD, were simply thrown out. There was more trouble with group photographs, especially those with STALIN in the group, for they had to be changed very carefully, so as not to leave any trace of retouching. It happened sometimes that a group photograph was found in order, and put in the file, only to be removed next day and "retouched," for during the preceding night the NKVD had arrested somebody who was on the photo. It is known to Miss BORN that an album representing the history of the Red Army was worked on for years and has never been published, because of constant changes necessary because of frequent arrests of high officers.

Miss BORN worked at this photo laboratory for about three months. She was released again for the same reasons as it was the case at the "Izogis." She was again unemployed for some time, then she obtained an editorial job with the State Dictionary Publishing House (Gosudarstvennoye Izdatelstvo Slovarye.)

She had to edit a Polish-Russian dictionary which had been prepared by a Polish woman from KIEV - a "Kiev Pole." "Kiev Pole" was a nickname or a designation of a category of Soviet Poles who had lived in the USSR long enough to forget their mother tongue. There were many, sometimes humorous mistakes in the vocabulary.

After having finished her job, Miss BORN was transferred to the Polish section of the Foreign Languages Publishing House (Izdatelstvo Literaturny na Inostrannikh Jazykakh,) which section was headed then by a woman ROZWADOWSKA, incidentally a "Kiev Pole." This section was newly created and Miss BORN was its first employee after ROZWADOWSKA. Other employees joined soon:

MIETKOWSKI Mieczyslaw, a Jew from BIALYSTOK, who is now one of the deputy ministers of Public Security in Poland;

MODZELEWSKI Zygmunt, who at that time still used his cover name FISCHER, and who had been released from the MOSCOW prison after YEZEKOW's fall, after serving two years and

KRAUZE, who is now in WARSAW and works with the Publishing House "Kisaska."

The first book which Miss BORN had to translate was DIMITROV's Collection of Writings and Speeches against

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HITLER. She went to a resort place in the Caucasus and worked there on the translation. She was not yet in the middle of the book when the RIBBENTROP-MOLOTOV pact of August 1939 was made public. She knew that the book would not be published at that time. She finished hurriedly and carelessly the translation, returned to MOSCOW, and submitted the work. She was told, as anticipated, that the book would not be published, and was paid the full remuneration for the translation. Nobody checked the correctness of the translation.

Miss BORN remained at the Foreign Languages Publishing House until the outbreak of the Russo-German war in June 1941. Among other things she was assigned, together with MODZELEWSKI, the translation of some writings of MARTY (1)

Among the employees of the Polish Section there were in MOSCOW at that time:

RAFALOWSKA Barbara, whose husband was murdered at KATYN;

DANISZEWSKI Tadeusz (real name Dawid KIRSZBAUM,) later on director of the Party School in LODZ;

OCHAB Edward - came from LWOW in 1940;

KASMAN Leon, at present chief editor of the PZPR paper "Trybuna Ludu", who had worked with the Kemitern, and lived at the Lux;

DZIERZYNSKA - widow of DZIERZYNSKI Feliks - she was entrusted with the Polish editing of the "Short Course of History of the WKP(b)." For the air of importance she gave herself she was called "wdowa im. Dzierzynskiego", an expression denoting an institution which she considered herself to be, "Dzierzynski Widow" (just like Rockefeller Foundation or similar.)

The last two were free lancers at the Polish Section, and contributed only occasionally.

When the Soviet-German war broke out on 22 June 1941, Miss BORN was in MOSCOW, still working with the Polish section of the Foreign Languages Publishing House. On the next day, on 23 June 1941, she was called to the Polish section of the MOSCOW Radio; which section was pieced together on the same day and in a hurry. The chief of this section was DANISZEWSKI. Programs started on the same day and continued until November, when the section was evacuated to KUIBYSHEV.

Among others, the following people worked with the

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Polish Section of the MOSCOW Radio:

Wilhelm BILLIG (later on director, "Polskie Radio";)

Hilary MYNC, and his wife Julia;

Hanka WIERBLOWSKA (wife of WIERBLOWSKI;)

Juliusz BURGIN (later on chief of foreign service in the UB and Ambassador to China;)

Jerzy BAUMRITTER (later on head department, Ministry of Information and director of the Institute for Foreign Affairs with the MSZ;) as well as free landers:

Jerzy PUTRAMENT;

Stefan JEDRYCHOWSKI (who worked also at the editorial office of the "Nowe Widnokregi" periodical;)

Jerzy PANSKI (literary director of the "Nowe Widnokregi";) and

GALAJ Julian.

When the Germans approached MOSCOW, and the situation was very dangerous, both PUTRAMENT and JEDRYCHOWSKI were much afraid that they would be called to the "defense guard of MOSCOW", and were very anxious to get out of MOSCOW as soon as possible. They succeeded in doing so a day ahead of the evacuation plan. They left behind the provisions for the journey and boarded the first train they could find a place on.

Miss BORN was evacuated to ENGELS, former capital of the German Autonomous Republic, and worked there with the Foreign Languages Publishing House (again) until late spring 1942, when she returned to MOSCOW.

In 1943 Miss BORN obtained from Wanda WASILEWSKA of the Union of Polish Patriots (ZPP,) a letter of recommendation to the BERLIN Army where she went together with PSZCZOLKOWSKI and SIEDLECKI. She worked in turn as chief translator, educational officer of the 1st Infantry Regiment, chief chronicler (she succeeded SZENWALD Lucjan, who was killed in action later on,) and eventually in LUBLIN she was employed with the Press and Propaganda Department under OCHAB Edward.

From LUBLIN she went to LODZ, where she was editor of a paper "Swietlica" - a sort of guide for educational instructors.

After the war she was assigned a job with the

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Polish Repatriation Mission at MALMO, where she worked for three months only, as there was no more work left after the Swedes completed the transports of Poles to Poland.

She was then given a job at one of the Polish diplomatic posts in Scandinavia. Twice she was on leave in Poland, on both occasions for a few months, in 1946 and 1947.

End.