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POLAND

DESCRIPTION OF THE COUNTRY

COMMUNICATIONS

Waterways

The "Grand Hotel" At SOPOT.

SOURCE ROME: No information available

DATE OF OBSERVATION: Until June 1952

At SOPOT, near GDYNIA is a most beautiful hotel called the "Grandhotel". This hotel had been constructed by the Germans during the occupation of Poland. Luckily the building was not damaged at all by the war and every thing is in full swing. It has been taken over by the Polish authorities and has been run ever since by the Polish Navy. It might be considered at the disposal of the Polish shipping companies.

Some directors and high officials of the Polish shipping companies are permanently staying at the Grandhotel.

But according to democratic principles all sailors are admitted to the hotel with their respective families, and dances, meetings and representations of various sorts take place there.

Also the hotel bar, with a generous supply of the best national and foreign liquors, is open to all sailors, starting from the ranks to the captains and the Port-commander.

On Saturdays they all have a good time there, and about midnight a good many of the too boisterous and very often completely drunk, have to be thrown out by the Police. Indeed, Saturday night, offers an excellent occasion to see how the new "democratic" society behaves in exclusive places where they would not have dared to show themselves before, and which were reserved to the upper classes only. (The Grandhotel was intended for the families of high German officials during the war.) To-day, as I have been told, the visitors of the Grand-Hotel belong mainly to the class which is called maritime "bolota" in Poland. There is plenty to eat and to drink at the Grand, but the sailors have to be very careful and beware of the "BEZPIEKA's" agents in civilian clothes who are in charge of observing and denouncing anybody who might be spending more than he earns.

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In the beginning, and immediately after the war when the Polish sailors earned a great deal through black-marketeering, real drinking-orgies took place at the Grandhotel. The sailors would spent up to \$100, per evening, and nobody would interfere and want to know where the money was coming from. It was a period of particular well-being which was tolerated by the Polish Government.

But things changed as time went by. To-day, we know from our reports that the Polish sailors have been forbidden any smuggling or commercial activities of their own: everybody has to make his wages do, and, even if we consider that a sailor's pay is superior to that received by a good number of other Governmental employees, it certainly does not permit him to afford expensive parties at the Grand-Hotel.

To-day it is well-known that, as soon as a sailor spends too much money at the bar it will be noticed by the police agents, and he can be sure that very soon an enquiry will start as to whether he has any private activities. And quite probably such an enquiry might wind up in a penal procedure with heavy consequences.

Considering all this, a wise sea-faring man bewares of having a good time at the bar of the Grand, because he is aware of being watched all the time. If there are some sailors still making some money from private deals they take care in not spending it at that spot.

EVAL. COMMENT: This hotel has never been mentioned before in any report.