

AH
20 June
VI/R/4/1887POLANDCOMMUNICATION
WaterwaysA "Szlachcic" CaptainSOURCE ROME: no information availableDATE OF OBSERVATION: current period

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It is known that in Poland people must now declare their social origin to be noted in their individual files. Many Poles try to conceal their real bourgeois, noble, capitalist or anyhow reactionary origin - as one would say using Communist terms, and declare that they come from farmers', workers', small tradesmen's families, or something of this kind. The Polish State would really like to know the truth about the social origin of a all Polish citizens, but on the other hand, it is already content if the citizens refuse to put their real social "reactionary" origin on their individual questionnaires, considering this gesture a first step toward the "social recovery" of the Polish people.

But there is a captain in the Polish navy who - when asked by the authorities to which social class he belonged before the war - answered that he was a member of the nobility (pochodzenie szlacheckie - szlachcic,) although he never had anything in common with the Polish "Szlachcic."

The Polish authorities cannot say anything to a citizen sincerely declaring his social origin, even if they guess he is making fun of them.

This captain, whose name is not known - is a very capable navy officer and being an expert he is greatly appreciated by the Poloceans in GDYNIA, in spite of the fact that his passive and quiet opposition against the present regime is certainly not regarded with favor and might one day really cause him some trouble.

But meanwhile, there is perfect order aboard his ship, and discipline is exemplary indeed. He behaves like any good captain should and takes part in all the meetings of the organizations existing aboard his ship, pretending to be most loyal to the regime, while he is constantly trying to ridicule the words, actions and discussions of the Party members, activists and any other servants of the Communists. But as he never uses any words, which might do him harm and always remains within the limits, nothing has so far happened to him

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Naturally this cannot go on for ever, but as long as he is captain of his ship he can very well revenge himself on those among his crew who preach Communism. "Chamow nalezy zwalczac ich wlasna bronia" (One must fight them with their own arms) - he says with regard to the Communists and, therefore, he does not miss an opportunity to take part in the political discussions so that he can hurt those who talk a lot and do very little and do not at all behave like good Communists. Thus woe betide if one of the Communist sailors on his ship does not carry out the captain's orders in a perfect way or does not work well. In such cases the captain sends very strict reports to the management of the shipping company asking that the sailors concerned be severely punished.

"If he is a Communist, I will not forgive him the least flaw," the captain says to his colleagues whom he trusts - and one should recall that although not all Polish captains have themselves called "szlachcic," almost all of them are not members of the Communist Party. Thus they form a remarkably "reactionary" group within the Polish merchant marine.

From conversations with various Polish captains, it appears that many of them believe that if the present situation in Poland should last for another few years, the regime will "purge" all pre-war maritime commanders as elements not loyal to the Communist regime, replacing them with young captains educated in Communist schools.

EVAL. COMMENT: Although this report does not contain any proper news it might be a good theme for a periclage.