

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of the Chief, Economic Research
Office of Research and Reports

Current Support Memorandum

ORR

DATE: 2 September 1954

SUBJECT: Abolition of Soviet Controlled Zone in Polish Port of SZEZECIN
(Stettin)

It has been reported that the USSR will relinquish control of that area of the Port of Szezecin which has been under complete Soviet domination since World War II. Source claims to have seen a Russian language "transfer of powers certificate." 1/

This is the first evidence of a Soviet concession to Poland similar to the concessions made to East Germany following the riots in 1953 and to other European Satellites in abolishing joint stock companies. This concession is more apparent than real and is probably calculated to reduce Polish resentment which has resulted in acts of sabotage and work slowdowns at the ports. It is highly improbable that actual controls will be relinquished in view of the importance attached to Polish merchant shipping in support of Communist China.

The port area under discussion comprises a sizeable portion of the Port of Szezecin and has heretofore been administered as Soviet territory. Ships entering or leaving the area have by-passed all Polish authorities including customs. The balance of the port as well as all other Polish ports are under a "joint" Soviet-Polish administration. The entire Polish merchant marine for that matter has been under strict surveillance, if not actual control by Soviet personnel. Soviet security and political officers have been placed aboard all vessels and in strategic positions within the administrative departments.

Polish seamen are proud of their merchant fleet traditions and are contemptuous of Soviet practices and operations. They are most resentful of the transfer of many of their best vessels to Soviet registry. This resentment has been evidenced by both overt and covert resistance to Soviet control. Acts of sabotage and work slowdowns have been common.

Bloc merchant shipping capabilities depend to a marked degree upon the Polish merchant fleet. The ports of Szezecin and Gdynia are among the best equipped Bloc ports on the Baltic Sea. Gdynia is the principal Baltic port for Bloc trade with Communist China. Maximum Soviet support of Communist China depends in great measure upon Polish ports and the Polish merchant fleet.

1/

~~SECRET~~