

Captain Quits Polish Liner Batory On Which Eisler Escaped to Europe

Skipper and Ship's Doctor Ask British Authorities to Give Them Asylum

By THOMAS P. RONAN
Special to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LONDON, June 23—Capt. Jan Cwiklinski, master of the Polish liner Batory on which Gerhart Eisler, German-born Communist leader, fled from the United States in 1949, has left his ship and sought asylum in Britain.

In a brief statement tonight the British Home Office confirmed reports that Captain Cwiklinski and the ship's doctor, who also has asked for permission to remain in Britain, did not sail with the ship when she left Hebburn on the River Tyne in northeast England Saturday after having been re-fitted.

The brief statement said that Captain Cwiklinski had been traced and detained, that he had sought permission to remain in Britain and that his request was under consideration. Of the doctor, the statement said that it could only confirm that he had left the ship.

However, other sources reported that the two men were being held in prison in or near Hebburn and



The New York Times
Capt. Jan Cwiklinski

that they were being questioned by British immigration and intelligence officials. There was little

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CAPTAIN OF BATORY QUILTS HIS VESSEL

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doubt here that their request would be granted.

The doctor, whose name was said to be Taklaeter, was first reported missing last Thursday. Local police authorities made a thorough search for him but they have not disclosed when or where they found him.

Among the places they visited was a Polish club in nearby Newcastle where eight members of the Batory crew who later received political asylum in Britain stayed after they had jumped ship two years ago.

The absence of Captain Cwiklinski was first noticed by Henry Leslie, the pilot, who took the ship out of the harbor. When he went aboard the Batory last Thursday to move her from her dock to a berth in the river he inquired about the captain and was informed he was in a hospital ashore. The first officer was in charge of the liner.

When the ship sailed Saturday the pilot again inquired about Captain Cwiklinski and was told that he was not on board. Mr. Leslie said later that the vessel had been taken out to sea by the chief officer and that the latter "obviously" was in command.

The liner was en route to Gdynia, Poland, to complete her crew and take on supplies.

She was to leave there Saturday for Copenhagen, Denmark, to take aboard 600 passengers, most of them Danes, with some Swedes and Norwegians for a fifteen-day cruise to England, Scotland, Ireland and France.

Herr Eisler, former Comintern agent stowed away on the Batory in May, 1949, after he had skipped the \$23,500 bail in which he had been held after his conviction for perjury. When the ship put in at Southampton he was carried off after a struggle by Scotland Yard policemen acting at the behest of the United States State Department.

Captain Wiklinski and Polish officials here had declared that they would not give Herr Eisler up but they changed their minds when confronted with the choice of surrendering him or delaying the liner's sailing. Nine days later the liner was held by a British court, which ruled that the offense with which he was charged in the United States was not cov-

ered by the treaty of extradition between the United States and Britain.

The 14,287-ton Batory was withdrawn from the North Atlantic run after a dock labor boycott and other obstacles had made it difficult for her to operate from New York.

Captain Cwiklinski, 57 years old, spent most of World War II in a German detention camp in the Netherlands. He had been sent to that country by the British Ministry of War Transport to bring out a liner but arrived after the Germans had overrun the country.

Captain Decorated by Reds

LONDON, June 23 (AP)—Jan Cinilinski, captain of the Batory, was decorated by Communist Poland for his part in the Eisler escape episode. The Batory, pride of Red Poland, is the ship Russian spy Valentine Gubitchev took home from New York. Gubitchev, a Russian engineer-diplomat working at the United Nations, was sentenced to fifteen years in prison for espionage in the Judith Coplon case in New York, but his sentence was suspended on condition that he leave the United States. He departed March 20, 1950, aboard the Batory.

The Batory, owned by the Polish Government, was built in 1936. Her home port is Gdynia, Poland. She was on the North Atlantic run after World War II but was withdrawn after New York authorities refused to handle her cargo.

When the vessel returned to New York June 4, 1949, for the first time after Herr Eisler's escape, the United States Government sent a swarm of agents aboard. The crew and 111 of the 683 passengers were detained for an Ellis Island hearing. Two days later an immigration official announced the crew had been "cleared of any implication in the flight of Eisler."

Captain Cwiklinski and his medical officer are the third and fourth Poles to make a dramatic switch to the free world since last March.

Lieut Franciszek Jarecki of the Polish Air Force landed a Russian MIG jet fighter on the Danish Island of Bornholm in the Baltic Sea March 5. Eleven weeks later, another Polish air force officer, Lieut. Zdzislaw Jazwenski, crash-landed a second MIG on Bornholm. Both received asylum in the West.

Daily Express

SAY JUNE 27 1953

THE CAPTAIN I told the Reds: 'I'm too old an apple tree to grow pears'...

FEAR MADE HIM A FUGITIVE

Express Staff Reporter JOHN KING



JAN CWIKLINSKI—yesterday.

FEAR. That was the reason Captain Jan Cwiklinski, 53-year-old skipper of the Polish liner *Batory*, walked off his ship re-fitting at Hebburn-on-Tyne last week to seek sanctuary in Britain.

A warning stepped up his fear. It prompted him to bundle his personal belongings in a leather grip and impelled him to walk down the gangway without a last fleeting glance of the 14,300-ton luxury ship he had commanded for more than seven years.

Behind him, too, he left his wife Slawa, his 17-year-old daughter, and nine-year-old son. They were at home in Gdynia, waiting for the father who will never return.

Yesterday Captain Jan—as he is known among seafarers from Gdynia to Gallipoli—told reporters of the warning and the fear.

The gold-toothed smile he always wears vanished as he spoke slowly: "I was warned what would happen when I returned to Poland after this voyage.

"My escape was not planned. I had to go. I would have been arrested and prosecuted.

"My crime? You may not understand, it is no crime... I speak English and have contact with English and American passengers."

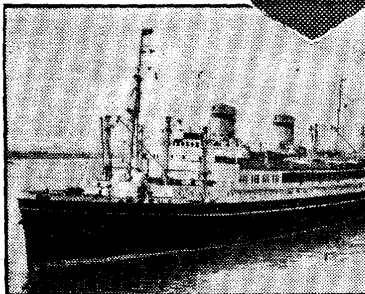
Who warned Captain Jan? He would not say more than: "Another person is involved. I cannot tell you whether he is in the *Batory*... you know what that means."

Unlike many Polish sea captains Captain Jan never joined the Communist Party. He was approached many times. "I told them I was too old an apple tree to grow pears," he said. "On board the *Batory* were political officers, three of them, the chief named Peter Szemiel (say Sheemiel).

"They were spying all the time. They had a net around all, including me," said Captain Jan. "When he gets back to Poland I wish him all the best," he added with a grin.

The medical officer of the *Batory* left the ship and sought sanctuary in Britain two days before the captain left. The double escape was not planned, said Captain Jan — "Dr. Tackreiter left on his own. I did not know anything until I was told on board."

AND THE SHIP HE WILL NEVER TAKE TO SEA AGAIN



BATORY—The Polish liner that makes headlines... "Trouble Ship" is one of the names she has been given this side of the Iron Curtain.

'Spring-clean'

Soviet-inspired purges are taking place throughout the Polish Merchant Navy, Captain Jan revealed.

"In the last two months there has been a spring-clean and 500 sailors have been discharged. All of them served with the Allies during the war.

"A sailor is suddenly discharged, he goes home and we do not hear any more. That is how it is."

Political officers ruled Polish ships. They gave permission to sailors who wished to go ashore.

"What is it like behind the Iron Curtain?" That question was answered simply: "It has not changed since Stalin's death. It is still as harsh."

Captain Jan spoke little of his family. He did not think he would broadcast a message to them for fear of reprisals.

'Confiscated'

"All their belongings will be confiscated and they will be moved to some place more than 100 miles from the seaside because of my action," he said.

He was the captain when the *Batory* brought Communist Gerhard Eisler out of America and he explained: "I had no part in it. I did not know he was on board when I left New York."

Captain Jan, now freed from Brixton Jail after being granted sanctuary, said of his plans: "I have offers, one from Florida, but first I want to stay here awhile.

"I chose England because it is the country of real freedom. I want to write a book and rest, rest."