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The Establishment of Pomeranian cities at the threshold of independence for the Second Polish Republic was not limited merely to petty-bourgeois, clerical or intellectual spheres. From at least the mid-nineteenth century, the local landed gentry was also a permanent element thereof. Earlier, due to its privileged political and economic position, this group played a leading social role, without becoming overly involved in urban circles. Under the influence of the changes brought by the Spring of Nations and the modernisation processes of the Prussian state, the rapprochement of various environments, social groups and the elites began. In turn, in the 1870s, the intensifying Germanisation policy – contrary to the intentions of Chancellor Otto von Bismarck – consolidated the Polish community. The combination of economic, social and political factors also influenced the high-profile activity of Polish landowners in the urban environments of the Prussian partition<sup>1</sup>.

It was no different in Toruń, which played the role of an important regional centre. Polish landed gentry activists – precisely in this city – convened the economic assembly every year, created financial institutions that served their countrymen in increasing the value and competitiveness of their enterprises. Starting from the slogans of economic development, they instilled the idea of organic work in the Polish so-

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<sup>1</sup> Sz. Wierchostawski, *Orzeł czarny i orzeł biały. Problemy modernizacji społeczeństwa polskiego prowincji Prusy Zachodnie w XIX i na początku XX stulecia*, Toruń 2011, pp. 170-172.

ciety, which over time became a political paradigm based on national solidarity. An important issue was to improve the level of Polish education, which is why the Academic Assistance Society was founded in nearby Chełmno, which subsidised talented youth, and a few years later in Toruń, the Association for Moral Interests. In the following years, the Academic Society was founded in Toruń, patronising the development of science and national culture in West Prussia. The primary activity of landowners in rural areas – in agricultural circles, folk societies, trade cooperatives, financial institutions – could not be overestimated, changing not only the face of the countryside, but also the mentality, awareness and intellectual level of the peasants<sup>2</sup>.

All these initiatives put forward, implemented and financed by the Pomeranian landed gentry contributed to the formation of a Polish intelligentsia aware of their own nationality – largely comprised of landowners personally. The inevitable result of these processes was the birth of modern political movements, which over time broke the monopoly of the landed gentry for the political representation of Poles in the representative bodies of Prussia and the German Reich<sup>3</sup>. Paradoxically, the landowners themselves – though unintentionally – contributed to their own marginalisation in favour of the participation of the intelligentsia, the petty bourgeoisie and representatives of other social groups in public life. However, they did not cease to occupy managerial positions in previously created organisations and institutions, still playing the role of local authorities.

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<sup>2</sup> J. Borzyszkowski, *Ziemiaństwo pomorskie a inteligencja i stan średni na przełomie XIX i XX wieku*, [in:] *Szlachta i ziemiaństwo na Pomorzu w dobie nowożytnej XVI-XX wieku (Przemiany struktur wewnętrznych)*, edit. J. Dygdała, Toruń 1993, pp. 125-132; A. Bukowski, *Oświata i nauka w programie pozytywistycznym toruńskiego Towarzystwa Moralnych Interesów (1869-1884)*, *Rocznik Gdański*, 1983, vol. 43, no. 2, pp. 5-58; B. Osmólska-Piskorska, *Pomorskie Towarzystwo Pomocy Naukowej. Pół wieku istnienia i działalności 1848-1898*, Toruń 1948; K. Wajda, *W dobie zaboru pruskiego 1875-1918*, [in:] *Dzieje Towarzystwa Naukowego w Toruniu 1875-1975*, vol. 1, edit. M. Biskup, Toruń 1977, pp. 11-110.

<sup>3</sup> Sz. Wierzchosławski, *Ziemiaństwo wśród elit polskiego ruchu narodowego w Prusach Zachodnich w drugiej połowie XIX i początkach XX wieku*, [in:] *Szlachta i ziemiaństwo na Pomorzu w dobie nowożytnej XVI-XX wieku*, edit. J. Dygdała, Toruń 1993, pp. 115-118.

The outbreak of World War I, in addition to the Poles' understandable fear of the ravages and uncertainty of tomorrow, also unleashed hopes for the resurrection of the Polish state. Along with subsequent appeals and later more specific declarations by the partitioning countries, the conviction about the inevitability of this process grew. Of course, the perspective was still a bit vague, and the intentions of the emperors were calculated and cynically focused on acquiring new, combative recruits to join the army. However, the upheaval in Russia, the deadlock of Germany on the Western Front, and finally the internationalisation of the Polish cause, in 1918 gave grounds to link the end of the war with the restitution of the Republic of Poland. Among the circles of people aware of the international situation, nothing was more present in the discussion than the perspective of regaining independence. The good news for the Poles spread quickly, at first thanks to the press (despite censorship blocking information on Germany's failures), and later in private correspondence and oral communication. At the beginning of October 1918, Polish newspapers reported on the peace proposal of Prince Maximilian of Baden's new German government, based on the January message of the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson. They cited the statement of Władysław Seyda – chairman of the Polish Circle in the Reichstag – who, referring to point 13 of this address, made lasting peace dependent on the creation of a united Polish state<sup>4</sup>. A few days later, first-hand information came to Nawra, near Toruń, via correspondence. Izabela Skórzewska, who witnessed those days in Berlin, gave her brother, Jan Szczaniecki, detailed reports. She left no doubt as to the emotions of the German parliamentary circles: the “despair, anger and indignation of the Germans is indescribable”, and at the same time she talked about her own joy, hopes and actions: “Poznań and Royal Prussia with Gdańsk, Silesia are sure for Poland. We immediately began preparing the organisation

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<sup>4</sup> *Propozycja pokojowa Niemiec. Stanowisko Polaków*, Kurjer Poznański, 8 October 1918, no. 231; *Koło polskie domaga się odbudowania niezależnej Polski, obejmującej wszystkie ziemie polskie z własnym wybrzeżem morskim*, Dziennik Bydgoski, 9 October 1918, no 230; *Odrodzenie Polski*, Pielgrzym, 12 October 1918, no. 123.

for the time of handing over the Prussian partition”<sup>5</sup>. The package addressed to Nawra included one more letter – of Władysław Seyda to “Dr. M”<sup>6</sup> – unfortunately not preserved. It was a common practice to convey important third party correspondence to family or loved ones for better orientation. Thanks to this, the circulation of direct reports expanded. In this way, Szczaniecki could give his neighbours fresh and confirmed news.

At that time, the German local administration was no longer unaware of the fact that Poles were happily awaiting the fall of the Reich. Chełmno Landrat, probing the moods of the opinion-forming Polish landed gentry, however, came to the conclusion that some of them (especially the wealthier) were still expectant<sup>7</sup>. If one were to give faith to this opinion – although it should be emphasised that it was a subjective assessment of the landrat – it might have been related to the progressive radicalisation of social moods resulting from poverty, prolonged war and famine. Waves of strikes and demonstrations had been haunting the German Reich since 1917. They also took place in Toruń and the surrounding area. The most famous ones occurred in Chełmża, where they also took on a nationalistic character. The progressive decomposition of the German state in the autumn of 1918 led to an increase in sentiments against the system that might result in Bolshevik conflagration, already known from the Russian territories. However, as the following weeks showed, Polish landowners were able to join in dynamic social movements – on the one hand, counteracting radicalisation, and on the other, directing the protest against the German authorities<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>5</sup> The State Archives in Toruń (referred to as: SAT), Szczanieckis of Nawra Archives, ref. no. 486, letter of Izabela Skórzewska nee Szczaniecka to Jan Szczaniecki, undated.

<sup>6</sup> It was probably about a letter to Dr. Władysław Mieczkowski – a Poznań lawyer and national activist, a member of the Reichstag, a member of the secret Citizens’ Committee, originating from the Pomeranian landed gentry, related, among others to Donimirski, Ślaski, and Szczaniecki families.

<sup>7</sup> State Archives in Gdańsk, Kwidzyn Regency, ref. no. 10158, a letter from Chełmno Landrat to the president of the Kwidzyn Regency on October 8, 1918.

<sup>8</sup> M. Wojciechowski, *Dzieje Chełmży w latach 1914-1920*, [in:] *Dzieje Chełmży*, edit. Mieczysław Wojciechowski, Chełmża 1994, p. 150.

The crisis in Germany occurred in the first days of November 1918, when information about the rebellion of sailors in Kiel and the creation of revolutionary authorities (workers' and soldiers' councils) in subsequent centres reached Berlin. However, the coup was thwarted by the central circles of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), which forced the abdication of the emperor, handing power over to the Council of People's Plenipotentiaries headed by Friedrich Ebert, and then proclaimed the creation of the German Republic. The weakening of central power opened the way for Poles to act in the Prussian partition. Two days after the Berlin events – on 12 November – the Central Citizens' Committee, established in the underground six months earlier as the beginning of the future Polish power, appeared in Poznań. It then appointed the Provisional Commissariat of the Supreme People's Council (SPC) while initiating the creation of a system of Polish People's Councils as a counterweight to workers' and soldiers' or peasants' councils (usually quite radical, with a German or mixed national composition). In accordance with applicable law, the current system of Polish *poviat* electoral committees (for legislative bodies) was used, which were to rally to prepare elections for the Polish Regional Parliament<sup>9</sup>.

In the following days Polish rallies were organised throughout the entire Prussian partition. In Toruń, apart from the Polish-German Workers' and Soldiers' Council (which postulated, among others, the demand for the division of landed estates), the Polish People's Council was established on 17 November 1918, which became the local representative body of Poles. Its work was managed by lawyers Władysław Szuman (chairman) and Stanisław Esden-Tempski as well as a medical doctor, Otton Steinborn<sup>10</sup>. At the same time, Pomeranian landowners jointly organised the structures of people's councils in the upcountry.

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<sup>9</sup> A. Gulczyński, „Poznański” *Sejm Dzielnicowy, czyli uwag kilka o korzeniach parlamentaryzmu odradzającej się Polski*, *Kronika Miasta Poznania* 1998, vol. 66, no. 4, pp. 9-11.

<sup>10</sup> M. Wojciechowski, *Toruń w latach rewolucji listopadowej (1918-1919)*, *Rocznik Toruński* 1966, vol. 1, pp. 114-115; K. Przybyszewski, *Wyzwolenie i pierwsze lata Torunia w niepodległej Polsce*, *Acta Universitatis Nicolai Copernici. Historia* 1978, no. 14, pp. 95-96.

Adam Czarliński – the owner of the land estate in Zakrzewko – acting as the chairman (from 1912) of the Polish election committee in the Toruń powiat, in accordance with applicable regulations, convened the so-called peripheral rallies in Chełmża, Siemoń, Złotoria, Podgórz on the following Sunday, 24 November, and a week later informative gatherings in Papowo Toruńskie and Biskupie, Bierzłowo, and Brąchnówek. At the rallies he was assisted by Jan Donimirski (owner of Łysomice), Wincenty Czarliński (his cousin), numerous priests and speakers from Toruń. The leaders of the landed gentry community turned out to be far-sighted political activists who, aware of the prevailing mood within society, were able to muster enthusiastic crowds of workers and peasants. Adam Czarliński began his speech at one of the meetings by welcoming his fellow countrymen “as free citizens of the future free Poland, which we need to rebuild with harmony and perseverance”<sup>11</sup>. The empowerment of women at the outset was an important gesture confirming civic equality, and one which he continued. Recognising these values, he called for concerted work, focusing the attention of the crowds attending the rally on a common goal that not only fulfilled the dreams of several generations of Poles, but materialised the current policy of national circles. The speech of Jan Donimirski, a landowner of the younger generation, was even more emphatic as he outlined a systemic vision for the “future people’s Poland”<sup>12</sup>. And he did not mean the system of government imposed a quarter of a century later by Joseph Stalin, but the new democratic order.

The rallies selected the People’s Council of the Toruń powiat, headed by – previously mentioned – Adam Czarliński (as president) and Jan Donimirski (as deputy). In addition, two priests, a doctor and two other residents of Chełmża joined the board<sup>13</sup>. The council vigor-

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<sup>11</sup> State Archives in Bydgoszcz (referred to as: SAB), Subcommissariat of the Supreme People’s Council in Gdansk (referred to as: SSPCG), ref. no. 49, report from a rally in Papowo Toruńskie, December 1, 1918.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. In addition to A. Czarliński and J. Donimirski, four other owners of larger farms (over 50 ha) sat in the Polish People’s Council of Toruń: – Jan Szlosowski (owner of the estate of Dębiny), Jan Rudnicki, Władysław Adamczyk and Anastazy Ordon.

ously began organising the Polish population and fulfilling tasks commissioned by the Supreme People's Council's Provisional Commissariat, and later by the Subcommittee Office in Gdańsk created specifically for Royal Prussia and the Duchy of Prussia. Initially, these included issues related to public safety, introduction of the Polish language to schools, material assistance for soldiers returning from the front, disseminating national demands formulated by the Supreme People's Council, and consolidation of the Polish population around them. The basic result of the autumn campaign of Poles in the Prussian partition was the election of nearly 1400 delegates to the Polish Regional Parliament, which took place in Poznań on 3-5 December 1918. Royal Prussia (the historical name of Pomerania was used at that time) was represented by 262 people, among whom were about 10% of representatives of the landed gentry. Seemingly, this appears to be a small number. However, considering the revolutionary mood prevailing in Central Europe at the time and the actual percentage of landed gentry in Pomeranian society (including families around 1-3%), this representation may be considered as numerous and an appropriate reflection of the authority enjoyed by representatives of this stratum. Among the twenty-one delegates of the Toruń powiat there was only one landowner – Jan Donimirski from Łysomice. However, from the farther areas there were, among others, Countess Maria Potocka and Wacław Hulewicz (from the Wąbrzeźno powiat), Bolesław Donimirski (from the Grudziądz powiat), Emilia and Tadeusz Parczewski (from the Świecie powiat) and Bolesław Ossowski (from the Lubawa powiat)<sup>14</sup>. The Parliament clearly articulated the will of Poles living in the lands of the Prussian partition to join the reborn Republic. In addition, it legitimised the political actions already taken, also elected the Supreme People's Council and consolidated the Polish community<sup>15</sup>.

With some delay, underground structures were organised for legal political actions, aimed at undertaking armed struggle. After all, it was not certain how the treaty solutions would be arranged and whether

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<sup>14</sup> *Dziennik Polskiego Sejmu Dzielnicowego w Poznaniu, w grudniu 1918*, Poznań 1918, pp. 112-114.

<sup>15</sup> A. Gulczyński, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

they would be satisfactory for the Poles in the Prussian partition. However, after the outbreak of the uprising in Greater Poland, serious consideration was given to the possibility that it might spread into Pomerania. Hopes were also associated with General Józef Haller's so-called Blue Army, which was expected to arrive in Gdańsk by sea from France. In such conditions, it would be desirable to call for military action in the Pomeranian hinterland. Therefore, at the turn of 1918 and 1919, the Military Organization of Pomerania (MOP) was established. Its structures were also co-created by landowners – sometimes the same who operated in legal organs. Count Oswald Potocki (from Piątkowo in the Wąbrzeźno powiat) was in the top management of the organisation, being at the same time a prominent member of the SPC Subcommittee in Gdańsk and Leon III Czarliński (son of the aforementioned president of the Toruń Powiat People's Council). The latter was also the head of the People's Guard Department of the SPC Subcommittee and commander of the district of the First MOP in Toruń; he was involved in the collection of weapons and later the transfer of volunteers to the Greater Poland army. Landed gentry representatives also commanded the neighbouring districts: II in Grudziądz – Jerzy and Bolesław Donimirski and III in Lubawa – Bolesław Ossowski<sup>16</sup>.

Preparations for an attempt to take military control over Toruń were undertaken by a young officer, Waclaw Hulewicz. He came from a Greater Poland landed gentry family, and shortly before the outbreak of the war he leased the estate of Gajewo in the Wąbrzeźno powiat. He returned there in November 1918 and took up the organisation of the Powiat People's Guard and the MOP units in Wąbrzeźno, Golub and Kowalewo. He consulted his bold idea of capturing the Toruń fortress with the help of local volunteers with Lt. Col. Julian Stachiewicz

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<sup>16</sup> J. Karwat, *Od idei do czynu. Myśl i organizacje niepodległościowe w Poznaniu w latach 1887-1919*, Poznań 2002, pp. 516-517; M. Wojciechowski, *Powrót Pomorza do Polski 1918-1920*, Warszawa-Poznań-Toruń 1982, s. 84; B. Osmólska-Piskorska, *Oswald Potocki*, [in:] *Polski Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. XXVIII, edit. E. Rostworowski, Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk-Łódź 1984-1985, pp. 116-117; P. K. Kutty, *Leon III Czarliński*, [in:] *Słownik Biograficzny Pomorza Nadwiślańskiego*, vol. 1, edit. S. Gierszewski, Gdańsk 1992, pp. 267-268.



(Chief of Staff of the Main Command in Poznań). Although he “silently” accepted the subversive action, he warned that in accordance with SPC’s guidelines, insurgent forces from near Inowrocław would not be able to actively support this operation. Nevertheless, Hulewicz undertook preparations for an armed uprising. He worked in close cooperation with the aforementioned Wincenty Czarliński, who was the commander of the MOP in Chełmża. They began methodical organizational work. Czarliński allegedly managed to recruit nearly a thousand volunteers ready to stand under arms. They needed weapons and for this purpose the organisers took a loan from the branch of the Bank of the Economic Companies Association in Toruń, which they personally guaranteed. The area of the Toruń fortress was divided into six sectors, which were regularly monitored by intelligence agents. One of them was careless and, as a result, the underground network was detected and broken by German services. Many Poles involved in this operation (with Hulewicz at the forefront) – having avoided arrest – moved to Kuyavia and joined the units of insurgent forces forming there<sup>17</sup>.

In view of the lack of resource materials, it is difficult today to determine the chances of success for a possible military campaign in Toruń and the surrounding area. It should be assumed that the underground did not have any significant forces, but rather hoped to inspire enthusiasm and support from Poles living in the region. Anyway, such logic characterised the first stage of insurgent operations in Greater Poland. On 2 January 1919, residents of nearby Inowrocław (about 500 people) took up arms and suffered a severe defeat. Three days later, the capture of this city by the Poles was facilitated by the bold and hard-fought assault of insurgent troops, significantly assisted by volunteer troops from the Kuyavian hinterland and two companies of the regular Polish Army from the 31st infantry regiment in Włocławek. At the turn of January and February 1919, there could be no more similar activities in Toruń, where a stronger German military garrison

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<sup>17</sup> The Kórnik Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences, ref. no. BK 11732/1, Waclaw Hulewicz, “Is it always pleasant to remember?”, vol. 1, typescript, 1971, pp. 124-127; K. Przybyszewski, *Waclaw Hulewicz*, [in:] *Toruński Słownik Biograficzny*, vol. 4, edit. K. Mikulski, Toruń 2004, pp. 103-106.

was stationed, and the population potential of Poles was less favourable there than in Western Kuyavia (in 1910, the Polish population was just over 34%, with 57% in Inowrocław, 51% in the rural areas of the Toruń powiat, and 66% in the Inowrocław powiat)<sup>18</sup>. Nevertheless, the documents found in the files of the General Aide Corps of the Commander-in-Chief confirm the organisational activities of the military structures in Pomerania<sup>19</sup>. Even in May 1919, in view of the threat of a German offensive, the Supreme Command in Warsaw seriously considered using the Pomeranian underground – “largely organised for the uprising” – to seize Toruń and the Chełmno Land<sup>20</sup>.

In connection with the outbreak and development of the Greater Poland Uprising, as well as the underground centres discovered here and there, the German authorities took a decidedly anti-Polish course in Pomerania from January 1919. Polish leaders and hostages were arrested after the armed incidents in nearby Chełmża between the People’s Guard and Grenzschutz. Toruń was besieged; the activity of Polish organizations was limited, the People’s Guard dissolved, and national activists were closely monitored. In May, the persecution culminated in the dissolution of the SPC Subcommittee in Gdańsk; all Polish meetings were banned in Toruń, and the functioning of the Polish People’s Councils was obstructed throughout Pomerania. A partial siege was introduced, suspending some constitutional freedoms. The significantly increased number of Grenzschutz units obtained great freedom in repressive activities (searches, arrests, etc.)<sup>21</sup>.

Only the decisions of the Versailles Treaty cut German hopes for maintaining the region and thus began the process of relaxation. At

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<sup>18</sup> K. Wajda, *Stosunki ludnościowe na ziemiach pomorskich w latach 1850-1914*, [in:] *Historia Pomorza*, vol. IV, pt. 1: *Ustrój, gospodarka, społeczeństwo*, edit. S. Salmonowicz, Toruń 2000, p. 128; B. Grześ, *Ludność niemiecka w mieście Inowrocławiu i powiecie na przełomie XIX i XX w.*, Ziemia Kujawska 1971, vol. 3, pp. 55-57.

<sup>19</sup> Józef Piłsudski Institute in America (referred to as: JPIA), General Aide Corps of the Commander-in-Chief (referred to as: GACC), ref. no. 701/2/46, report from the Duchy of Prussia, Royal Prussia and Warmia regarding the organization of military districts, undated – probably January 1919.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, ref. no. 701/2/4, report of Colonel Stanisław Haller, 3 May 1919.

<sup>21</sup> M. Wojciechowski, *Powrót Pomorza*, pp. 112-119; *idem*, *Powrót Torunia do Polski w 1920 r.*, *Rocznik Toruński*, 1971, vol. 5, pp. 13-14.

first, they did not resolve all the problems. To a large extent, local activists shouldered the task of preparing and negotiating with Germany the conditions for taking over Pomerania, securing its economic potential and the needs of the inhabitants. During this period – from August 1919 – people’s councils became active again. Pursuant to the agreement with the German side, Polish powiat delegates were appointed, acting as advisors to landrats and mayors of cities with powiat rights. Their real task was to become familiar with important administrative matters and control German officials. In the future, they were to hold the positions of the first Polish powiat starosts. Almost half of these posts in the future Pomeranian Voivodeship were entrusted to landowners. On the one hand, this was related to the lack of people educated and prepared to perform such functions. On the other hand, it pointed to the authority and trust enjoyed by representatives of the landed gentry in Pomerania, who were offered their positions by people’s councils<sup>22</sup>. It was no different in the Toruń powiat, where Adam Czarliński was appointed a Polish delegate from 11 August 1919. Initially, he worked – as before, as the chairman of the Powiat People’s Council – at his own manor in Zakrzewko. He met Landrat three times a week for longer conferences, during which he presented the main problems facing the Polish population. Less than a month later, he received his own room at the Landrat’s Office, where he served for four days of the week. He devoted the remaining two working days to managing his own land assets<sup>23</sup>. Over time, this changed, because in the face of the plethora of clerical work and the requirements of the SPC’s Subcommittee, he had to perform his duties for five days, which was reflected in the condition of his own enterprises. Although he received remuneration for his work (about 1000-1500 marks), he left no doubts in his correspondence with the Subcommittee that in order to cope with the task he suffered “significant health and property sacrifices”<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> T. Łaskiewicz, *Ziemiaństwo na Pomorzu w okresie dwudziestolecia międzywojennego – w perspektywie codzienności*, Inowrocław-Toruń 2013, p. 332.

<sup>23</sup> SAB, SSPCG, ref. no. 51, letter from Adam Czarliński to the SPC’s Subcommittee in Gdańsk, 2 September 1919.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, letter from Adam Czarliński to the SPC’s Subcommittee in Gdańsk, 28 October 1919; M. Wojciechowski, *Powrót Pomorza*, p. 154.

In the first place, Adam Czarliński took care of suspending the export of agricultural products outside the powiat. The aim was not only to provide for the dietary needs of the inhabitants of Toruń and the surrounding area, but also to secure food reserves that could, after joining Pomerania, supply the Polish internal market. Due to the scale of war damage and the decline in agricultural production, preventing famine was a fundamental political issue for the newly created state. To maintain order, the People's Guard was restored and armed quite quickly. Separate controllers were also appointed to prevent profiteering on food. Czarliński also had to take care of clerical positions after the formal takeover of the Pomeranian region by Poland and prepare himself for running the district. It must be admitted that in all matters he cooperated with the local German landrat, and it was rather in relations with the SPC's Subcommittee in Gdańsk that minor tensions occurred. It seems that they resulted from the lack of routine of the Toruń powiat delegate. To be specific, the Subcommittee quite abruptly urged him to respond to the circular regarding unemployment: "The office of yours belongs to the few from which we have not yet received the reply to the circular [...]. We urge you to send us a thoroughly completed form within three days or give us a reason why you cannot satisfy our summons"<sup>25</sup>. In turn, Adam Czarliński treated this prompt quite personally. Replying to that he complained that since gymnasium education for more than forty years no military or civil authority "has spoken to me in a similar tone. If I have been entrusted with the office of delegate, then I deserve enough confidence that I work under my strength in these difficult conditions"<sup>26</sup>.

Instead, local lawyer Stanisław Esden-Tempski, who came from a family with landed gentry roots, became the delegate of Toruń's high mayor. And at the beginning of 1920, in connection with his nomination as deputy voivode, he was replaced by a lawyer and landowner – Dr. Bolesław Wolszlegier (brother of deputies to the Reichstag, well-

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<sup>25</sup> SAB, SSPCG, ref. no. 51, letter from the SPC's Subcommittee in Gdańsk to Adam Czarliński, 29 October 1919.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., letter from Adam Czarliński to the SPC's Subcommittee in Gdańsk, 3 November 1919.

known national activists – priest Antoni and Władysław), who came from Szejnfeld in the Chojnice powiat. A few days later he became the first Polish president of Toruń<sup>27</sup>.

When discussing the involvement of landowners from the Toruń area in favour of Poland's restitution of Pomerania, one should also mention the role of Count Oswald Potocki, from the nearby (though in the Wąbrzeźno powiat) Piątkowo. His participation in the MOP has already been mentioned above, but it should be added that he was also a member of the Powiat People's Council, and then he was in the top management (next to Stefan Łaszewski, Dr. Józef Wybicki and Dr. Franciszek Kręcki) of the SPC's Subcommittee in Gdańsk. Due to his excellent command of French, he and his wife, Maria Potocka, translated materials later used by the Polish National Committee during the treaty negotiations in Versailles. Later, he participated in negotiations with the German side regarding the details of the takeover of Pomerania. At meetings of representatives of people's councils from Pomerania, he reported many important legal and clerical problems<sup>28</sup>. He was also the author of valuable studies in which he tried to present the local socio-political conditions to the Polish government and advised what actions should be taken to gain the support of the German population as well. He drew attention to the proper selection of military troops, which should bring order and eliminate the social disorder that followed the November Revolution. However, he warned against any retaliation and recommended exemplary discipline, firmness and formal and law-abiding actions. In his opinion, such an attitude might win the young Polish state universal recognition in Pomerania, as well as in the areas covered by the plebiscite<sup>29</sup>. As it turned out later, his fears about the behaviour of the Polish army were justified, and the authori-

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<sup>27</sup> Chojnice. *Śp. dr Bolesław Wolszlegier*, Pielgrzym, 5 June 1926, no 67; M. Wojciechowski, *Toruń w latach 1914-1920*, [in:] *Historia Torunia*, edit. M. Biskup, vol. III, no. 1: *W czasach zaboru pruskiego*, Toruń 2003, p. 476.

<sup>28</sup> SAB, SSPCG, ref. no. 22, minutes of the meeting of Powiat People's Councils in Tczew, 6 August 1919; *ibid.*, minutes of the congress of Polish powiat delegates in Grudziądz, 28 August 1919; B. Osmólska-Piskorska, *Oswald Potocki*, p. 116.

<sup>29</sup> JPIA, GACC, ref. no. 701/2/6, address of Count Oswald Potocki to the Polish government, 3 September 1919.

ties did not fully benefit from the suggestions<sup>30</sup>. As early as January 1920, they could not find a job for Count Potocki to use his extensive knowledge and excellent expertise of relations in Pomerania. His private home in Gdańsk could have become a social meeting place, favourably influencing local opinion forming circles. Too late – because Oswald Potocki died in Toruń on 22 February 1920. The commander of the Pomeranian Front noticed this, criticising the proceedings of Maciej Biesiadecki, the Commissioner General of the Republic of Poland in the Free City of Gdansk<sup>31</sup>.

Landed gentry also supported various national initiatives with their own money. An example would be the situation that arose during the discussion on the organization of the ceremony of welcoming Polish troops on 18 January 1920 in Toruń. That most important day, the culmination of many decades of dreams and efforts of Poles for a free homeland, was to be a great holiday with a dignified setting. The problem of the costs of appropriate decorations that should be covered from the city budget appeared quite quickly. However, the Polish People's Council feared a refusal by the German authorities still in office and decided to resort to a private loan. Felicja Gajewska (a landowner from Turzno near Toruń, also a sister-in-law of countess Maria Potocka) reacted without hesitation, allocating a substantial sum of 20,000 marks (corresponding to contemporary prices, e.g. of 70 tonnes of coal) for that purpose. She was the only private person to grant a loan for it. It was primarily thanks to her support that the capital of the Pomeranian Voivodeship took on a white and red robe, which "Gazeta Toruńska" could proudly notice. Gajewska herself did not even draw up a relevant contract nor did she later demand money that the city magistrate would not return for many months<sup>32</sup>.

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. *Sejm Rzeczypospolitej o Pomorzu w 1920 r. Sprawozdanie Komisji Pomorskiej*, prepared by J. Borzyszkowski, P. Hauser, Gdańsk 1985.

<sup>31</sup> JPIA, GACC, ref. no. 701/2/48, letter of General Józef Haller (commander of the Pomeranian Front) to General Stanisław Haller (chief of the General Staff), 4 March 1920.

<sup>32</sup> SAT, Polish People's Council in Toruń, ref. no. 9, Helena Steinborn's letter to Jan Brejski, Pomeranian Voivode, 23 January 1921; *Historyczne wydarzenie w Staro-*

From the presented outline of the activity of landed gentry from the area near Toruń for the return of Pomerania to the Republic of Poland in 1918-1920, a picture of sacrificial attitudes and full commitment may be drawn. Virtually at every stage of activity – from the underground movement, the people's councils, military underground, empowering the troops formed in Kuyavia, to administrative and political activities – the landed gentry co-decided on the shape of the national movement and played an important role in the entire process that led to restitution of Pomerania. It should be emphasised that in the autumn of 1918, landowners were able to join the movement of people's councils (to some extent also workers, soldiers and peasants<sup>33</sup>), clearly affecting its composition. Through their activity and unequivocal commitment, they successfully prevented it from social radicalisation, focusing on national demands. They also clearly saw the changes that followed World War, skilfully modifying their own rhetoric and political goals. It seems that their attitude at that time can be described as a synthesis of patriotism, pragmatism and social modernisation. This was a clear continuation of the organic movement, which effectively brought the separate social strata closer together. The consequence of this political concept, the activity of Pomeranian landed gentry in the years 1918-1920, and – importantly – the structure of land ownership, was close cooperation between peasants and landowners in this region in the interwar period.

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*stwie Toruńskim*, Gazeta Toruńska, 24 January 1919 r., no. 19, *ibid.*, *Przyjęcie generała Hallera w Toruniu*, 25 January 1919 r., no. 20.

<sup>33</sup> M. Wojciechowski, *Rady Chłopskie i Robotników Rolnych na Pomorzu Gdańskim w latach 1918-1920*, Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika w Toruniu. Nauki Humanistyczno-Społeczne, vol. 46, Historia VII, Toruń 1972, pp. 18-20.