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The Maritime League. A study of the dissolution of a social institution

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Communists, who, owing to the military support of Moscow, took the reins of power in Poland in the summer of 1944, were gradually extending the scope of their authority over the next few years until they took control over nearly all areas of social life in the late 1940s by administrative, military and terrorist means and by rigging parliamentary elections (1947). At the same time, in implementing their policy of integrating the German territories incorporated by Poland in 1945, they were forced to rely on the great ideological achievements and organisational potential of social institutions that were completely alien to their doctrine. The most important of them was the Polish Western Union (*Polski Związek Zachodni*, PZZ). This organisation had been established before 1939 and it had set itself the task of optimally integrating with the Polish state the German territories which had been incorporated into Poland as part of the Treaty of Versailles imposed on Germany as the losing side in World War I. PZZ was closely associated with the right-wing political party, the National Democrats. In their love of their homeland, the National Democrats (or the “Endeks”, as they were called) did not hide their nationalist sentiments, especially their hostile attitude towards the Germans, but also their hatred of Bolshevism and the Soviet Union. After World War II, some members of the National Democratic Party decided to establish cooperation with the communists from the Polish Workers’ Party (*Polska Partia Robotnicza*, PPR) to promote – as they believed – the Polish *raison d’état* beyond ideologies, which was to integrate the Polish state with the German lands granted to Warsaw at the conference of the victorious powers in Potsdam in the summer of

1945. The then leader of PPR, Władysław Gomułka made a decision to use the help of the Endeks, which he considered to be absolutely indispensable¹.

Another social organisation which also dated back to pre-war times was the Maritime League (*Liga Morska*, LM; before 1939, the Maritime and Colonial League). From 1945, the League worked in an ideologically incoherent cooperation with communists towards the goal of familiarising Polish citizens as fully as possible with maritime problems and “re-Polonising” the sea coast – an objective it shared with PZZ. The activities of LM were intertwined with the initiatives of PZZ, as both these organisations cooperated extensively on the Polish sea coast, which for the most part (except for a small belt in the region of the Gulf of Gdańsk) had been incorporated into Poland at the expense of Germany in 1945. As it later turned out, their fates were to be entwined even more strongly at the end of the 1940s when the communists broke up the cooperation and began to administratively liquidate social organisations which they found to be ideologically alien to them. The liquidation was carried out in several stages. First, the organisations were forced to change their ideological character and to accept new leaders, who were submissive to PPR. At the same time, members whose ideological position was inconsistent with that of the party were removed from these institutions. In the next stage, the already defenceless organisations were fused with others. In this way, PPR reduced the number of entities which assembled large social groups not directly associated with the party. As part of these activities, the political authorities came up with the idea of merging PZZ with LM. Because the scenario of incapacitating and then liquidating independent social structures had been planned out for years to come before and was in fact similar for all such organisations, I gave this study a title indicating that the post-war fate of the Maritime League was just one of the several “cases of the dissolution of social institutions”².

In the first instance, the communist party (PPR, and from December 1948 PZPR) decided to put a lid on the Polish Western Union. The authorities pressured and threatened the leaders of PZZ to abandon their national (national-democratic) ideology. The pre-war organisation was absurdly and falsely accused (in an internal document of PZZ from the end of the 1940s) of not having instigated the public before the war to “re-gain” the western lands which Poland had lost to Germany in the long historical process that had spanned several centuries. PZZ, incapacitated in the years 1947–1948, radically changed its goals and methods of work from the beginning of 1949. As the Union

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- 1 See more on this topic in older literature: Grzegorz Strauchold, *Mysł zachodnia i jej realizacja w Polsce Ludowej w latach 1945–1957* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2003). The fate of post-war social initiatives in the 1950s and 1960s was discussed very recently by a Szczecin (Stettin) historian, Adam Makowski. Adam Makowski, *Między iluzją a realiami. Towarzystwo Rozwoju Ziemi Zachodnich w latach 1957–1970* (Szczecin: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, 2019).
 - 2 G. Strauchold, *Mysł*.

evolved in the direction desired by the communists, its programme was becoming more and more a simple reflection of the theses of the then communist propaganda³.

The author of the valuable and still valid monograph on the history of post-war PZZ, Michał Musielak, pointed to another factor which had deepened the crisis of this organisation and had been associated with radical internal changes within the communist party. At that time (1948–1949) the party was increasingly transforming into (replacing?) the state. At the end of 1948 and the beginning of 1949, Władysław Gomułka was removed from power. His successor, Bolesław Bierut, initiated an accelerated transformation of the communist party and the entire state along the lines imposed by Moscow. In the process, PZZ was thoroughly purged. Repressive measures were taken against some of its leaders⁴.

The process of internal pacification in line with the communists' expectations also affected LM, which had so far been independent of the state authorities, had a reserved attitude towards the communists – to say the least – but was still useful to them.

The situation was to be moulded according to the party's plan during the Convention of LM, which had been postponed several times and was finally held on 23–24 February 1947 in the presence of the League's "party guardian" Zenon Kliszko (PPR). The election of the chairpersons of the convention evokes associations with the convents of PZZ: Zenon Kliszko and Deputy Speaker of the Sejm Waclaw Barcikowski (prominent members of PZZ) were elected deputies to the Chairman of the Convention, Minister of Labour and Social Welfare Kazimierz Rusinek from the Polish Socialist Party (*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna*, PPS). The opening address was delivered by the then President of the General Board of LM, Lt. Col. Stanisław Kiryluk (PPR), and one of the speeches was given by an honorary member of LM Eng. Eugeniusz Kwiatkowski, who was then the Government's Delegate for Coastal Affairs (later, the organisers were reproached for having invited Kwiatkowski to the meeting). His speech revolved around the thesis that the possession and skilful use of a sea coast leads to increasing the importance and prosperity of a state and the standard of living of its citizens.

The convention was stormy; the delegates clashed over the General Board's report (which mentioned some financial "deficiencies and flaws") and over statements regarding the freedom of speech in the discussion (or a lack thereof). Despite the

3 A classic example of this is the letter of 12 September 1949 by the secretary of the Wrocław district of PZZ, Mirosław Filipowicz, addressed to the General Board of PZZ. In discussing "[t]he tasks of PZZ at the new stage of its development", the author mentioned "mobilising society to fight for peace and against Anglo-Saxon imperialism; highlighting the role of the Soviet Union in regaining the Western Territories; the campaign to raise awareness of the transformations in West and East Germany; the execution of the economic plan as a response to imperialists; [and] the issue of national defence." Cf.: Archiwum Państwowe Poznań, Polski Związek Zachodni, sygn. [State Archives in Poznań, Polish Western Union, ref. no.], 617, 1.

4 Cf.: Musielak Michał, *Polski Związek Zachodni 1944–1950* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1986), 164–167.

disagreements, the General Board was given a vote of approval. The organisation's new statute was also approved, and new leaders of the League were appointed. The executive committee of the General Council was to be presided over by Rear Admiral Adam Mohuczy. Kazimierz Petruszewicz (from March 1947, Deputy Minister of Shipping) was appointed Vice-President. Among the members of the Council, there were people with firmly established positions in the highest circles of state and party authorities: Waław Barcikowski, Zenon Kliszko, Józef Dubiel, and former President of LM Stanisław Kiryluk.

At the end of the session of the League's first post-war convention, the following resolution was adopted by acclamation:

The First General Convention of the Maritime League in the Reborn, Democratic Homeland (...) declares that the regaining of the ancient Piast lands and the 500-kilometer-long sea coast is a great accomplishment of the Polish Democratic Camp. We believe that the inviolability of our borders on the Oder, the Neisse and the Baltic Sea is a fundamental condition of our independence and sovereignty. We solemnly declare that the Maritime League will work with full enthusiasm and dedication towards educating our nation in the spirit of love of the sea and the understanding that it is only the Democratic Camp that can defend and develop our coast (...).

The League's new Board was elected at the convention. Stanisław Kiryluk had to give up the President's seat. According to a later report of the Office for Mass Organisations at the Mass Organisations Department of the Central Committee of PPR, he felt bitter about it and did not want to participate any more in the initiatives of LM. This led to an organisational crisis in the League, which, to make matters worse, suffered "insurmountable difficulties" resulting from the lack of adequate funds. Of note, the Central Committee's report emphasised that, at that time, a political struggle was going on within this organisation between PPR and PPS. Representatives of the socialist party, who, according to Jerzy Bogusz from the Mass Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of PPR, considered themselves to be "the main hosts of the LEAGUE" were viewed as causing "great difficulties" to the communists. Moreover, the Central Committee of PPR believed that the majority of the delegates to the convention were elements hostile to communists or members who had only recently joined PPS. Despite this, PPR managed to take control of several departments of the League following the meeting.

The convention welcomed with appreciation the decision to establish the Committee for the Construction of the House of the Maritime League. Naturally, the House was to be built in Warsaw, since "The capital, which concentrates centres of state, political, cultural, social and economic administration must also be home to the administrative centre of the League, the pioneer of maritime thought".

The struggle for influence which was taking place during the convention was, seemingly, not reflected in the statute, Article 2 of which provided that "The Maritime League is a social-democratic organisation of higher public interest, whose aim is to encourage the largest possible masses of Polish citizens to work at sea and for the sea". Nonetheless, the transformations which were occurring at that time were signalled in the League's framework programme for the years 1947–1948. It said, among others, that the emphasis had been shifted towards economic matters (the three-year plan), and that "the romantic approach had been replaced with a realistic approach". Thus, there was a departure from the previous main objective (with "imperial overtones"), which was to unite society in the effort to consolidate Polish rule at sea. These provisions were supposed to set out a different course of work for LM and affect its goals.

Despite the communists' success, several years after the so-called unification with PZZ, President of the General Board of the Maritime League General Mieczysław Wągrowski still talked about "elements" who obstructed the process of giving the League an appropriate ideological identity. At the national conference of LM held on 10 May 1953, he remonstrated that during the pre-unification period (before LM was merged with PZZ), there had been people among the League's authorities who were not only "strangers", but also held "thoroughly reactionary views". As evidence, he mentioned the fact of the "Sanation activist" E. Kwiatkowski having been invited to the convention of 1947.

Also, just after the convention, the leaders of PPR still perceived the current situation as undesirable. A newsletter of the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee (issued in March 1947) addressed to the secretaries of the provincial committees of PPR stated that there were "small opposition groups" within LM "which hid themselves behind the mask of 'the maritime idea' understood in isolation from reality and the politics of the People's Republic of Poland". Jerzy Bogusz made a list of local leaders who had attended the convention of the Presidents of the District Boards of LM held on 9 March 1947. His list (and the epithets he used to refer to those participants) now looks almost like a line from a comedy sketch (but it did not at that time). The convention was described as a gathering of "populars [members of the Polish People's Party] (Nowak – Katowice, Dębski – Wrocław), Pilsudskite mafia (Szwedowski – Warsaw), Endeks (Otto Uhlik – Kielce), and others who are difficult to classify, but can all be referred to as, more or less, masked enemies". They were purportedly supported at the convention by PPS, which, otherwise, had so far been PPR's closest ally. The situation was even worse – according to the communist analyst – in other social organisations, such as PZZ.

Therefore, a plan was developed to suppress the impact of these institutions on the League. The plan was all the more necessary given that – according to party activists – the report of the General Board of LM, which was received by the Central Committee

of the Polish Workers' Party on 10 April 1947, confirmed that the "ideological and political direction outlined [in 1946] by [its] General Board" had a weak influence on the League's members. It was therefore planned for "a certain number of Party members" to join LM (by individual enrolment). Then, if necessary, the communists were to sign up to the League collectively. In this way, the influence of PPR on LM was to increase along with the growing number of communists in the League's local organisations. The plan was implemented at a truly revolutionary pace. For example, in the Silesia–Dąbrowa Voivodeship "a hundred thousand [?] of the working mass" joined the Maritime League. The communists did not manage to fully bring off the same feat in Bydgoszcz and Szczecin.

Despite all these plans and actions, the General Board of the Maritime League complained in its report for the year 1947 that the local boards had not pulled rank-and-file members "into the orbit of genuine [!] political, economic and maritime work and the problems facing the nation". Also in the work agenda for 1948, the authors complained that in the previous years there had been no "thorough ideological work which would instill in the member masses [!] the ideas of democratic people's Poland"⁵.

The events which followed occurred at an ever faster pace, in keeping with the communists' expectations. The communists achieved the envisioned breakthrough at the meeting of the Supreme Council of the Maritime League held on 9 May 1948. It was during that meeting that the League formulated ideological and political principles that satisfied the communists, cutting itself off from its organisational tradition dating back to pre-war times. In doing so, it followed in the footsteps of PZZ, which had taken a similar step during a convention held on 7–8 December 1947. A new executive committee of the General Board of LM was also established at that meeting. The post of President was given to a member of PPS (and then PZPR) Józef Salcewicz (deputy Minister of Industry and Trade), and the posts of Vice-Presidents were offered to Jan Nowak and Col. (sometimes referred to as a Lieutenant Colonel) Tadeusz Koral. Jerzy Bogusz, a senior PPR official, became Deputy to the Secretary General. It is he who supervised the process of unifying PZZ and LM over the next several months.

At that time, the pre-war activity of LM was evaluated as having been compliant with the ideas of Sanation, whose maritime policy – according to Jerzy Bogusz (one

5 Cf.: Archiwum Akt Nowych, Liga Morska, sygn. 2 [Archives of New Records, Maritime League, ref. no. 2], 238–248, – text of the resolution, 247; Archiwum Akt Nowych, Liga Morska, sygn. 2, 312–313; Archiwum Akt Nowych, Komitet Centralny Polskiej Partii Robotniczej [Archives of New Records, Central Committee of the Polish Workers' Party], sygn. 295/X-9, 8–9; Archiwum Akt Nowych, Liga Morska, sygn. 2, 373; Archiwum Akt Nowych, Liga Morska, sygn. 66, 1; Archiwum Akt Nowych, Komitet Centralny Polskiej Partii Robotniczej, sygn. 295/VII-59, 114; Archiwum Akt Nowych, Komitet Centralny Polskiej Partii Robotniczej, sygn. 295/X-4, 1–5; Archiwum Akt Nowych, Komitet Centralny Polskiej Partii Robotniczej, sygn. 295/X-16, 48; Archiwum Akt Nowych, Komitet Centralny Polskiej Partii Robotniczej, sygn. 295/X-16, 5; Archiwum Akt Nowych, Komitet Centralny Polskiej Partii Robotniczej, sygn. 295/X-16, 69.

of the leaders of the Propaganda Department of the Central Committee of PPR) was “false and detrimental to Poland’s development at sea”. In this connection, a plenary session of the General Board of the Maritime League was organised in Wrocław to discuss the issue of increasing vigilance towards “bourgeois elements of all kinds, who were still to be found among [LM’s] authorities or who were exponents of reactionary ideology”. The timing for this task was all the more perfect since it had been concluded at the very same plenum that the League, though not affiliated with any party, was not apolitical after all. Moreover, the basic principle of the League’s activity was to be “revolutionary struggle and work under the leadership of the working class”.

It is therefore not surprising that in the face of the so-called unification of workers’ parties, the League, which welcomed this fact with satisfaction, defined itself in line with Marxist methodology as “an organisation of the broad working masses”. There was no room for unreliable “elements” in it, which is why the newsletter announcing the General Convention of Delegates in 1949, emphasised that new Board members and delegates to the convention should come from among “activists of LM, working people, labourers, smallholders, shock workers, politically and socially aware individuals (...)”. In that period, the League’s vulgarised agenda could, in principle, be applied to any area of activity of the socialist realist state. It was enough to replace the word “maritime” with any other epithet, such as “mountain”, “river”, and so on and so forth. An example of a slogan that was created following this simple formula was “The shock worker realises the maritime programme”. In this case, the six-year maritime plan. The activity of LM was naturally still under close scrutiny. This is evidenced by the fact that party meetings were organised for members of the PZPR representing the provincial authorities of the League.

On 26 May 1949, a general assembly of delegates from the Warsaw and Capital District of the Maritime League was held. This time the meeting was overseen by a board that was more palatable to PZPR. Stefan Ajnenkiel, who had been poorly assessed by the communists, had resigned as President on 20 October 1948. In the resolution adopted at the assembly, the delegates supported the establishment of socialism in Poland⁶.

6 Cf.: Archiwum Akt Nowych, Liga Morska, sygn. 3, 20; Archiwum Państwowe Poznań, Polski Związek Zachodni, sygn. 637, 149; Jerzy Bogusz, “Przedwojenna rola Ligi Morskiej i Kolonialnej”, *Strażnica Zachodnia*, 5–6 (1948): 273; Archiwum miasta Stołecznego Warszawy, Zarząd Okręgowy Warszawski i Stołeczny Ligi Morskiej, sygn. [Archives of the Capital City of Warsaw, Warsaw and Capital District Board of the Maritime League, ref. no.] 6, 42; Archiwum miasta Stołecznego Warszawy, Zarząd Okręgowy Warszawski i Stołeczny Ligi Morskiej, sygn. 2, 36–39a; Archiwum miasta Stołecznego Warszawy, Zarząd Okręgowy Warszawski i Stołeczny Ligi Morskiej, sygn. 2, 36–39a; Archiwum miasta Stołecznego Warszawy, Zarząd Okręgowy Warszawski i Stołeczny Ligi Morskiej, sygn. 2, 36–39a; Archiwum miasta Stołecznego Warszawy, Zarząd Okręgowy Warszawski i Stołeczny Ligi Morskiej, sygn. 2, 10–12a; Archiwum miasta Stołecznego Warszawy, Zarząd Okręgowy

The “sorting out” of affairs in the Polish Western Union and the Maritime League proceeded side by side with the preparation of the members of these organisations to unite in one organisation. *De facto*, the unification meant the liquidation of PZZ and a cessation of its re-Polonisation activities. As pointed out by Michał Musielak in his monograph on PZZ, the idea of the merger arose in mid-1948 in the circles of the Main Committee for the Coordination of Social Organisations, a body which was in charge of controlling and guiding social organisations in accordance with the vision of the centre of the political power in Poland.

Shortly before the unification, at the end of 1947, Czesław Pilichowski, summed up the three years of PZZ’s post-war work, saying that “Contrary to some opinions, PZZ is not a transitional organisation, but quite the opposite – a very much needed and indispensable one”.

On 20 May 1948, a meeting of the executive committee of the Supreme Council and the General Board of PZZ took place, which was attended, among others, by Waclaw Barcikowski, Chairman of the Supreme Council, Józef Dubiel, President of the General Board, and Czesław Pilichowski, Secretary General. The participants in the meeting agreed that the greatest danger was posed by the “restoration of German revisionism by Anglo-Saxon imperialism” the aim of which was to call into question Poland’s rights to the Western and Northern Territories. In order to make society aware of this danger in a more effective way, a resolution was passed which “extended” the cooperation of PZZ with LM. The document adopted at that time stated that “Based on the position expressed by many centres of the Polish Western Union, the Executive Committee of the Supreme Council and the General Board of the Polish Western Union recommend that all organisational units establish close cooperation with the fraternal organisation which is working on deepening people’s knowledge and love of the Polish sea – the Maritime League, and above all, to discuss forms of closer cooperation between the two organisations”. At the same time, the executive committee of the General Board of PZZ was authorised to conduct “detailed talks” about this cooperation.

On 24 October of the same year, seeing that the time was ripe, the authorities entrusted Czesław Pilichowski with preparing a special memorandum raising the issue of binding the two organisations with even closer ties. The draft of the memorandum was approved by the executive committee of the General Board of PZZ on 2 October

Warszawski i Stołeczny Ligi Morskiej, sygn. 2/X-9, 20–21; Archiwum Akt Nowych, Liga Morska, sygn. 54, 126. A good example of the aforementioned “breakthrough” in the League’s ideology was the letter of 29 November 1948 by the President of the Lower Silesia District of the Maritime League, B. Kupczyński. He wrote, among others, that “The Maritime League, as an organisation which cooperates in the implementation of our maritime plan (...), cannot remain indifferent to the changes that have been taking place in our social life. The Maritime League, in close association with the Soviet Union and the countries of people’s democracy, sees in the socialisation of our country and our economic and social life, a guarantee for the consolidation and proper development of our coast as a hinterland, and our western borders.” Cf. Archiwum Akt Nowych, Liga Morska, sygn. 52, 26.

1948. Without considering the differences in the goals and activities of the two organisations and their specific character, the committee concluded that both re-Polonisation and maritime affairs were part of the general programme of the democratic camp, and that these tasks should not be executed separately by two different organisations. Work on the merger of the two associations was mentioned explicitly in the report on the activities of the Social and Political Department of PZZ for the period from 1 May to 31 October 1949.

The events took place as planned – at the meeting of the executive committee of the Supreme Council and the plenum of the General Board of PZZ held on 23 August 1949 in Warsaw [!] (while the organisation had been based in Poznań since pre-war times), a resolution was passed unanimously to merge PZZ with LM. The fusion was deemed all the more legitimate as it was based on a “serious and multidimensional convergence” between the two organisations. Moreover, it was emphasised – and indicated as the most important reason for the unification – that “the historical task of populating, developing, and restoring the Polishness of the Western and Coastal Territories along the Baltic Sea coast, the Oder and the Lusatian Neisse” had supposedly been accomplished. The adjective “coastal” was increasingly used side by side with the name “Western Territories”. However, the idea was not new. In the interwar period, the term “western and coastal borderland” had been used by Mikołaj Rudnicki, a western activist, researcher at the University of Poznań. In 1948–1949, the term “Recovered Territories” was more and more often replaced with the name “Western Territories”. Increasingly, the inhabitants of these areas were referred to as Poles, without mentioning their division into regional groups. The phrase “indigenous inhabitant” also fell out of official use. Earlier, in 1947, on the request of the editors of *Przegląd Zachodni* (Western Review), Rudnicki initiated a discussion on finding a different, more appropriate name. He himself opted for the term “native”.

The integration of the Western and Northern Territories with the rest of Poland was considered to have been completed, and further activities in this area were to be organically connected with the activities of the unified and homogeneous state. Since the basic premises for viewing western (and coastal) affairs had been outlined, it was time to state the fact that PZZ and LM had so far shown “serious and multidimensional convergence” in their activities. In view of the above, the General Board of PZZ authorised its executive committee to start talks with the General Board of LM on “merging the two organisations into one social organisation that would mobilise Polish society around matters associated with establishing our border on the Oder, the Lusatian Neisse and along the Baltic Sea coast, and in particular, the issues of comprehensive use and development of the sea and the coast and strengthening the country’s defences at sea through cooperation with the Navy, which is the guardian of the peaceful work of the coast and the state”. The above text could have been (and probably

was) written following a “hint” given to the General Board of PZZ by the leadership of PZPR (an emanation of the “unification” of the workers’ movement in Poland). It clearly reflected the Cold War rhetoric cloaked in the disguise of struggle (and work) for peace. At the same time, a plan was made at the aforementioned meeting of 23 August 1949 to convene an Extraordinary General Assembly of PZZ Delegates on 29 October 1949. Also here – similarly as in the case of the Maritime League – a suggestion was made as to which delegates should be voted for. They had to come from the right social background and show the right type of political engagement. A lecture entitled “The issue of the unification of PZZ and LM” was to be delivered at local assemblies of PZZ convened to elect delegates. The fusion was one of the issues to be addressed in the resolutions of the General Assembly. It was during this meeting that a statement was to be made that PZZ had completed its fundamental tasks and that there were good reasons for it to continue working alongside LM, as part of a unified organisation, “for the good of People’s Poland headed towards socialism, for the good of an economically strong Poland with strong defences on the Oder, the Lusatian Neisse and the Baltic Sea”. Ultimately, however, the idea of organising the General Assembly was abandoned. Instead, a joint unification meeting was to be held for PZZ and LM members⁷.

On 29 August, a few days after the meeting of 23 August, at the plenary session of the Central Commission for the Coordination of Social Organisations, views were presented which corresponded with the unification that was already underway in PZZ and the Maritime League. In general, it was pointed out that social energy, put into an organisational framework, should be fully concentrated around the most important force – the United Workers’ Party. From then on, social organisations were to officially “participate in building the foundations of socialism in Poland”.

This was an announcement of not only the completion of the enforced unification of social organisations, but also the liquidation (unification) of the organisations that deviated from the adopted political direction. A confirmation of this claim can be found

⁷ Cf.: Andrzej Zaćmiński, *Działalność zagraniczna Towarzystwa Rozwoju Ziem Zachodnich w latach 1957–1970* (Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo Uczelniane Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej w Bydgoszczy, 1995), 22; Musielak, *Polski*, 109–110; Archiwum Państwowe Poznań, Polski Związek Zachodni, sygn. 593, 87; “Z działalności Rady Naczelnej i Zarządu Głównego P. Z. Z.”, *Strażnica Zachodnia* 5–6 (1948): 263; Archiwum Akt Nowych, Ministerstwo Ziem Odzyskanych [Archives of New Records, Ministry of Recovered Territories], sygn. 82, 10; “Rezolucja Głównej Komisji Koordynacyjnej Organizacji społecznych uchwalona na Plenum Komisji dn. 29 sierpnia br.”, *Strażnica Zachodnia* 7–9 (1949); an untitled report without a reference number from a council meeting held on 23 August 1949 dated to 24 August, kindly made available to me by Maria Rutowska from the Institute for Western Affairs, 39–40; Ośrodek Badań Naukowych Olsztyn, Zbiory Specjalne, sygn. [Centre for Scientific Research in Olsztyn, Special Collections, ref. no. R–58, 223–224, 226; Archiwum Państwowe Poznań, Polski Związek Zachodni, sygn. 935, 39; Norbert Kołomejczyk, “Polski Związek Zachodni (Okręg Śląski) w latach 1945–1950”, *Studia i Materiały z Dziejów Śląska* 6 (1964), 353. For information on the nomenclature used by M. Rudnicki see: Bernard Piotrowski, *O Polskę na Odrę i Bałtykiem. Myśl zachodnia i badania niemcoznawcze Uniwersytetu Poznańskiego (1919–1939)* (Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 1987), 119.

in a report by the communist Mieczysław Wągrowski, preserved in the archives of the Central Committee of PPR. This text, which had also been published in the periodical *Polska Zachodnia* (Western Poland), left no doubt as to the intentions of the central authorities: “Nonpartisanship does not mean apoliticality”. This slogan signified (or portended) the end of any organised activity unyoked to the chariot of goals set by the establishment. The merger (and incapacitation) of the two organisations was justified in a breakneck manner, though one that was consistent with the “logic” of the events, by Jerzy Bogusz, Secretary General of the Central Commission for the Coordination of Social Organisations, who saw it as part of the “unification” of the Polish workers’ movement. Bogusz, by the way, had been – at least in 1947 – a senior official of the mass propaganda division of PPR, and in the autumn of 1949, he became a member of the supreme authorities of both PZZ and LM.

The above events were – as already mentioned – connected with the shaping of the ideology and personnel of PZZ to the communists’ liking. In that period (1948–1949), PZZ was seen in a negative light by the ruling party’s leadership. As pointed out by Andrzej Zaćmiński, what spoke against the Union was not only its national democratic lineage, but also the fact that it assembled in its ranks a large number of members of parties of the former political opposition which were being liquidated (or “democratised”) in that period. Likewise, the establishment of the German Democratic Republic in place of the Soviet occupation zone, which resulted in a re-evaluation of the general perception of the German issue, could not remain without influence on the communists’ views regarding the legitimacy of the further existence of PZZ. Zaćmiński stated that the planned (and established) unified organisation called the Maritime League was a copy of Soviet “Dosflot”⁸.

PZZ and LM were initially to be united at a special convention in Szczecin on 30–31 October 1949. Later, the date was postponed twice: to the first quarter of 1950, and then to 2–3 April 1950. In October 1949, local commissions for the unification of PZZ and LM were established at different tiers of organisational structure⁹.

Many members and activists of the Union were not delighted with the prospect of the merger. The former could protest, though to little avail, at local extraordinary assemblies of PZZ, which, as a side note, followed a very diverse and (from today’s

8 Cf.: “Organizacje społeczne – współuczestnikiem budowy podstaw socjalizmu w Polsce”, *Polska Zachodnia* 36 (11 Nov 1949); Archiwum Akt Nowych, Komitet Centralny Polskiej Partii Robotniczej, sygn. 295/X-83 [no pagination]; Mieczysław Wągrowski, “Organizacje społeczne w Polsce Ludowej”, *Polska Zachodnia* 33 (22 Aug 1948); Jerzy Bogusz, “W obliczu zjednoczenia ruchu robotniczego”, *Polska Zachodnia* 48 (5 Dec 1948); Zaćmiński, *Działalność*, 22.

9 Contrary to the information given in *Polska Zachodnia*, Norbert Kołomejczyk wrote that, initially, the unification convention was to take place in the first days of December 1949. Cf.: Norbert Kołomejczyk, “Krajowa Narada Polskiego Związku Zachodniego i Ligi Morskiej”, *Polska Zachodnia* 41 (16 Oct 1949); Kołomejczyk, “Polski Związek”, 353.

perspective) quasi humorous course. For example, at the convention of the Warsaw district, after L. Gluck's introductory lecture on the planned unification of PZZ and LM, the first of the debaters (an employee of the Ministry of Treasury) declared that the lecture had been so exhaustive that no debate was needed. In Olsztyn, on the other hand, the anxious delegates demanded that work be continued and care be provided for the so-called indigenous people. It has to be remembered that the complexity and seriousness of the affairs of the native population was particularly great in that region. It seems that the assurances that the upcoming transformations did not mean that PZZ would be liquidated and its achievements thwarted did not entirely convince the participants of the meeting¹⁰. Naturally, the resolutions adopted at local conventions signified the grass roots' trust in the Union's leadership, which strikingly resembled the workings of communist democratic centralism. Numerous articles justifying the merger were published to "soften" the doubters, in a special section of *Polska Zachodnia* under the heading "Facing the unification of PZZ and LM".

On 11 September 1949, the executive committee of the General Council and the plenum of the General Board of LM authorised the executive committee of the General Board of LM to convene a general assembly of delegates in the autumn, in which a motion was to be put forward for the League to be fused with PZZ "in order to continue their programmed work aimed at mobilising public opinion and social material resources to participate as broadly and actively as possible in the implementation of the maritime economic plans of the People's Republic of Poland, increasing the country's defences and the security of our sea border, and the border on the rivers Oder and Lusatian Neisse, which is inextricably linked with it [the sea border] and is the border of peace"¹¹.

Another element of the pre-unification "campaign" was a special joint meeting of the activists of the two organisations. In preparing this National Meeting of PZZ and LM, a number of preliminary steps were undertaken by both organisations. On 16 September 1949, a conference with the participation of representatives of the organisations' authorities, such as Pilichowski (PZZ) and Szubert (LM), was held to discuss, among others, the draft of the statute of the future unified organisation. Several suggestions for the name of the new structure were made at that conference: the Polish Maritime Union, the Sea and River League, and the Naval League. On 16–18 September 1949, a statutory and regulatory commission, composed of representatives of the two organisations, worked on the draft statute. They prepared a document which said that the seat of the united organisation was to be established in Warsaw. The name of the new association still remained an open question, though. Later the draft was amended,

10 Cf.: Archiwum Państwowe Poznań, Polski Związek Zachodni, sygn. 118, 118, 121–124; Ośrodek Badań Naukowych Olsztyn, Zbiory Specjalne, sygn. R-57, 152–153.

11 Archiwum Państwowe Poznań, Polski Związek Zachodni, sygn. 940, 216.

possibly by Stefan Matuszewski (deputy of a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of PZPR at that time), whom the preserved documents mention as the addressee of the revised version of the regulations delivered on 27 September by Pilichowski. Interestingly, at that time, Matuszewski was also President of the General Board of the Soldier's Friends Society (League) (*Towarzystwo Przyjaciół Żołnierza*, TPŻ) (in the years 1945–1953). This was noteworthy since in 1953, in another movement to liquidate social organisations, the post-unification Maritime League became part of TPŻ.

In the surviving draft of the statute – probably a version discussed at the National Meeting – a proposal was made to give the unified organisation the name “Maritime League”, “a democratic, non-party organisation, which (...) mobilises society to work and expend effort towards developing the maritime economy and establishing a close cooperation with the People's Navy, the guardians of the sea border and peace”. No reference, however, was made, in the discussion on the goals and means of action, to the goals and ideology of PZZ, which had major repercussions at the October meeting of PZZ and LM activists¹².

Activists of PZZ and LM met at the National Meeting on 9 October 1949. This assembly merits some attention, not only because it was probably the last such clear demonstration of independence, and also Western ideology, on the part of experts on the subject, but also because it brought significant ideological re-evaluations.

At the presidential table were present: Chairman of the Supreme Council of PZZ and Deputy Speaker of the Sejm Waclaw Barcikowski, President of the General Board of LM Admiral Adam Mohuczy, member of the Supreme Council of PZZ and the General Board of LM Jerzy Bogusz (a universal activist, so to speak), Secretary General of PZZ Czesław Pilichowski, Secretary General of LM Edward Szubert, and member of the General Board of PZZ Karol Przesmycki. The list of guests invited to the conference by PZZ included the name of the guru of pre-war and post-war Western thought, professor Zygmunt Wojciechowski, who, however, did not make it to the meeting. His absence was recorded as excused.

Already in the speech opening the session, W. Barcikowski, in addition to the criticism of the “fairly serious political mistakes” committed in the past by PZZ and LM, indicated the determinants of the international confrontation of ideologies, which provided grounds for the centralisation of social organisations. The unification was viewed as all the more justified as the Western and Northern Territories were considered to have been properly developed and populated and to be integrally engaged – at that stage – in the process of building socialism in Poland. J. Bogusz took the argument

12 Cf.: Archiwum Państwowe Poznań, Polski Związek Zachodni, sygn. 940, 232–234; Archiwum Państwowe Poznań, Polski Związek Zachodni, sygn. 940, 235–237, 259–260; Archiwum Państwowe Poznań, Polski Związek Zachodni, sygn. 940, 218–219.

even further without beating about the diplomatic bush. He recalled that the resolutions of both General Boards on the unification had already been passed. Thus, the current conference was simply a working convention, preparing the execution of what had already been decided. An emblematic example of the hypocrisy and cynicism of the political decision-makers of that time was Bogusz's view of the legitimacy of liquidating the Ministry of Recovered Territories. He argued that "The resolution on the liquidation of the Ministry of Recovered Territories is a clear and telling proof that our entire state has recognised that there are no (...) Recovered Territories, there is one Poland". He added that the problem of indigenous people that still existed there "will find an appropriate solution". The communists used this "occasion" to make a clear announcement that other organisations would take over from PZZ all the matters associated with German affairs to eliminate the Union's monopoly, which was harmful at that stage. This was an evident negation of the legitimacy of the existence of the Polish Western Union. The Maritime League was also seriously criticised for various things: for invoking its pre-war traditions and achievements, and for "making the sea the focal issue" while ignoring the importance of the fact that power in Poland had been "taken over by the people". This last fact was presented as the most important cause of Polish post-war achievements on the coast.

So explicitly expressed, the communists' *credo* regarding the further pursuit of the Western policy provoked verbal resistance, which was probably most fully articulated by Rev. Col. Weryński, a representative of Cracow PZZ. He bluntly pointed out that what was in the pipeline was not a unification but a liquidation of PZZ. This followed clearly from the draft statute of the new, united organisation, a draft that belied the official pre-unification propaganda which had promised to maintain the role of social factors in the work in and on the Western and Northern Territories. The successive speakers coming from PZZ circles, voiced their doubt as to naming the new organisation Maritime League. A similar view was also expressed by L. Gluck, who stated that such an old-new name could only deepen the fears of liquidation in PZZ circles. Franciszek Rataj from Mrągowo spoke in even more dramatic words. In what he said, he aired the views of a large group of Western activists who recognised the danger of effective re-Polonisation work among the so-called indigenous people being brought to a standstill. He said point-blank: "the name Maritime League is not appropriate for where we are based, in Masuria. We don't mind the merger, but we want to come together" [and not get liquidated]. He added: "this new statute, which I received at the last minute in the room [!], does not say a word about our native population". There were more critical responses. They form a long sequence of comments in the preserved archival records. The apprehension about the name Maritime League was even supported by a representative of the "old" League, Col. Stanisław Kiryłuk, who pointed

to the bad response the proposed name (imposed by the draft statute) provoked from members of PZZ.

In the course of the discussion, it was becoming more and more clear that the doubts did not focus on the issue of unification which had already been sealed, but on the name of the new organisation and the problems of the native population. Doubts about the reunification itself in the then situation could only be voiced as verbal protest. The delegates were clearly given to understand they had no say in this regard by a member of the Supreme Council of the Maritime League, Stanisław Herok (PZPR) from Katowice. He said that the new organisation should be shaped in such a way as “the supreme authorities want us to”. As he himself was the supreme authority in the Maritime League, he probably had in mind the party leaders of the state¹³.

Referring to the issues of the native population, Secretary General of the Maritime League E. Szubert defined the place of this group of Polish residents in society. They were not only supposed to be beneficiaries of rights and privileges (which was a peculiar description of the re-Polonisation activities), but also Poles, integrated with the rest of the country’s inhabitants, who had to take a conscious and active part in building socialism. This sort of *fait accompli* strategy (verging on cretinism) was complemented by J. Bogusz’s summary of the discussion. He did not see the need for only one social organisation to take care of the indigenous people. Not even the one established as a result of the unification. The matter of native inhabitants was to be treated normally and taken care of by various offices and organisations, just as in the case of the remaining citizens of the state. All the more so that, as stated by Lt. Tadeusz Koral, a member of the supreme authorities of LM, after five post-war years “the special issue of providing care to indigenous people” no longer existed. Opinions of this sort only confirmed the suspicions of old Western activists as to the intentions of the party-and-state authorities with regard to the tradition and activities of PZZ¹⁴.

The name of the future organisation stirred up strong emotions during the meeting. The subject of the discussion – as mentioned above – was the name “Maritime League”. Some alternative names, such as the Polish Maritime League and the Polish Maritime Union were proposed. Let me add that, ultimately, none of these proposals – which were to be considered at a later time – was adopted, and the organisation established in 1950 adopted the name “Maritime League”.

In fact, the wording of the name referred to something far more important: to what extent the future organisation would focus on maritime issues, and to what extent it would continue the work previously done by PZZ. These concerns could be felt in a speech made by Secretary General of PZZ Czesław Pilichowski. He pointed out that

13 Cf.: Archiwum Państwowe Poznań, Polski Związek Zachodni, sygn. 940, 26–28; Archiwum Państwowe Poznań, Polski Związek Zachodni, sygn. 940, 29, 41–43, 46, 53; 61; 74–75; 87; 56.

14 Cf.: Państwowe Poznań, Polski Związek Zachodni, sygn. 940, 95, 127, 110.

the Poznań headquarters of the Union had been receiving letters from the locals alerting the organisation to the risk of the issue of re-Polonisation of the native population being forgotten in the unified organisation. In a meandering speech, in which he tried to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, Pilichowski in fact slipped in a word which expressed a deep fear that what Poland had achieved so far among the so-called indigenous people would go to waste¹⁵.

Symptomatic for the direction in which PZZ was heading is the list of topics drawn up in the Wrocław district of PZZ to be discussed at the October National Meeting. This document reflects the realities of the time so faithfully that I am going to quote it almost in its entirety. It enumerates "(...) topics that should be discussed at the meeting: I. Critical evaluation of the activity of PZZ in the years 1944–1949: (a) nationalist tendencies in PZZ, (b) petty-bourgeois influences in PZZ (composition of the Boards at lower organisational levels, defence of interests of private merchants), (c) unclear attitude to the cooperation with Political Parties at lower organisational levels, (d) the burden of pre-war ideology, troubles with the crystallisation of the new PZZ ideology, (e) weak ties with the working class and peasants. II. Achievements of PZZ in the period 1944–1949: (a) settlement and development of the Western Territories, (b) campaign for re-emigration from Germany, (c) PZZ as a social factor during verification, (d) provision of assistance and legal care to the native population, (e) re-Polonisation campaign: removal of traces of Germanness, retrieval of traces of Polishness in Recovered Territories, (f) educational campaign: re-Polonisation courses, social homes, etc. III. Tasks of PZZ at the new stage of development: (a) to change the internal situation: to end the verification action, to end the settlement action, (b) to promote a unified educational action by handing it over to the Trade Unions. Accordingly, no task to accomplish in this area of activity, (c) the issue of the native population as a nationwide issue, and not just a matter of one social organisation, (d) to shift the focus to the defence of the western border, (e) to mobilise society to fight for peace and against Anglo-Saxon imperialism, (f) to emphasise the role of the Soviet Union in regaining the Western Territories, (g) to campaign for raising awareness of the changes in West and East Germany, (h) to implement the economic plan as a response to imperialists, (i) the issue of the country's defences"¹⁶.

The National Meeting ended with the adoption of a resolution read out by Pilichowski. The text sounded like a summary of a sentence of an impromptu court against both organisations in their current form and against the initiatives they had been involved in. A hatchet job was done on the pre-war pursuits of PZZ and LM. They were criticised for continuing to make old mistakes in the renewed post-war structures.

15 Archiwum Państwowe Poznań, Polski Związek Zachodni, sygn. 940, 115–120.

16 Cf.: Archiwum Państwowe Poznań, Polski Związek Zachodni, sygn. 617, 1.

In statements reminiscent of the ritual self-criticism practised in PZPR, it was pointed out that PZZ had wrongly isolated the native population from the realities of Polish political life. This trend was finally broken at the convention of this organisation held in December 1947. The Maritime League, on the other hand, was reproved for its “romantic attitude towards the sea” and “cloudy phraseology [used to talk about] the maritime idea”. They were seen as tendencies detached from the country’s realities. This wrong, in turn, was exposed and stopped at the meeting of the General Council held on 9 May 1948. In the text of the resolution, there materialised the darkest fears of the “misguided” Western activists. This was evidenced by the words that “PZZ has performed the basic tasks that justified its reactivation after the war. The lands on the Oder, along the Baltic coast and on the Lusatian Neisse have been populated and developed. The Polish population native to these lands is working, on an equal footing with the rest of society, having joined the collective effort of building the foundations of socialism”. At the same time, the goals of the unified organisation were outlined. They included social campaigning for the execution of economic plans “in the maritime sector”, close cooperation with the navy, combating colonialism, and popularisation of maritime affairs in order to increase the number of personnel working at sea and in the maritime sector. There was no shortage of criticism of “imperialist warmongers” and warm words towards the “new, democratic Germany”¹⁷.

Contrary to earlier plans, seeing that the state of preparations was insufficient, the boards of the two organisations decided to postpone the unification convention to 4 and 5 December 1949. They did not stay on schedule this time either. The next proposed dates were February or the beginning of March 1950. Ultimately, a decision was taken in March that the convention would be held in April. The National Convention for the Unification of PZZ and LM was held on 2–3 April 1950 in Szczecin. Convened in order to implement the decisions already made, and not to discuss them, the meeting had served its purpose. This is hardly surprising since the vast majority of the Maritime League’s delegates to the convention were members of PZPR and/or the Union of Polish Youth (*Związek Młodzieży Polskiej*, ZMP). Out of thirty three delegates from the Warsaw and Capital District, one was a member of the Democratic Party (*Stronnictwo Demokratyczne*, SD), which was a puppet of the ruling party (PZPR), and eight were described as non-party delegates.

On 2 April, two separate conventions (PZZ and LM) took place, during which decisions about unification were made. General Mieczysław Wągrowski became President of the General Board of the new structure called the Maritime League. Czesław Pilichowski was elected Secretary General. Out of nine members of the plenum of the General Board of LM, only three came from PZZ. Similarly, 18 out of the remaining 56

17 Archiwum Państwowe Poznań, Polski Związek Zachodni, sygn. 940, 131–138.

members of the General Board came from PZZ. It should be noted, however, that this statistic is misleading if one wants to treat it as a criterion for having specific political views and a specific attitude to the Polish reality of that time. In other words, previous membership in PZZ did not guarantee that a given member of the General Board of the Maritime League was a staunch supporter of the Western idea in its traditional, classical form, and not a declared Marxist.

In the unification documents, there resurfaced the issue of the native population, but, this time, only as a confirmation of the fact of its “inclusion in the mainstream of the political, economic and cultural life of the People’s Republic of Poland”. While lambasting Anglo-Saxon imperialism and West German revisionism, the delegates warmly welcomed the German Democratic Republic, recognising its establishment as a “historical breakthrough” in Polish-German relations. The unification resolution summarised the programme of the new organisation in the following words: “increasing the potential of the maritime economy” and “popularisation of the heroic traditions of the Polish People’s Army and cooperation with it, especially with the Navy in order to strengthen the country’s defences and mobilise social forces to fight for peace”.

The decisions of the convention *de facto* meant a liquidation of the Union and its incorporation in the Maritime League. Actually, even *de jure*, the unification was an absorption. On 18 January 1951, the executive committee of the Provincial National Council in Poznań sent a letter to the General Board of LM, informing it that (as of 13 January 1951) PZZ had been removed from the register of associations. The decision was based on the fact that, in accordance with the resolutions of the Szczecin convention, PZZ “merged with the Maritime League and became part of it [!] along with its assets and liabilities”. It is hard to find a clearer legal commentary on what has been done.

A commentary on the so-called “unification” published in *Przegląd Zachodni* said that PZZ “as an organisation of a social nature whose work programme is mainly related to anti-German political activity, does not in today’s conditions have an analogous rationale for its work”. Thus, “the merger is a logical consequence of the development of international political relations and of the development of social relations in the country”.

The decision to liquidate PZZ was made by high-ranking party officials. As Andrzej Zaćmiński wrote, the Central Committee of PZPR for Social Organisations indicated the following reasons for this move: “– an incorrect principle of reactivating PZZ as an equivalent of the organisation which existed before 1939, – the tasks performed [by PZZ] do not correspond with the needs and socio-political plan that exists in the democratic system”¹⁸.

18 Cf.: Archiwum Akt Nowych, Liga Morska, sygn. 7, 25; Archiwum Akt Nowych, Liga Morska, sygn. 7 [no pagination]; Archiwum Akt Nowych, Liga Morska, sygn. 3, 1–43, 52–55; Archiwum Akt Nowych, Liga Morska, sygn. 3, [no pagination]; Archiwum Akt Nowych, Liga Morska, sygn. 4, 1–52, 60–104;

Two internal documents of the Maritime League, drawn up after the Szczecin convention, demonstrate how this organisation's old mode of operation and goals were confronted with the practices imposed on it by the communist party. More specifically, after the convention, a decision was made to convene district councils of "the League's activists". The aim of these meetings was to critically evaluate previous activities of PZZ and LM and to plan projects aimed at popularising water sports and implementing the tasks of "defending the country, especially at sea". At the other pole, there were rapidly growing problems (never fully resolved before) in the areas inhabited by the native population. This was especially conspicuous in the former East Prussia. Local members of PZZ who were indigenous to that territory did not want to accept new forms of work, demanding that the existing policy be maintained¹⁹.

As part of the unification policy, which was becoming more and more widespread, in 1950, the authorities liquidated the Baltic Institute, which was one of the last two research and development institutions existing in the 1940s that were not part of the general education system. The liquidation was – as Tomczak put it – a consequence of accepting the thesis that the existing scientific societies were unable to undertake new challenges. It was justified by the reorganisation of science and the establishment of the Polish Academy of Sciences. Some departments of the Baltic Institute were transferred to the Maritime Institute of Technology. And the latter was eventually transformed into the Maritime Institute. The department of Pomeranian studies was to be taken over by the Institute for Western Affairs. However, this plan was only minimally implemented²⁰.

While still on the topic of maritime affairs, I would like to add that in 1953 the complex process of transformation (liquidation) of the institution whose roots reached back to Polish Western Union and the Maritime League, both of which had been reactivated at the end of the war, came to an end. Let me recall that the former was absorbed by the latter on 2 April 1950 during the so-called Unification Convention. After the convention, the leadership of LM focused on removing from the organisation all "alien and hostile elements" that had penetrated into it "under the guise of professionalism". This

Archiwum Państwowe Poznań, Polski Związek Zachodni, sygn. 940, 208; Roman Łyczywek, "Zjazd połączeniowy LM i PZZ. Pięćlecie odzyskania Szczecina", *Przegląd Zachodni* 5–6 (1950), 507; Andrzej Zaćmiński, "Stanowisko Towarzystwa Rozwoju Ziem Zachodnich wobec problemu niemieckiego w latach 1957–1970." PhD diss. (Poznań: UAM, 1992), 38–39.

19 Cf.: Archiwum Akt Nowych, Liga Morska, sygn. 153, 5–6; Archiwum Akt Nowych, Liga Morska, sygn. 153; Archiwum Akt Nowych, Liga Morska, sygn. 153, 84.

20 Cf.: Maria Tomczak, "Polska myśl zachodnia", in: *Polacy wobec Niemców. Z dziejów kultury politycznej Polski 1945–1989*, ed. Anna Wolff-Powęska (Poznań: Instytut Zachodni, 1993), 177; Andrzej Bukowski, "Instytut Bałtycki. Jego przeszłość i obecne zadania," *Komunikaty Instytutu Bałtyckiego* XII (1964): 2; Andrzej Bukowski, "Instytut Bałtycki", *Rocznik Ziem Zachodnich i Północnych* z 1965 (1965): 244; Edmund Męclewski, *Powrót Polski nad Odrę, Nysę Łużycką, Bałtyk. Szkice* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1971), 564.

meant a hunt for remnants of independent thought, or members of the former LM and PZZ “burdened” with the problems of the past. The real and ideologically desirable nature of LM was reflected in the instructions for the organisation of “Days of the Sea” to be held in 1951. The newsletter announcing the event emphasised several times that it was absolutely necessary to saturate it with political content and that the organisers were obliged to ensure that the ceremony was “politically correct”.

The “unified” LM did not survive long. A meeting of the members of the General Boards of the Maritime League, the Aviation League (*Liga Lotnicza*, LL) and the Soldier’s Friends Society (League) was called for 19 April 1953. Among the guests invited to the assembly were representatives of the Polish Army, state authorities and mass organisations. The goal was to unite these three institutions into one organisation “in accordance with the will of the vast majority of members of LPŻ, LL and LM”. It was probably a coincidence that this convention was held in the Central Club of the Polish-Soviet Friendship Society (*Towarzystwo Przyjaźni Polsko-Radzieckiej*) in Warsaw. The preserved documentation does not even have a semblance of representative internal democracy. The documents say explicitly that the members of local boards of the fused organisation were to be appointed after consultation with the local authorities of PZPR²¹. The new, unified organisation operated under the name Soldier’s Friends League. By the way, it is worth paying attention to an interesting trend that had been growing since the late 1940s – the “industrialisation” (the demands of the 6-year plan) and then militarisation (the increasing danger of a “hot” war between the East and the West) of forms of organisational activity of Polish society.

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21 Cf.: Archiwum Akt Nowych, Liga Morska, sygn. 65, 21–24; Archiwum Akt Nowych, Liga Morska, sygn. 66, 1–5; Archiwum Akt Nowych, Liga Morska, sygn. 52, 100.

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SUMMARY:

The article analyses the tactics and the strategy communists from the Polish Workers' Party (and from the end of 1948 – the Polish United Workers' Party) used to incapacitate and then liquidate social organisations dating back to the pre-war period. These structures had different formal and ideological positions in the political reality of the Second Polish Republic. An important role in promoting the so-called western borderlands, which at that time included Greater Poland, the Polish part of Pomerania and the Polish part of Upper Silesia, was played by the Polish Western Union which was close to nationalist national democracy. Another important interwar institution was the Maritime and Colonial League, which was associated with the then establishment. These institutions, which had been gradually revived since 1944, were formally independent, but under the pressure of communists, who wanted to take over power in Poland, they were being peopled by individuals who were ready to serve the communist Polish Workers' Party. After the end of the war, PZZ focused on the so-called Recovered Territories. LM (now without the word “Colonial” in its name), on the other hand,

concentrated on the issues associated with the 500 km stretch of the Polish sea coast and the problems related to the Polish merchant fleet.

The Maritime League, which was reluctant to implement communist ideals and practices, had been, from the moment of its revival, infiltrated from within by representatives of branches of the new political power in Poland. The communists did collaborate with the League (and also with PZZ) in the first post-war years, but the cooperation on their part was short-lived and pragmatic, and so the Maritime League was doomed to dissolution after PZPR took full power over Poland.

Liga Morska. Studium rozbicia instytucji społecznej

Słowa kluczowe: Liga morska, Polski Związek zachodni, polityka morska; autochtoni (ludność rodzima); likwidacja niezależnych instytucji społecznych

STRESZCZENIE

Treść artykułu wypełnia analiza taktyki, a w efekcie strategii, komunistów z Polskiej Partii Robotniczej (od końca 1948 r. Polskiej Zjednoczonej Partii Robotniczej) stosowanej dla ubezwłasnowolnienia, a następnie likwidacji organizacji społecznych o przedwojennym rodowodzie. Były to struktury o różnym usadowieniu formalnym i ideowym w realiach politycznych II Rzeczypospolitej. Ważną rolę w propagowaniu problematyki tzw. kresów zachodnich, do których zaliczano wówczas Wielkopolskę, polską część Pomorza i polską część Górnego Śląska odgrywał – bliski nacjonalistycznej narodowej demokracji – Polski Związek Zachodni. W okresie międzywojennym funkcjonowała, powiązana z ówczesnym establishmentem, Liga Morska i Kolonialna. Instytucje te, odradzające się stopniowo od 1944 r., w warunkach parcia komunistów do przejścia władzy w Polsce, z pozoru (formalnie) były niezależne, aczkolwiek już od początku nasycane ludźmi dyspozycyjnymi wobec komunistycznej PPR. PZZ koncentrował się od końca wojny na problematyce Ziemi Odzyskanych. LM (już bez słowa “Kolonialna”) skupiała się na zagadnieniach ponad 500 km wybrzeża morskiego i tematyce polskiej floty handlowej. Liga Morska, daleka od implementacji ideałów i praktyki komunizmu, podlegała zatem od momentu swego odrodzenia praktyce infiltrowania od wewnątrz przez ekspozytury nowej władzy politycznej w Polsce. Aczkolwiek komuniści z nią (także i z PZZ-etem) współpracowali. Współpraca ta z ich strony w pierwszych latach powojennych miała li tylko aktualny, pragmatyczny charakter. Nie mogła zatem Liga Morska ostać się po objęciu przez PZPR pełnej władzy w Polsce.

Citation

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