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Selected aspects of Polish emigration to Norway between the 19<sup>th</sup> Century and 1980

**I. Introduction.** The history of Polish-Norwegian relations is long and interesting, and testifies to the centuries-long contacts between these two countries<sup>1</sup>. However, until the final decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Norway was not regarded by Poles as an attractive place for emigration. This is not so much due to the geographical distance – *after all* [from Norway] *Poland is not at the end of the world*, as was written in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>2</sup> – as to the unfavourable climate and harsh nature which settlers can encounter. The presence of Poles in Norway and the mutual relations between the two countries have, for many years, been the subject of research and have been described in the literature<sup>3</sup>. The aim of this study is to present the history of the relatively small number of Polish emigrants to Norway

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<sup>1</sup> Information on this subject can be found in the article *Stosunki polsko-norweskie* on the website of the Polish Embassy in Norway: [www.oslo.polemb.net](http://www.oslo.polemb.net) [avail.: 12<sup>th</sup> April 2010].

<sup>2</sup> T. Tripplin, *Wspomnienia z podróży po Danii, Norwegii, Anglii, Portugalii, Hiszpanii i Państwie Marokańskim*, part. I *Dania i Norwegia*, Poznań 1844, p. 223.

<sup>3</sup> See a collection of scientific articles: *Polacy w Skandynawii*, ed. E. Olszewski, Lublin 1997; *Norwegia–Polska. Przeszłość i terażniejszość. Norge–Polen. Fortid og nåtid*, ed. E. Denkwicz-Szczepanik, O. K. Grimnes, Toruń 2006; *Polska–Norwegia 1905–2005*, ed. J. Szymański, Gdańsk 2006; E. Later Chodyłowa, *Polska diaspora w Skandynawii. Norwegia* [in:] *Polska diaspora*, ed. A. Walaszek, Kraków 2001, pages 225–227. A collection of works containing a great deal of information connected with various aspects of Polish migration to Norway is the five-volume *Encyklopedia polskiej emigracji i Polonii*, ed. K. Dopierała, volumes I–V, Toruń 2003–2005.

against a backdrop of the large emigration from Polish lands between the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the time of “Solidarity”, that is, to 1980.

The following periods are distinguished: a) pre-World War I b) the inter-war years, when Polish migration to Norway was a very rare occurrence, as well as c) post-World War II, when – for various reasons – a greater number of our countrymen, who should be considered as emigrants, came to live in Norway. In each of the mentioned time periods, attention is paid to the characteristic views concerning various factors connected with Polish emigration to Norway – including negative ones, namely the reasons for its extremely rare occurrence up to the 1980s. The details of this are presented in comparison with the great wave of Polish economic migration to other western European countries, especially at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as well as later, after 1918.

**II. Pre-World War I.** In the period before World War I, when Poland was partitioned, Norway was a little-known but fascinating country. It aroused the interest of Polish travellers through its natural environment and its culture. Travel-writing, which developed in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, brought Polish society closer to the harsh yet beautiful nature of Scandinavia. The descriptions of Norway were occasionally mixed with fiction, however, they all helped to spread knowledge about this country and the living conditions in it. This could have been a factor which influenced, favourably or not, the view of Norway as an attractive option for Polish emigrants.

In travel literature, there are some descriptions of Polish political emigration, which took place in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and even earlier. In his book,

Teodor Tripplin (1813–1881) mentions the example of the Pole Józef Władysław Pradowski – an emigrant after the Kościuszko Insurrection<sup>4</sup>. T. Tripplin was himself a Polish emigrant from 1831, who travelled a great deal throughout Europe. There were claims in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that his books were, to a large extent, plagiarism and fictitious, and that he combined real descriptions with lies<sup>5</sup>. Despite this, his books enjoyed great popularity among Polish society, which can be seen from the many different titles, as well as the number of editions, he published. According to Tripplin's book, the Polish emigrant J. Pradowski was an excellent organiser, a local social leader, a man with perfect manners, as well as a model citizen and patriot. Besides his abilities presented in the fields of construction, agriculture and marsh drying, he gained the respect of Norwegians with his respectful behaviour towards women, his distaste for alcohol, and, most of all, for his love of his homeland. The author of the book cites one Norwegian saying, connected with the longing of Poles for their country, which emphasises the common feeling of patriotism felt by Poles and Norwegians<sup>6</sup>: *We have all suffered from the sadness of expatriation, but we respected the nobleness of its causes; so our fatherland remains dear to us, and though it is cold and rocky, we long for it from afar. A Norwegian maintains a longing for hard rock on which he must constantly fight against the harsh climate. A Pole*

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<sup>4</sup> T. Tripplin, *Wspomnienia z podróży...*, op.cit., pages 209–226.

<sup>5</sup> *Encyklopedia powszechna*, printed by S. Orgelbranda, vol. XXV, Warszawa 1867, pages 546–548 (F. M. Sobieszkański). Cf *Dawni pisarze polscy od początków piśmiennictwa do Młodej Polski. Przewodnik biograficzny i bibliograficzny*, vol. IV, Warszawa 2003, pages 266–267 (A. Polakowska, H. Gacowa); *Słownik pisarzy polskich*, ed. A. Latusek, Kraków 2005, p. 505 (I. Węgrzyn). See also W. Szewczyk, *Anioły z lodu. Z notatnika norweskiego*, Poznań 1978, pages 8–11.

<sup>6</sup> T. Tripplin, *Wspomnienia z podróży...*, op.cit., p. 222.

*constantly craves for his homeland, for which he has shed tears since his early childhood. This is how we bind more strongly with the land for which we must fight against fate, enemies, nature and adversity.* Similar descriptions published in Polish works, even if they were the thoughts of the author, served the clear aim of strengthening the feeling of Polish patriotism during the reality of the partitions.

It should be noted that, although the conditions for Polish settlers were unfavourable, the authors describing Norway presented the hard lives of the majority of inhabitants with admiration, especially those of the fishermen in northern Norway<sup>7</sup>: *They are not, however, unhappy, and consider their craft to be superior to all others; a fisherman's son will also become a fisherman and not undertake a different trade. Cherishing his state, in which he fights against danger, he scorns the calmness and stability of village life, and laughs at the farmer tilling his narrow fields with his safe dreams between the cows and pigs. A fisherman falls in love with danger, with the always new, real poetry of life, and believes in the gains of the conscious mind, he is more sober, and therefore more religious and with greater sacrifice for his family.* This kind of quote brought recognition in the eyes of the Polish reader, which sometimes, but not necessarily always, created a desire to settle in the north of Europe. Of course, contact with travel literature was limited to the elite of the Polish social world. However, a literary encounter with the everyday living conditions in Norway certainly influenced authors who dealt professionally with the issues of expatriation, as well as organisers of the migratory movements from Polish lands a little later, at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

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<sup>7</sup> Idem, *Najnowsza podróż po Danii, Norwegii i Szwecyi odbyta w roku 1855 przez skrzypka polskiego*, vol. I, Vilnius 1857, 132–133.

The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw an improvement in Polish-Norwegian relations, especially in the area of culture<sup>8</sup>, however, this had no effect on migration. Among the distinguished Polish emigrants living in Norway during the 19<sup>th</sup> century were the cartographer Aleksander Waligórski (1794–1873), the publisher Adam Dzwonkowski (1815–1885)<sup>9</sup> and the photographer Ludwik Szaciński de Rawicz (1844–1894)<sup>10</sup>. In the last case, professional successes did not, unfortunately, transfer into a successful private life. Stanisław Przybyszewski used the following words to describe his meeting with the expatriate L. Szaciński<sup>11</sup>: *Soon after arriving in Norway, I became acquainted with a Pole, who had managed to escape from the death penalty after [18]63. (...) I had imagined a man full of fantasy, vibrant with health and a great noble spirit, yet here I stood next to a man whose face was covered by dark shadows acquired from a deep depression. When he heard the sound of Polish words, his eyes shone brightly for a moment, he bustled about trying to make me feel welcome, brought a bottle of wine, started to excitedly tell me about his past, and suddenly slumped, his eyes becoming hazy and glazed (...) he finally lifted his heavy head from his chest: “Please leave this country soon – no Pole can survive here for long – the longing for his homeland will kill him – sooner or later... I have been here for 30 years, and with each year it is worse and worse...”. Shortly after their meeting, L. Szaciński died. Przybyszewski included a short, yet moving, description of Szaciński's funeral in his*

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<sup>8</sup> See T. Cieślak, *Norwegia. Z dziejów XIX i XX wieku*, Poznań 1970, chapter IV *Polsko-norweskie związki w XIX i na początku XX wieku*, pages 64–78.

<sup>9</sup> *Polski słownik biograficzny*, vol. VI, Kraków 1948, pages 186-187 (W. Dzwonkowski).

<sup>10</sup> *Polacy w historii i kulturze krajów Europy Zachodniej. Słownik biograficzny*, ed. K. Kwaśniewski, L. Trzeciakowski, Poznań 1981, p. 424 (E. Later Chodyłowa); eadem, *Norwegia [in:] Polonia w Europie*, Ed. B. Szydłowska-Ceglowa, Poznań 1992, p. 602.

<sup>11</sup> S. Przybyszewski, *Moi współcześni. Wśród obcych*, Warszawa 1926, pages 201–203.

book<sup>12</sup>: *Szaciński's coffin was covered by a flag with a white Polish eagle on an amaranth background – which was first sprinkled with soil brought from Poland, and only later was it covered by that such hospitable, yet such alien – such very alien soil.*

The turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was a period of increased economic emigration from a Poland under partition to western Europe and America. As regards Scandinavia, seasonal migration from Poland was generally directed towards Denmark and Sweden<sup>13</sup>. In both these countries, Polish agricultural workers found good employment conditions, not only in terms of wages, but also the standard of living and the quality of work during the tilling and harvest seasons. They generally worked on farms and less frequently in industry. There is, however, a lack of statistical information concerning Polish seasonal or permanent migration to Norway.

This does not mean though that Norway was not included in Polish literature which looked at the issues connected with migration. Norway was generally regarded as a country which was undergoing a wave of emigration to America<sup>14</sup>. Detailed information concerning emigration from Norway can be found both in works related to migration statistics<sup>15</sup>, and in most kinds of papers

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 203.

<sup>13</sup> Guides for migrants on this subject were published in Galicia, for example: J. Okołowicz, *Poradnik dla robotników rolnych udających się na obczyznę (Ogólne rady i przestrogi. Wychodźstwo do Francji, Danii, Szwecyi i Czech)*, Kraków 1910, as well as other publications from the Polish Emigration Society. Among these collections of guidelines, despite the presence of interesting information concerning the conditions in Scandinavian countries – Denmark and Sweden, there is no information about Norway.

<sup>14</sup> See below, fn. 75.

<sup>15</sup> See. K. W. Kumaniecki, *Studia z zakresu statystyki wędrowek*, Kraków 1909.

connected with the causes and effects of Polish emigration. As regards other information concerning Norway in Polish scientific literature, authors who researched the appearance of migration even in the times of the partitions highlighted the very small population of Norway<sup>16</sup>, as well as the harsh climate of northern Scandinavia which was unfavourable for agriculture<sup>17</sup>. On the other hand, in scientific works which analysed the factors influencing the scale of migration from particular countries, emphasis was placed on the comparatively low population growth in Norway, as well as on the low fatality rate<sup>18</sup>. However, in publications for emigrants, in the information sections, Norway's political system was sometimes mentioned<sup>19</sup>: *The western half of this [Scandinavian – GMK] peninsula consists of Norway and eastern [sic] Sweden. These two countries had a joint king until a few years ago, but currently possess their own governments and monarchy.* In the most serious Polish works concerning emigration, written by those directly engaged in researching this field during its most important period, there is no mention of migration to Norway<sup>20</sup>.

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<sup>16</sup> Cf B. Wasiutyński, *Ruch wychodźczy z Królestwa Polskiego*, [in:] *IV. Zjazd Prawników i Ekonomistów Polskich. Referaty*, “Czasopismo Prawnicze i Ekonomiczne” no. VII: 1906, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> Cf J. Okołowicz, *Polsko-amerykański kalendarz dla wychodźców na rok 1910*, Kraków 1910, chapter. *Robotnicy polscy w Szwecyi*, p. 56; idem, *Kalendarz emigracyjny na rok 1912*, Kraków 1912, chapter. *Szwecya*, p 48.

<sup>18</sup> R. Dmowski, *Wychodźstwo i osadnictwo*. part I, Lvów–Warszawa–Poznań 1900, pages 64–65. It is worth adding that, while discussing the causes and effects of migration (chapter II), the author includes Norway in the category of “The most cultural countries of Europe” (p. 64).

<sup>19</sup> J. Okołowicz, *Polsko-amerykański kalendarz...*, op.cit., p. 56.

<sup>20</sup> See L. Caro, *Emigracya i polityka emigracyjna ze szczególnem uwzględnieniem stosunków polskich*, translated from German with significant additions by K. Englisch, Poznań 1914; J. Okołowicz, *Wychodźstwo i osadnictwo polskie przed wojną światową*, Warszawa 1920. See also A. Mytkowicz, *Powstanie i rozwój emigracji sezonowej*, Kraków 1917.

**III. The Inter-war Years.** After Poland had gained its independence in 1918, throughout the inter-war years, Norway was still not a popular destination for Polish emigrants. As a result of changing economic and political relations, even countries which had been popular with Polish seasonal migrants before World War I – like Sweden for example – were considered to be *dead emigration land*<sup>21</sup>. Observations relating to Sweden concern, of course, the whole of the Scandinavian Peninsula. In official government records related to the concentration of Polish emigrants in the world, Norway is not taken into consideration<sup>22</sup>. In reports from the Polish Emigration Society<sup>23</sup> at the end of the 1920s, it is possible to find, among others, data provided by the Society's central office and various regional offices concerning migration to particular countries in Europe and the rest of the world. Among the tens of countries about which inquiries related to *various emigration issues* were made, Norway is not to be found<sup>24</sup>. Pieces of information on

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<sup>21</sup> M. Szawleski, *Kwestja emigracji w Polsce*, Warszawa 1927, p. 124.

<sup>22</sup> *Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. Wychodztwo polskie w poszczególnych krajach. Materiały opracowane na podstawie sprawozdań konsularnych przez Referat Emigracyjny w Wydziale Administracyjno-Paszportowym Departamentu Konsularnego Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych (kwiecień 1926)*, Warszawa 1926. It should be noted that, according to this publication, the number of Poles in Sweden at the time was around 200, mainly industrial and agricultural workers (p. 164).

<sup>23</sup> This should not be confused with the Polish Emigration Society which was active in Galicia before World War I, and whose activity actually ended in 1914. Cf G. M. Kowalski, *Przestępstwa emigracyjne w Galicji. Z badań nad dziejami polskiego wychodźstwa*, Kraków 2003, pages 79–130.

<sup>24</sup> *Sprawozdanie z działalności Polskiego Towarzystwa Emigracyjnego za rok 1929/30*, Warszawa 1930, p. 54 and others. There were countries, however, which seemed to be exotic, like China, Persia, Siam and others.

the subject of Norway could be found in publications for emigrants, but concerned, for example, the time of the harvest<sup>25</sup>.

The Polish diplomatic services fulfilled the function of diplomatic representative in Oslo between the wars; an Honorary Polish Consulate also operated<sup>26</sup>. Documents from the Polish diplomatic services confirm that, in the inter-war period, the issue of Polish emigration to Norway did not exist. According to an extensive (13 pages) administrative-consular report for 1928<sup>27</sup>, prepared for the consular department of the Polish Foreign Ministry, the chargé d'affaires in Oslo, Leszek Malczewski, confirmed that *issues of a cultural nature do not exist, as there is no Polish colony present. As a result, there are no expatriate issues, and no reports concerning such issues* (page 7). Furthermore, in the report section entitled “Emigration-cultural issues” (page 11) the chargé d'affaires wrote: *1) In Norway, there are virtually no Poles. In the whole of this huge country, only about 30 are to be found; relations with them do not exist, with the exception of emergency cases concerning passport issues or extensions, or nationality*

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<sup>25</sup> Przewodnik dla wychodźców i reemigrantów, by W. Malinowski, Warsaw, this year, p. 98.

<sup>26</sup> See Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych. *Spis urzędów dyplomatycznych i konsularnych państw obcych w Polsce i W. M. Gdańsku oraz sieć polskich urzędów dyplomatycznych i konsularnych zagranicą*, Warszawa 1928, pages 21, 33; T. Cieślak, *Norwegia...*, op.cit., pages 141–142; M. Gawinecka-Woźniak, *Stosunki rządu polskiego z rządem norweskim na emigracji w Londynie w latach 1940–1945*, Toruń 2008, p. 17. For a wider discussion of diplomatic relations between Poland and Norway between the wars, see. J. Szymański, *Polsko-norweskie relacje dyplomatyczne w latach 1919–1930* [in:] *Polska–Norwegia...*, op.cit., pages 119–133, idem, *Charakterystyka relacji polsko-norweskich w latach 1919–1929. En beskrivelse av polsk-norske relasjoner i årene 1919–1929* [in:] *Norwegia–Polska... Norge–Polen...*, op.cit., pages 71–85.

<sup>27</sup> Oslo, 30<sup>th</sup> April 1929; l. dz. 512/A/29. AAN, Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych w Warszawie (1917) 1918–1939 (1949) (further: MSZ), ref.no. 11757, pages 5–17.

checks. 2) There are also virtually no Polish workers. Due to unemployment issues, foreigners have little chance of earning a living<sup>28</sup>. At the same time, L. Malczewski highlighted: *Interest in Poland, both [Norwegian – GMK] trading and others, is constantly increasing, helped partly by the Norwegian-Polish Trade Agreement<sup>29</sup>, lower duty charges on herring, and last but not least by the propaganda work of the diplomatic envoys* (page 7). In the following years, Poles still didn't arrive in large numbers. At the start of the 1930s there were officially 50 Poles in Norway<sup>30</sup>.

It should be noted that, in this period, Norway was a country with a single uniform nationality, in which there were generally no serious problems with ethnic minorities – not only Polish. The lack of this kind of issue can be clearly seen in the document of 26<sup>th</sup> August 1931, in which the Polish envoy in Oslo, Władysław Neuman, states that *the Consulate can not provide answers to the questionnaire because the issue of ethnic and national minorities does not exist in the area of its jurisdiction<sup>31</sup>*.

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<sup>28</sup> Cf below, fn. 77. In reports concerning the problem of unemployment in Norway, the lack of reference to Polish expatriates is also highlighted in other places: *O zarobek jest tutaj* [in Norway – GMK] *bardzo trudno z powodu panującego bezrobocia* (p. 13).

<sup>29</sup> Discussion of the trade and navigation agreement created on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1926, with an additional protocol signed on 26<sup>th</sup> April 1928. For more, see J. Szymański, *Stosunki gospodarcze Polski z Norwegią w latach 1918–1929*, Gdańsk 2005, passim.

<sup>30</sup> *O braciach naszych na wychodźstwie*, S. Malessa, ca 1931, p. 31. According to Polish calculations based on Norwegian statistics, the number of Poles in Norway equalled: 1920 – 198 Poles, 1930 – 173, 1935 – about 40. E. Olszewski, *Polacy w Norwegii* [in:] *Polacy w Skandynawii*, op.cit., p. 256.

<sup>31</sup> Letter to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Warsaw *concerning minority claims at the League of Nations forum* No.694/P/31. AAN, MSZ, ref. no. 2222, p. 270.

Despite the insignificant migration from Poland to Norway, contact on many different levels developed. Cultural relations became stronger and stronger<sup>32</sup>. One example of this was the establishment in Warsaw on 9<sup>th</sup> January 1933 of the Friends of Norway Academic Circle, with the aim of *bringing the academic youth of Norway and Poland closer*<sup>33</sup>. Another important scientific and logistical undertaking was the Polish polar expedition to Spitsbergen in 1936<sup>34</sup>.

**IV. Post-World War II.** During World War II, Polish soldiers engraved themselves in Norwegian history, in particular at the Battle of Narvik in 1940, where the famous Polish Independent Highland Brigade, under the leadership of General Zygmunt Szyszko-Bohusz (1893–1982), bravely fought and Polish Naval ships also took part. However, after the unsuccessful campaign and during German occupation, many Poles found themselves in Norway, but not of their own free will. A few thousand people were sent from Poland to Norway for work<sup>35</sup>. Some of

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<sup>32</sup> See P. Jaworski, *Polska niepodległa wobec Skandynawii 1918–1939*, Wrocław 2001, part III *Problemy kultury skandynawskiej w Polsce*, pages 201–267.

<sup>33</sup> Letter of the Circle to the Polish Consulate in Oslo from 24<sup>th</sup> March 1933. AAN, The Republic of Poland's envoy in Oslo 1920–1940, ref. no. 19.

<sup>34</sup> Documents from the expedition's organisers and its journal, as well as other materials, including Norwegian press cuttings, can be found in: AAN, MSZ, ref. no. 7235. For more, see M. Operacz, *Wyprawy polskich badaczy na Spitsbergen w okresie międzywojennym. Polskie forskningsekspedisjoner på Spitsbergen i mellomkrigstiden* [in:] *Norwegia–Polska... Norge–Polen...*, op.cit., pages 55–69. Interesting observations of Norway in the 1920s are found in the memoirs of the Polish diplomat: A. Wysocki, *Na placówce dyplomatycznej w Sztokholmie 1924–1928. Wspomnienia*, selected and ed., and foreword, by P. Jaworski, Toruń 2005, pages 187–188.

<sup>35</sup> E. Denkwicz-Szczepaniak, *Polacy w Norwegii w latach 1945–1947* [in:] *Polacy w Skandynawii*, op.cit., p. 271; Cz. Łuczak, *Przemieszczenia ludności z Polski podczas drugiej*

these Polish workers – including “volunteers”, those willing to move due to the living conditions in the occupied country – arrived in Norway as part of the main German construction institution, Organisation Todt<sup>36</sup>. Mainly as a result of forced conscription into the Wehrmacht, more Poles ended up in Norway. These often refused to reveal their Polish origins in fear of their lives<sup>37</sup>. Another group consisted of Polish prisoners of war from the Invasion of Poland in 1939<sup>38</sup>.

It is only possible to approximate the number of Poles in Norway after the fighting ended (including workers, those who joined the Wehrmacht and fighters from the September Campaign). Among others, the following figures, based on various sources, are presented in the literature: over 20 thousand directly after the end of the war<sup>39</sup>, around 18 thousand in this period<sup>40</sup>, and a little later: over 17 thousand in August 1945<sup>41</sup>, and more than 15 thousand in October 1945<sup>42</sup>. Poles

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*wojny światowej* [in:] *Emigracja z ziem polskich w czasach nowożytnych i najnowszych (XVIII-XX w.)*, ed. A. Pilch, Warszawa 1984, p. 465.

<sup>36</sup> See E. Denkiewicz-Szczepaniak, *Polska siła robocza w Organizacji Todta w Norwegii i Finlandii w latach 1941–1945*, Toruń 1999.

<sup>37</sup> B. Bratbak, *Polskie pomniki wojenne w Norwegii* [in:] *Polska–Norwegia...*, op.cit., p. 213.

<sup>38</sup> For more, see E. Denkiewicz-Szczepaniak, *Polacy w Norwegii...*, op.cit., pages 271–272. Cf L. Niekrasz, *Gdzie Polska, gdzie Svalbard...*, Warszawa 1978, p. 40.

<sup>39</sup> E. Later Chodyłowa, *Polska diaspora...*, op.cit., p. 225.

<sup>40</sup> E. Denkiewicz-Szczepaniak, *Polacy w Norwegii...*, op.cit., p. 272.

<sup>41</sup> Data according to Norwegian government organs for immigration was placed in a report of 20<sup>th</sup> August 1945 under the title *Sytuacja Polaków w Norwegii i problem ich repatriacji*. AAN, Generalny Pełnomocnik Rządu RP do spraw Repatriacji w Warszawie 1944–1947 (1948–1950) (further: Gen. Peł. ds. Rep.), ref. no. 378, p. 138.

<sup>42</sup> AAN, Gen. Peł. ds. Rep., ref. no. 395, p. 36 (dupl.: AAN, Gen. Peł. ds. Rep., ref. no. 378, p. 100); E. Denkiewicz-Szczepaniak, *Polska siła robocza...*, op.cit., p. 256. See also E. Olszewski, *Polacy w Norwegii*, op.cit., p. 259.

were gathered in camps while they waited to be repatriated to their homeland or to others of their choice<sup>43</sup>. Those who, for various reasons – most often in fear of repression from the communist authorities – decided to stay abroad, became expatriates. In this context, it is worth noting that, in accordance with “assumptions” presented by the Chief of Staff, General Stanisław Kopański, at the VIII sitting of the National Defence Committee in London on 12<sup>th</sup> March 1946, with the participation of the President of the Republic of Poland<sup>44</sup>, that, among others, *the working masses relocated by the Germans and former prisoners of war* should be treated as Polish emigration.

The repatriation of Poles from Norway was discussed in Polish literature<sup>45</sup>. The generally helpful attitude of Norwegian society towards Poles in a period of difficulty for both nations should be emphasised. There were, however, some unfortunate incidents. Some Norwegians behaved provocatively and aggressively towards Poles and accused them of favouring the Germans. This was connected with the forced service of Poles in the Wehrmacht. Another reason for the negative opinion of Poles was – understandably in the post-war period – the difficult situation related to the lack of basic everyday commodities, including, above all,

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<sup>43</sup> In accordance with *Camp regulations* defining the conditions for staying in Bodø (19<sup>th</sup> June 1945) the aim of gathering citizens of allied countries was *the rapid conduct of registration and medical examinations to enable a quick return to home* (§ 5). Camp regulations were not restrictive, however to avoid various undesired incidents, access was only possible for nationals of the same country for which the camp was designated (§ 4). The camp inhabitants could use the same legal regulations as Norwegians (§ 1). AAN, Gen. Peł. ds. Rep. Ref. no. 378, p. 6.

<sup>44</sup> *Wybór dokumentów do dziejów polskiego uchodźstwa niepodległościowego 1939–1991*, written and ed. A. Suchcitz, L. Maik, W. Rojek, Londyn 1997, no. 13, p. 46.

<sup>45</sup> E. Denkiewicz-Szczepaniak, *Polska siła robocza...*, op.cit., chapter 5 *Repatriacja Polaków z Norwegii*, pages 244–276; E. Olszewski, *Polacy w Norwegii*, op.cit., pages 259–262.

food products. The Poles living in the camps, in the eyes of some Norwegians, were a financial burden to their country, and the situation was made worse by the fact that the camp inhabitants also conducted unlicensed trade<sup>46</sup>.

One of the documented incidents was a clash in the Polish camp in Bergen-Laksevaag during the night of 29<sup>th</sup> August 1945, and whose initiators were Norwegians. According to reports of the incident<sup>47</sup>, Norwegians had behaved aggressively towards the Poles, despite Polish activities in the field of education and culture intended to improve relations with the local society. However, that ill-fated night, after a verbal altercation, the Norwegians began to open fire at the Poles, wounding a few people. As was written in the report: *We don't know the reasons which have caused such an unfriendly attitude towards us from a certain section of Norwegian society. We have always regarded the Norwegian nation as our friend, two nations combined by the misery of war (...). We were happy with our friendship and tried to strengthen it. Our behaviour was always friendly and appropriate. However, even immediately after the Germans' defeat, we met some reticence from certain elements, which at times went as far as clear ill-will. We tried to ignore this, and our aim was for this ill-will to pass with time. We set up a Polish academy in the camp, for which there was certainly much interest from serious Norwegian citizens, we communicated with Norwegian journalists, writing reports for newspapers just to get closer to Norwegian society and to show them how much we wanted to be friends with them. (...) We would like to believe that this event [i.e. the attack on the Polish camp – GMK] could take place only due to a lack of knowledge connected with our position in Norway, not knowing the full extent of the terror that*

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<sup>46</sup> Report of the Polish Repatriation Mission active in Oslo and Stavanger from 9<sup>th</sup> December 1945. AAN, Gen. Peł. ds. Rep., ref. no. 378, pages 41–42.

<sup>47</sup> AAN, Gen. Peł. ds. Rep., ref. no. 396, pages 5–6.

*the Germans forced upon us, which was the reason for us being there.* As can be seen, the Poles did not feel a lack of acceptance from Norwegian society as a whole, but only from groups. Unfortunately, acts of aggression, even verbal ones, or openly hostile acts directed at Polish emigrants must have been very painful for members of Polish society<sup>48</sup>. The cause of conflict was not always serious accusations from the Norwegians of sympathising with the Nazis or clashes against the background of illegal trading. They also took place as a result of – something natural among youths, irrespective of location and situation – *competition for Norwegian girls*<sup>49</sup>. The various altercations, such as the one described above in the camp in Bergen, were fortunately only isolated incidents, although they could definitely have played a role in the decision of some Poles to return to Poland or to stay as expatriates in Norway.

Propaganda intended to encourage Poles to return to their homeland was conducted by Polish language newspapers and radio operating in Norway. In broadcasts directed at Poles, only superlatives were used to present both the transport conditions back home and the situation within the country itself. The matter of emigration was often touched upon<sup>50</sup>: *We will not spare any time or effort, so all Poles currently in the hospitable land of Norway who would like to return to their homeland, can do so as quickly as possible, in the most convenient conditions. (...) All Poland is waiting longingly for its brothers to come back and to greet them [sic] with joy. The proof of this lies in the innumerable crowds which gather in ports, to participate in the homecoming welcome of their*

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<sup>48</sup> Cf E. Denkiewicz-Szczepaniak, *Polska siła robocza...*, op.cit., p. 275.

<sup>49</sup> Report from 9<sup>th</sup> December 1945, p. 42, see fn 46.

<sup>50</sup> Message in the bulletin “Wiadomości Polskie w Norwegii” from 16<sup>th</sup> November 1945. AAN, Gen. Peł. ds. Rep., ref. no. 394, pages 14–15.

countrymen, after often difficult times in exile, to their free homeland, which is now vibrant with life. This propaganda was also related to the long history of Polish economic migration<sup>51</sup>: *For centuries the Polish peasant and worker has searched for bread in foreign lands; he has cleared forests in Canada and Brazil, or worked on the steppes of Argentina; thousands went to Saxony, to the mines of France and Belgium – everywhere, he has been used as good and cheap labour. Now is not the time to wander around foreign lands, to depend on someone's generosity for your living. (...) It is necessary to work for your country in Poland!* In the post-war conditions, it is understandable that flagrant overstatements were used in the quoted announcements, directed at those exiled Poles who found themselves in hard times in foreign lands<sup>52</sup>.

Not all Poles, however, had the chance to return home. According to a general report on the verification of Polish camps for the period 1<sup>st</sup> September – 27<sup>th</sup> November 1945 (Oslo, 29<sup>th</sup> November 1945)<sup>53</sup> the author informed that the chance to return was denied to people who had collaborated with the Germans or *Volksdeutschen*, as well as people *opposed to the current Polish reality*. In twelve camps

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<sup>51</sup> Message of the Polish Repatriation Mission. The text from a Polish radio program on Norwegian radio on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 1945. AAN, Gen. Peł. ds. Rep., ref. no. 394, p. 34.

<sup>52</sup> Presenting the situation in Poland, various regions were described (excluding of course the eastern Polish land annexed by the Soviet Union), with the following: *This work accompanies a spiritual life. On the way to Silesia we enter Krakow. The old stronghold under Wawel has resumed its traditions. Schools, academies, universities, theatres, literature in full.* This last text is from the final Polish broadcast on Norwegian radio on 4<sup>th</sup> December 1945. AAN, Gen. Peł. ds. Rep., ref. no. 394, p. 37.

<sup>53</sup> AAN, Gen. Peł. ds. Rep., ref. no. 378, pages 29–36; and ref. no. 396, pages 18–25.

which underwent verification<sup>54</sup>, there were 7,758 people according to the statistics<sup>55</sup> (the actual number was 7,294). Of these, 1,320 people voluntarily decided to stay. However, according to further checks, the Polish Repatriation Mission (Oslo, 9<sup>th</sup> December 1945)<sup>56</sup> qualified 11,770 people for repatriation, 2,400 were rejected, and 2,008 voluntarily decided to emigrate. It could also be considered if, in practice, various forms of pressure was placed on those “undesired” emigrants to “voluntarily” remain abroad. Besides this, the obvious fact that not all Polish emigrants who decided not to return to Poland after the war remained in Norway should also be taken into consideration. Some of them travelled further to other western European countries or to America. Therefore, after repatriation had finished, the number of Poles living in Norway decreased considerably. According to works concerning the problems of the Polonia, in 1946, there were 1,280 Polish citizens in Norway, and at the end of the decade there were fewer than 1 thousand (900 people in 1950, of which 616 possessed Polish citizenship)<sup>57</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup> The report's author verified 13 camps however, in 1 camp he only provided data for those qualified to return to Poland – 223 people (there is a lack of data related to the number of people emigrating).

<sup>55</sup> In one case, only the actual state was given.

<sup>56</sup> AAN, Gen. Peł. ds. Rep., ref. no. 378, p. 44. E. Denkwicz-Szczepaniak, *Polska siła robocza...*, op.cit., p. 273.

<sup>57</sup> T. Stpiczyński, *Polacy w świecie*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny, Warszawa 1992, p. 71. Cf J. Byczkowski, *Polonia w Europie*, Opole 1990, p. 246; E. Later Chodyłowa, *Norwegia...*, op.cit. p. 603; E. Olszewski, *Polacy w Norwegii*, op.cit., p. 267. In the last work, Norwegian statistics for the number of Poles in Norway during later years are found, together with a table showing their ages and location in Norway etc. (pages 264–268). Statistics show how slowly the number of Polish emigrants grew before 1980.

Later in the period discussed, Polish emigration to Norway was rather insignificant. In a letter from 30<sup>th</sup> October 1958, addressed to the “Polonia” Society in Warsaw, a Polish worker, resident in Oslo (having been an expatriate for almost 20 years) and married to a Norwegian, stated<sup>58</sup>: *In Norway there are currently around 800 Poles, who are spread throughout the whole country. The largest group is to be found in southern Norway (...). This is a group of migrant workers. The Poles residing in Norway established an association which tried to conduct educational activities and nurse Polish culture. The results of these activities, despite great efforts, were initially unsatisfactory. In the letter mentioned above, the following statement can also be found: As regards Polish organisations, only one exists – the Polish Soldiers Society). The number of members is quite modest. Polish organisations in Norway are generally unheard of. Educational and cultural activity does not exist at all. (...) After my stay in Poland (September this year), I met many Poles who showed great interest in Polish matters and Poland itself. There was no end of questions. I conclude from this that there is interest in Poland. (...) I would like to note that the hunger for Polish words is partly due to the denationalization of the Poles here. Many Poles start to lose their Polish accent, many have broken down because of this or other reasons, and quite a large group can be found in psychiatric institutions. The Norwegian mentality and conditions of their stay here are the main reasons for this mental breakdown. The next reason is that Poles begin to denationalize, and there is, as I mentioned before, a negative attitude of diplomatic representatives to Polish issues in the Polish government's diplomatic centre. According to the latest data, 187 Polish citizens acquired Norwegian citizenship between 1945 and 1957.*

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<sup>58</sup> AAN, Towarzystwo Łączności z Polonią Zagraniczną “Polonia” w Warszawie, 1955–1977 (further: Tow. “Polonia”), ref. no. I/200. Original letter. J. Byczkowski (*Polonia...*, op.cit., p. 246) estimates that in 1958 in Norway were about 900 Poles.

*The activity of the first representatives of the People's Republic of Poland and their treatment of Poles here was repulsive, whereas currently they show no interest at all.*

During the communist regime in Poland, up to 1980, Poles emigrated to Norway for various reasons. The main one, of course, was economic. A letter which was sent from Norway to the “Polonia” Society in Warsaw on 30<sup>th</sup> October 1960 is characteristic for a few reasons. It was written by a Polish expatriate, who quit his job on a fishing trawler and stayed in Norway. Worth noticing are the author's description of his emigration, information about the conditions of his life in Poland and his opinion of Norway, as well as his honest and open style of writing. This letter, constituting a colourful and yet dramatic story of the factors leading to his emigration to Norway, is worth quoting in full<sup>59</sup>:

*26<sup>th</sup> November 1959; I left the fishing trawler on which I worked. I got off in Norway, and the boat belonged to the State Enterprise of Sea Hunting and Fishing Services (...). I got off, not so I could look for pleasure or adventure in the world like others do, when they are healthy and strong. I left the boat sick, tortured, a shadow of my former self and staggering. I was simply saving myself from being finished off by the crew of pirates on board. After a couple of days fishing in storms on the North Sea, I fell weak and sick. My strength had gone from the excessive work of a new worker, and, in addition, I was too honest for this work. My hands were so swollen from the effort that a Norwegian doctor had to examine them.*

*During my seasickness, I stopped eating, or rather everything I ate was soon vomited into the sea, even together with my false teeth. When I lost all strength, my work became less efficient*

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<sup>59</sup> AAN, Tow. “Polonia”, ref. no. I/200. The letter is hand-written, and some corrections and changes can be seen. The personal details of the sender have been omitted, as have the corrections and changes. A division into paragraphs has been added.

*than the crew, which was healthy, more experienced and used to the storms and work at sea. At work I began to fall with emaciation. The crew, and in particular the boatswain, helmsman and captain, started first to insult me, and later beat, kick and shove me. I was bruised and tortured like a prisoner of war. They didn't care that I was sick and exhausted. They mistreated me literally like the Pharisees did with Jesus Christ and with inventive derision.*

*The ship entered the port (...) after over two weeks of fishing. The plan was to stay in the port for 24 hours and then return to sail in those terrible storms and fish again. In the state I found myself: that is, out of favour with the whole crew, beaten, bruised, seasick, deprived of strength and health. In this state of sickness and disfavour, it would be madness to sail to sea with this crew. Why I was treated so badly in this work, I do not know even today.*

*I left the ship neither willingly nor of my choice, I never considered this. I wanted to work on the ship to earn more than on the land and to be able to save up to buy a car in the future. On the land, where I previously worked for 4.5 years in a factory (...) was not too bad. Together with my wife, we earned enough to buy necessities. I loved and still love my wife and two kids very much. I had my own flat and couldn't complain about my life in Poland as it was comfortable. Because of the above, I was sad and sorry to leave the ship and walk away among strange people and places. As I already knew from school in Poland, Norway is a cold, cloudy, and not very merry country. The summer and days are short with little sun. A poor country and generally discouraging for permanent living. If I had found myself in England or even in Sweden, Denmark, or other countries, it would be easier to accuse me of lying, but as I am in mountainous, rocky, cold and poor Norway, there should be no doubts about what I write. Although this country is what it is, because it could even be the North Pole, or the desert in Africa, I still wouldn't return from it and I'm not thinking about returning from Norway to Poland, regardless of whether my wife and*

*kids receive passports to visit me, as one who deserts a ship is not allowed to come back, despite his greatest will.*

*The ship's crew didn't follow the rules with their evil treatment of me, so why does the Passport Office follow its rules – regulations? The crew broke a rule and, by doing this, it paid a penalty and took responsibility for me on itself. The crew is guilty for my journey, so I am innocent. Why is the Passport Office punishing me and my wife by refusing her a passport to visit me in Norway? I can add that my wife has the right to visit Norway, which was issued by the Norwegian court in Oslo. I and my wife beg you for help in gaining a passport for her. We ask you to intervene at the Director's office (...). The Passport Office unfairly and without grounds follows its rules. Once again, with my wife, we plead with you, our friends, to support us so we can join together again and not be a family broken by an evil crew. We thank you in advance for your help. Please keep me informed of the results of this intervention in the shortest possible time.*

As can be seen, the motivation behind the emigrant's decision is written in a simple yet dramatic way. Ignoring the fact that when he was writing about the factors that forced him to stay in Norway, he could have simply been lying, attention is drawn especially to the position of the Polish government in denying his wife and children permission to travel. This kind of behaviour, connected with the rejection of passport applications for close relatives, effectively limited the emigration of those who had to leave their families behind in Poland. Poles who remained abroad illegally had serious difficulties when trying to meet their spouses and children. In the conditions of the communist regime, emigration of the whole family was extremely difficult.

Other emigration fates are presented in a letter by Father Piotr Bzdyl from 9<sup>th</sup> July 1968<sup>60</sup>. The author wrote about himself that: *I am an old expatriate and the time has come for me to think about my eternal future. I left my home before World War I as an Austrian, as I come from Galicia. My former county was Wieliczka and is currently Myslenice. I have stayed in Holland, in Belgium, in France and for 40 years in Norway. I have had very few ways of meeting my countrymen, that's why I have forgotten what I learnt in my mother tongue during the partition. My trips to my country have been rare and too short to refresh the tongue of my youth. I didn't want to be a stranger in my own country and lived like a "lamp keeper": I read Polish books. My activities are based on maintaining our holy faith among distracted believers like Norwegians, Poles, Germans and others. I visit them according to time and possibility.* As can be seen, Father P. Bzdyl arrived in Norway between the great wars and for tens of years performed church services for, among others, Polish emigrants. More will be mentioned on the subject of Polish religious workers in Norway later on.

During the period of communist rule in Poland, if the authorities denied citizens the right to leave the country, some of them decided to emigrate illegally. A good opportunity for emigration to the West were tourist excursions, during which the holidaymakers decided to remain abroad. This kind of incident also took place during trips to Scandinavia. During one such incident, on 7<sup>th</sup> May 1969, up to twenty people left the Polish ship "Batory" in Oslo<sup>61</sup>. This incident was reported in

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<sup>60</sup> AAN, Tow. "Polonia", ref no. I/200. Original letter.

<sup>61</sup> IPN Kr ref no. 08/109 file 11, part I, cards 65–73.

the Norwegian press<sup>62</sup>: *Nine Polish citizens approached the police requesting permission to stay in Norway, after disembarking the ship "Batory", which was anchored near the shore in Oslo. In total, 20 passengers did not return to the ship*<sup>63</sup>. *Four of the nine were sent to the Court of Inquiry (...) and, as usual in such cases, an order was served to keep them under temporary arrest for 14 days. (...) The Poles, who have requested permission to remain here are, on the whole, young specialists. They cite the difficult working conditions and low earnings in their country. How many of them will decide to settle in Norway after receiving permission to stay is unknown at the moment. A few of them have already expressed their intention to travel further to other western countries. In the final instance the Ministry of Justice will decide to grant residency permits or not. The role of the police is limited to conducting an investigation and directing the case to the Ministry of Justice. A police spokesman (...) stated that there must be exceptional circumstances to send an asylum seeker back to his homeland against his will. (...) During previous voyages ["Batory" – GMK] there were other incidents of tourists escaping and requesting permission to remain in Norway.* It can be seen that, according to press reports, none of those who requested the right to reside in Norway gave political reasons as a factor in their decision to emigrate. This was an emigration, as can be judged, based mainly on economic factors. In addition, as can be gathered from the statements of the Poles themselves, for the majority of them Norway was only a stop along the migratory road to other western European countries or America.

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<sup>62</sup> Translation of the Norwegian article from "Aftenposten" 9<sup>th</sup> May 1969 can be found in: *ibidem*, card 68.

<sup>63</sup> The acts of IPN note 18 Polish citizens. *Lista turystów, którzy opuścili w dniu 7 maja 1969 r. m/s "Batory" w porcie w Oslo.* Among those listed, the oldest was born in 1898, and the youngest in 1942. *Ibidem*, card 67.

A small number of documents concerning Polish emigration to Norway in the 1960s and 1970s can be found in the archives. One such example relates to the employment of a Polish scientific worker in the Polish Academy of Science<sup>64</sup>. In official notes *concerning refusal to return to Poland after a business trip to Norway* (no date given, end of the 1960s) the following information can be found: *The following person (...) travelled to Norway with the aim of conducting research work within the framework of his research grant (...). At the request of PAN, the expiry date of his passport was extended (...) he informed PAN of his resignation from his job, refusing to return to his country. (...) With regard to the above, the aforementioned person has been entered to the list of people refusing to return their country.* Another example is a Polish citizen who went on a family holiday to Yugoslavia passing through Austria in 1970<sup>65</sup>. His daughter's sickness meant the family had to stop in Vienna. After a six-week stay in Austria, the whole family travelled to Norway, where initial teething problems caused the break-up of the marriage (the wife and children returned to Poland). After a few years, however, as can be seen in official notes, the expatriate *achieved, as far as can be seen, in Norway a good position at work, earned well, and the control found nothing to incriminate him with activities related to enemies of the Polish state and regime.* The most important reason for his emigration was, according to the author of the information, *contact with the western lifestyle and its comparison with life in Poland.* The emigrant permeated “manners” of *western etiquette and morality, and was unable or unwilling to judge the changes that had taken place in Poland during his exile, and with this gave further praise for the alleged superiority of*

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<sup>64</sup> IPN Kr ref.no. 08/109 vol. 3, part II, pages 140–142.

<sup>65</sup> *Informacja dot. przebywającego za granicą obyw.[atela] PRL z 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1975.* IPN Kr ref. no. 08/267 vol. 7, pages 68–71.

*bourgeois social relations*. The records located in the Institute of National Remembrance's archives require further investigation with regards to the emigration of Poles to Norway after World War II.

Contact between Polish expatriates was not helped by their scattered locations throughout Norway. Their rapid denationalisation was also hastened by the lack of Polish language training, which was treated by parents as unnecessary, and sometimes even harmful, as it hindered the assimilation of their children into Norwegian society<sup>66</sup>. The most socially active group of Polish emigrants at the beginning of the 1970s was the “Polonia” Society in Norway. This was established following an initiative of the Polish Embassy at the end of the 1960s<sup>67</sup>. Its 16-member board, which was chosen on 10<sup>th</sup> March 1972 consisted of 7 Polish women and 8 Polish men, who had arrived in Norway during World War II or in the 1950s and 1960s, as well as 1 Polish woman who had British citizenship<sup>68</sup>. It should be highlighted that quite a large number, in comparison with Norwegian conditions, of Poles took part in the election gathering – over 60 people. This is testament to the considerable activity of a small number of Polish expatriates. Among those selected as board members in “Polonia”, probably 5 people had moved to Norway as a result of marrying a Norwegian citizen. Six more had

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<sup>66</sup> On which Father. P. Bzdyl pays attention both in the quoted letter above and in his next one from 9<sup>th</sup> February 1971. AAN, Tow. “Polonia”, ref. no. I/200.

<sup>67</sup> AAN, Tow. “Polonia”, ref. no. I/200. According to a report from 11<sup>th</sup> April 1972 the society was established in 1969, However, in the literature the given date is 1967. See E. Later Chodyłowa, *Skandynawskie pielgrzymowanie* [in:] *Skandynawskie Polaków pielgrzymowanie*, ed. O. F. Szajer ofm, Oslo 2003, p. 16

<sup>68</sup> It can be seen that already in 1972 Polish expatriates were equally represented by both genders, as in the 16-member board were the same number of men and women.

arrived in Norway during the war, one couple had arrived together in the 1950s, one woman had travelled to Norway to gain work experience a few years earlier, but still possessed a valid passport, and one had arrived in 1963 with a consular passport.

It is worth noting in this context, the appearance of the so-called “matrimonial emigration”. This concerned a small number of Polish expatriates who arrived in Norway in the sixties and seventies as a result of marriages with Norwegians<sup>69</sup>. Due to the often large distances between their places of abode, the Poles did not maintain any kind of contact. These marriages were generally not long-lasting relationships<sup>70</sup>. As can be seen from the aforementioned reports, only those Poles who lived in larger cities, such as Oslo, had any chance of actively participating in Polish social groups.

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<sup>69</sup> E. Later Chodyłowa, *Norwegia...*, op.cit., p. 604 and the literature quoted there.

<sup>70</sup> In one of the books containing an interesting collection of stories about life in Norway (B. Tryfan, *Szkice skandynawskie. Reportaże z Danii, Norwegii i Szwecji*, Warszawa 1972) the following example was given: *In one country I visited, a woman visited the Polish government representative with a request: “I want to return. I swear to God never to leave again”. This woman had crossed the Polish border legally two weeks earlier for a great love. The foreigner who had been a perfect gentleman in Poland made such a striking impression on her that when he asked for her hand in marriage, she had no hesitation in accepting. They immediately took their wedding vows and the bride received a passport. She began her honeymoon in her new homeland by buying three pairs of stockings, each costing in that country roughly two or three tram rides (public transport in Scandinavia is terribly expensive). Her loving husband lost his temper when he saw this, screaming that this expense was not in his budget. At this moment, his wife decided to return* (p. 61). Despite the slight exaggeration of this incident, there is a tendency to draw attention – as often mentioned by expatriates, such as in the aforementioned letter to the “Polonia” Society – to the different mentality and living conditions in Poland and Scandinavia. These differences almost certainly greatly influenced the large number of Polish-Norwegian marriages which ended in divorce, and where the Pole decided to live abroad.

In summary, it can be stated that, in the period discussed, Polish emigration to Norway was rather insignificant, although it was at a higher level than before World War II. In the territory of Norway in 1960 there were 1,032 Polish people (412 possessed Polish citizenship), in 1970 – 1,145, however, in 1980 – 1,566 (680 with Polish citizenship )<sup>71</sup>. It should also be highlighted that even official Norwegian statistics did not consider Polish migrants inside the country<sup>72</sup>. The development of certain forms of Polish emigration was not helped by restrictive regulations introduced in Norway in 1975 aimed at limiting immigration. These regulations were, however, somehow useful for the Intelligentsia (the immigration of some specialists was allowed in Norway), and that helped a small number of Polish scientists and artists to emigrate<sup>73</sup>.

**V. Summary.** As noted in the Introduction, before the outbreak of World War II, Polish emigration to Norway was insignificant with only very few cases. This was due to a few factors, the most important of which was certainly the unfavourable natural conditions for living in this country. This is so obvious that it does not require further examination. It should be remembered that from Poland to western and northern Europe – including Scandinavian countries, Denmark and Sweden – the main groups of migrants consisted of peasants generally looking for work in

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<sup>71</sup> T. Stpicyński, *Polacy w świecie*, op.cit., p. 71.

<sup>72</sup> E. Later Chodyłowa, *Norwegia...*, op.cit., p. 605; eadem, *Adaptacja współczesnych imigrantów polskich w Norwegii. Mottagelsen av moderne Polske immigranter i Norge* [in:] *Norwegia–Polska... Norge–Polen...*, op.cit., pages 247; 255.

<sup>73</sup> Eadem, *Skandynawskie pielgrzymowanie*, op.cit., p. 17; E. Olszewski, *Polacy w Norwegii*, op.cit. p. 265.

agriculture. This type of work was difficult to find for Polish “obieżysasów” (Polish peasants who travelled to western Europe, and Saxony in particular, for seasonal agricultural work) at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Norway. The rapid industrial development of this country took place a little later.

Furthermore, the fact that Norway itself was, from the 19<sup>th</sup> century, (as described in Polish literature relating to this kind of country) a “migratory country”<sup>74</sup>, and one in which emigration occurred on a large scale, also played a role. This emigration was generally overseas, and, on the whole, directed towards the United States of America. The causes and size of this appearance created interest among Polish researchers at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and was discussed in the literature<sup>75</sup>. The most important reason why Norwegians decided to leave their homeland was the demographic situation, connected with the increasing population and the insufficient amount of arable land<sup>76</sup>. In this respect, it is understandable that Polish emigrants had no reason to choose Norway as their destination.

If we examine other economic branches besides agriculture, Norway also suffered from significant unemployment among its citizens. Information on this subject reached Polish society through, among others, various kinds of statistical

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<sup>74</sup> J. Okołowicz, *Wychodźstwo...*, op.cit., p. 302.

<sup>75</sup> On the subject of Norwegian emigration, see, among others: R. Dmowski, *Wychodźstwo...*, op.cit., pages 26, 27, K. W. Kumaniecki, *Studia...*, op.cit., passim, and from modern literature: A. Walaszek, *Migracje Europejczyków 1650–1914*, Kraków 2007, pages 256–260 and the literature quoted there. Cf. T. K. Derry, *A History of Modern Norway 1814–1972*, Oxford 1973, chap. 7. *Norwegians Abroad*, pages 206–236.

<sup>76</sup> A. Walaszek, *Migracje Europejczyków...*, op.cit., p. 257.

publications<sup>77</sup>. This type of information certainly discouraged potential emigrants, as well as those responsible for organising emigration. On the other hand, the literature presented the development of industry and settlements, mainly in the north of the Scandinavian Peninsula, including Norway<sup>78</sup>. This, in turn, could have encouraged Polish emigrants to choose, or increase their interest in, Norway as their destination, although in practice this was not the case and no mass emigration to Norway occurred.

Despite the small-scale emigration in the period before World War II, relations between Poland and Norway were good. It is possible to find evidence in the literature that both countries – especially their political and cultural elite – knew and sympathised with each other, and enjoyed mutual respect<sup>79</sup>. In Polish travel publications and literature, Norwegians were generally presented as very warm-hearted. As early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the very low crime rate in Norway and the hard work of Norwegians was admired. Of course, their faults were also presented, however, these were often connected with misconceptions about the realities of life in the North and characteristics which were alien to the Polish nation. After Poland had gained independence in 1918, political relations between the two countries

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<sup>77</sup> For example: J. Wąsowicz, A. Zierhoffer, *Świat w cyfrach*, annual 1929–1938, Lvów–Warszawa 1929–1938. According to the 1938 annual, unemployment in Norway in 1936 equalled 33 thousand (18.8 % of the working population).

<sup>78</sup> *The Norwegian, Swedish and Finnish parts of Lapland have constant and intensive growth, due to the development of industry and, as is common in northern Europe, settlements further north in search of new pasture and arable areas.* J. Wąsowicz, *Powojenne zmiany w rozmieszczeniu ludności w Europie Zachodniej*, “Czasopismo Geograficzne” 1933, no. 4, p. 9.

<sup>79</sup> Cf *Skandynawia w oczach Polaków. Antologia*, selected and ed., intro., by Z. Ciesielski, Gdańsk 1974, chapter *Norwegia*, pages 321–411. The Norway collection contains 19 texts created between the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

settled well<sup>80</sup>. In recent literature, the significant achievements in economic relations made by Poland and Norway between the wars have been emphasised<sup>81</sup>.

After World War II, the emigration of Poles to Norway was also unable to develop, but this time for different reasons. With a communist regime ruling in Poland after the fighting had ended, the relations between Poland and Norway took on a completely different form than between the wars. In the eyes of central and eastern Europeans, who lived under the influence of the Soviet Union, Norway was a country with political and economic freedom. The increasing wealth of Norwegians, and the resulting improvements in the standard of living, transformed Norway into an attractive destination for economic migrants<sup>82</sup>. However, the communist rulers created many barriers against travelling, including refusal to issue passports, effectively blocking the formation of economic migration, as well as hindering any form of scientific and cultural contact<sup>83</sup>. Official publications printed

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<sup>80</sup> See M. Gawinecka-Woźniak, *Stosunki rządu polskiego...*, op.cit., chapter I, *Stosunki polsko-norweskie 1918–1939*, pages 13–43; eadem, *Charakterystyka stosunków politycznych między rządem RP a rządem norweskim ne emigracji w Londynie w latach 1940–1945. De politiske relasjonene mellom den polske og norske eksilregjering i London 1940–1945* [in:] *Norwegia–Polska... Norge–Polen...*, op.cit., pages 107–122; P. Jaworski, *Polska niepodległa...*, op.cit., part I *Polsko-skandynawskie stosunki polityczne* pages 13–107; T. Cieślak, *Norwegia...* op.cit., chapter VII *Międzywojenne stosunki polsko-norweskie*, pages 97–102.

<sup>81</sup> J. Szymański, *Stosunki gospodarcze...*, op.cit.; P. Jaworski, *Polska niepodległa...*, op.cit., part II *Skandynawia jako partner gospodarczy*, pages 109–199.

<sup>82</sup> Cf Główny Urząd Statystyczny. Departament Statystyki Międzynarodowej, *Norwegia–Polska. Wybrane dane porównawcze*, Warszawa 1974.

<sup>83</sup> Information on the subject of Polish-Norwegian cultural relations can be found in, among others, the collection of articles written by Janina Januszewska-Skreiberg, who moved to Norway in 1968. The articles cover the period from the 1970s. It is possible to find interesting information about cultural initiatives, parties and exhibitions etc, undertaken by Poles in Norway

during the time of the People's Republic of Poland, although sometimes containing interesting subject matter, were not void of ideological attacks and did not help Poles to create a real picture of life in Norway. The binding ideology of the regime was also reflected in scientific literature concerning research into the Polonia, leading to unfounded opinions and views related to both economic emigration<sup>84</sup>, and the situation of Poles abroad<sup>85</sup>. The stereotypes prevalent in western societies about Poles were often based on central and eastern Europe lying “behind the Iron Curtain” and – connected with that – a lack of objective information on Polish history, its cultural achievements and the conditions inside Poland. Another factor for this was – the aforementioned – difficulties of undertaking artistic and

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before 1980. J. Januszewska-Skreiberg, *Od Ibsena do Twardowskiego. Norwesko-polskie pejzaże kulturalne*, Warszawa 2001.

<sup>84</sup> *Emigrants are often undoubtedly driven by a desire to quickly earn and acquire consumer goods, which can not be currently satisfied in our community. This appearance can, however, be regarded as temporary. Therefore, it is also possible to put forward the theory that in socialist countries there is no objective economic force which causes mass economic migration.* J. Byczkowski, *Niektóre problemy emigracji ludności we współczesnej Europie* [in:] *Stan i potrzeby badań nad zbiorowościami polonijnymi*, ed. H. Kubiak, A. Pilch, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk 1976, p. 124.

<sup>85</sup> *While examining both the changes and common problems of the Polonia in Europe, we can indicate the essential difference between Poles living in socialist countries (in the USSR, Czechoslovakia and others) and the Polonia living in capitalist countries. From the perspective of Poland's national interest and its international position, it is important that Poles and those with Polish roots living in socialist republics: Lithuania, Belarus, Russia or Ukraine, as well as in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Romania, generally identify with the political system and ideology of our country. (...) Besides this, the Polonia living in these countries are not threatened by political assimilation and discrimination from the governments and are not subject to insults on our national pride, as is the case in western societies, in which there is a frequent negative stereotype of Poles and the Polonia as a national group (of emigrants) with a low level of culture.* A. Kwilecki, *Polonia w Europie* [in:] *Stan i potrzeby badań...*, op.cit., pages 538–539.

educational exchange. The great “Solidarity” social movement and the events after 1980 did not confirm the numerous predictions published in the literature concerning mass emigration, both political and economic, to the countries of western Europe.

Among the other reasons why Polish emigration to Norway was limited, it is worth drawing attention to the differing national character of Norwegians and Poles, as well as the lifestyle in Norway, which is quite different from the one to which Poles are accustomed in their homeland. The better living conditions in Norway, combined with the unavailability of many consumer goods in the Polish socialist reality, did not always compensate for the feeling of alienation in Norwegian society.

A larger number of Polish migrants appeared in Norway during the time of communism in Poland, namely at the beginning of the 1980s, as a result of the events connected with the “Solidarity” movement as well as the reaction of the government in the form of introducing martial law<sup>86</sup>. As E. Later Chodyłowa highlights, this was the greatest Polish emigration to Norway after World War II *and in contrast to the previous individual ones – this one had a collective group character*<sup>87</sup>. Therefore this wave of emigration *can reasonably be spoken of as the first and only Polish emigration to Norway, considering all the years Poles have resided in this country dating back to the post-uprising emigration of the 19<sup>th</sup> century*<sup>88</sup>.

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<sup>86</sup> Acts of Norwegian help for Poles during the 1970s, and especially after the introduction of martial law are presented in: J. Strękowski, *Bohaterowie Europy. Norwegia – Polsce 1976–1989*, Warszawa 2005.

<sup>87</sup> E. Later Chodyłowa, *Norwegia...*, op.cit., p. 605.

<sup>88</sup> Eadem, *Polacy w Norwegii*, www.oslo.polemb.net [avail: 12<sup>th</sup> April 2010].

When analysing Polish emigration to Norway, the important role played by Polish clergymen of the Roman Catholic Church should be underlined<sup>89</sup>. Polish nuns carried out charity work from as early as the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>90</sup>. The leading figure among Polish nuns active in Scandinavia was Sister Urszula Ledóchowska (1865–1939), who also extremely active in spreading knowledge about Poland and Poles. Other important figures were Father Marceł Świątek (1872–1932), who worked in Norway in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and the previously mentioned Father P. Bzdyl, who arrived in Norway in the 1920s. The presence of Polish spiritual workers was important for the small group of Polish expatriates, especially during the 1960s and 1970s, as they helped to cultivate Polish culture in difficult living conditions abroad. However, the earliest missionary activity conducted by Polish priests was carried out almost exclusively among Norwegians, although some form of contact with representatives of the Polish expatriates can obviously not be excluded.

As a result of the changes which took place in Poland after the fall of the communist regime, it finally became possible for Poland and Norway to cooperate more closely. A considerable improvement in the relations between the two countries ensued<sup>91</sup>. Norway became, for the first time in history, a popular

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<sup>89</sup> Eadem, *Skandynawskie pielgrzymowanie*, op.cit. pages 11–24.

<sup>90</sup> Eadem, *Polacy w Norwegii*, op.cit.; E. Olszewski, *Polacy w Norwegii*, op.cit., p. 256.

<sup>91</sup> This is visible in the scientific research conducted on the acts of Poles in Norway, as well as in publications on this subject. See A. Chodubski, E. Olszewski, *Stan badań nad zbiorowościami polonijnymi w Skandynawii* [in:] *Polacy w Skandynawii*, op.cit., chapter *Polonia norweska*, pages 422–423. Increased scientific activity in the area of Polish-Scandinavian relations is being conducted by the most important academic centres in Poland. Besides those

destination for Polish migrant workers. In addition, more and more links between Poland and Norway in the field of science have helped the two countries to become closer and learn more about each other's history and cultural achievements.

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works already cited, a recent publication worth noting is: *Norwegia w pierwszej połowie XX wieku*, study under ed. E. Denkiewicz-Szczepaniak, Toruń 2004.