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POLISH OCEAN SHIPPING AND PLANS FOR ITS DEVELOPMENT

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At the end of 1945, the entire Polish merchant fleet was still outside the boundaries of the country. The offices of the largest shipping enterprises of Poland, GAL (Gdynia-America Shipping Lines, Limited), Zegluga Polska (Polish Shipping, Limited), and Polbryt (Polish-British Shipping Association, Limited) were still in London. The shipping enterprises and the ships did not return to Poland until March 1946, upon completion of negotiations by the UMA (United Maritime Authorities), an international shipping organization which was formed during the war and handled all the ocean-going vessels of all the Allies except those of the USSR. The Polish passenger and freight ships such as the MS Batory, SS Kosciuszko, and SS Pulaski were under charter (Bareboat charter or time charter) to the Ministry of War Transport of England until April 1946, while the MS Sobieski was under charter to the same ministry until the fall of 1946.

Despite the fact that the ships were released from war operations in March 1946, the Polish shipping enterprises could not transfer their activities from London to Poland until the following transactions essential to normal operations were completed: (a) release of the shipping companies' funds by the Bank of England for the disposal of the National Bank of Poland; (b) organization and maintenance of regular and normal telephone and telegraph communications with all countries, especially seacoast countries, and assurance of fast postal service; and (c) assurance of office space on the seacoast for the several hundred officials and living quarters for several hundred families, etc.

As of 1 October 1946, the offices of the GAL, Zegluga Polska, and Polbryt were established in Gdynia. The three enterprises were organized as joint stock companies before the war and were almost entirely financed by state capital.

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Only 1.5 percent of GAL capital was owned by Danish stockholders and not even 8 percent of Polbryt stock was owned by English stockholders. At the outbreak of the war, these companies came under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Industry and Trade, according to the Statute of 30 March 1939 regarding communications in the service of national defense. According to Article 19 of this statute, in case of war, municipal and private shipping enterprises pass under the authority of the Minister of Industry and Trade and their administrations become operating agencies of the Ministry.

During the 5 war years, the merchant marine was under the jurisdiction of the Minister of the Treasury and the Minister of Industry and Trade until the middle of 1942, and from then on under the Minister of Industry, Trade, and Navigation.

With the outbreak of the war, the offices of the shipping companies were disrupted, with no representation abroad. Trustees were appointed for each of the three companies as provided for in the decree on the administration and disposition of Polish property abroad. In the second half of 1944, the Trustees, Limited, of Zegluga Polska and Polbryt released the assets of the two companies to GAL, which has administered and disposed of more than 92 percent of all the Polish merchant vessels from that time until the present, and is itself under compulsory state control. The reorganization of the three shipping companies according to their original setup is to take place in the near future.

At the beginning of 1945, the total tonnage of merchant ships at the disposal of the three shipping companies operating with government capital was 101,995 gross registered tons; the tonnage of the remaining companies operating with private capital was 7,076 gross registered tons.

The table below gives the status of the Polish merchant fleet at the beginning of 1946:

Ocean-Going Vessels of GAL

<u>Name of Vessel and Type</u>	<u>DWT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>NRT</u>
MS Batory - pass, frt	5,560	14,287	8,102
MS Sobieski " "	7,260	11,030	6,351
SS Pulaski* " "	6,130	6,345	3,820
SS Kosciuszko " "	5,300	6,825	4,207
MS Morska Wola - frt	4,556	3,223	1,972
MS Stalowa Wola " "	4,556	3,223	1,972
SS Bialystok " "	10,490	7,172.79	4,278.03
SS Tobruk " "	10,430	7,047.96	4,976.64
SS Narvik " "	10,420	7,031.40	4,967.02
SS Baltyk " "	10,098	7,001.47	5,121.26
SS Boryslaw " "	8,635	5,977.33	4,044.04

*The obsolete uneconomical vessels built before World War I were sold at a profit to the British Ministry of War Transport in April 1946, at a time when such vessels were still desirable for army transports.

DWT--dead-weight tonnage; BRT--gross measurement capacity in registered tons; NRT--net measurement capacity in registered tons; one registered ton equals 2.83 cubic meters.

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Ocean-Going Vessels of Zegluga Polaka, Limited

<u>Freighters</u>	<u>DWT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>NRT</u>
SS Wisla	5,146	3,108	1,844
SS Wilno	2,850	2,018	1,121
SS Katowice	2,850	1,995	1,107
SS Krakow	2,850	2,018	1,121
MS Lechistan	3,070	1,907	994
MS Lewant	3,070	1,923	996
SS Slask	1,515	1,402	758
SS Hel	1,545	1,066	504
MS Okrywle	1,010	766	342
SS Poznan	2,850	2,018	1,121
SS Torun	<u>2,850</u>	<u>2,018</u>	<u>1,122*</u>
*Recovered in April 1946	29,606	20,239	11,030

In 1946, Zegluga Polska also assumed operation of two Danzig ships obtained by Poland as reparations: the SS Rataj formerly the Weichsel, 1,021 gross registered tons, and the SS Nyssa, formerly the Hafnia, 546 gross registered tons.

Ocean-Going Vessels of Polbryt

<u>Freighters</u>	<u>DWT</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>NRT</u>
SS Lech	2,110	1,568	790
SS Lublin	1,974	1,409	687
SS Lida	<u>2,110</u>	<u>1,568</u>	<u>790</u>
	6,194	4,545	2,267

During the entire year of 1946, Zegluga Polska was operating five Type "K" vessels leased from the US government for a token dollar: the SS Kutno, SS Kolno, SS Krosno, SS Kowel, and SS Kielce with a total capacity of 9,360 gross registered tons. The SS Kielce sank in the English Channel after collision with a British vessel in March 1946. GAL was operating only one vessel leased from the US government, the SS Opole, 7,176 gross registered tons. In October 1946, the US government terminated lease agreements for the above-named vessels, which were returned to the US early in 1947.

Three private shipping companies, in existence before the war, i.e., (1) Polskarob (Polish-Scandinavian Transport Company, Limited) which during the war operated under the name of A. Falter; (2) Baltic Shipping Company; and (3) Rothert and Kilaczycki, remained outside of Poland throughout 1946, and their vessels did not call at Polish ports. A. Falter had two ships, the SS Kmiec, 1,894 gross registered tons, and the Kordecki, 1,948 gross registered tons. The Baltic Shipping Company had the SS Narocz, 1,794 gross registered tons, and the SS Chorzow, 845 gross registered tons, which was subsequently sold. Rothert and Kilaczycki had only one ship, the MS Bug, 499 gross registered tons.

The present Polish merchant marine is not adequate either in size or quality for the economic needs of the country and must be greatly increased. The carrying capacity of the 27 ocean-going vessels available at the end of 1946 totaling 94,698 gross registered tons was less than 2 million tons a year. The equipment is not the modern high-grade equipment Poland had before the war. During the war, many Polish vessels operated without adequate annual repairs and now require major repairs. The MS Batory, the largest Polish ship carrying passengers and freight, was returned to GAL by the British in April. It was put up in the Antwerp shipyards for general repairs and also for the reconversion of its installations from wartime to peacetime operations. Because of a fire which broke out on the ship

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In July 1946 and the strike of Antwerp port workers in December 1946, the repairs took over 6 months to complete. The ship did not leave until 1 April for its first voyage to New York via Southampton where it picked up 850 passengers, reestablishing the prewar passenger and freight service to North America. The MS Sobieski was released to GAL in October 1946 by the British and was put in the Gdansk shipyards for general repairs and for rebuilding. On 29 April 1947, the Sobieski left for Genoa to start the regular Genoa-Cannes-New York run, a well-paying export of ocean services.

The deteriorated condition of the Polish merchant fleet compared to 1939 is part of the price paid by Poland in the fight for victory. The German ships received through reparations partly compensated Poland for its losses.

In 1945, the remaining German merchant fleet was divided among the three big Allies, who in turn were to redistribute the spoils among the smaller Allies. Poland is to receive 15 percent of the Soviet share of marine reparations.

In September 1946, during the stay in Moscow of Dr. K. Petruszewicz, Vice-Minister of Navigation, it was decided that Poland's allotment would be 19 ships totaling 54,000 gross registered tons, i.e., 3 passenger ships, 3 regular freighters, 6 tramp ships, one ocean railroad ferry, one tanker, one lighter, one hulk of an unfinished ship, and 3 tugs. These ships, which were released to Poland in the first half of 1947, are listed below:

<u>Polish</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>German</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>BRT</u>	<u>DWT</u>	<u>Speed</u>	<u>Built</u>
SS Jagiello	Duala		Pass	6,139	3,000	16	1938
SS Beniowski	Kaiser		"	1,900	--	16	1905
SS Waza	Meklenburg		"	1,547	400	13	1903
MS Waza	Schiksee		"	117	--	--	1927
SS Olsztyn	Inkenturm		Frt	1,925	3,200	10	1944
SS Opole	Irena Oldendorf		"	1,923	3,200	10	1944
SS Kutno	Helga-Ina		"	2,181	3,375	9.5	1925
SS Kalisz	Boltenhof		"	3,300	5,630	8.5	1911
SS Kolobrzeg	Schleswig-		"				
	Holstein		"	2,369	4,180	9	1921
MS Warynski	Athen		"	4,900	7,185	14.5	1937
SS Pulaski	Leuna		"	6,700	9,825	13.5	1928
SS Kolno	Nordlicht		"	2,491	3,200	13.5	1938
MS Karpaty	Adria		"	6,000	9,500	12	1928
SS Kosciuszko	Rheinfels		"	7,763	11,200	16	1934
Oliva - Hulk No 852	not completed						
Zubr	Bartenflet		Tug	219	1,100 hp		
Bawol	Rechtenflet		"	148	1,100 hp		
Cyklop	Statman		"	--	480 hp		

In addition to war reparations, the Polish merchant marine is being increased by restitution of ships which before the war flew the Polish or the Gdansk flag. In 1946, through the efforts of the Polish Marine Mission in London, its agency in Hamburg, and the delegate to the Marine Branch of the Polish Military Mission in Berlin, 40 former Polish merchant ships were identified, reclaimed, and returned to Poland. Among these were the freighter Torun, several Gdynia tugboats, a number of fishing cutters, and two former Gdansk ships, the SS Weichsel and the SS Hafnia, now the Rataj and the Nyssa, respectively. Negotiations are continuing and it is expected that the Robur VIII, the MS Bielsko, 4,660 gross registered tons, and the Levant II will be returned to Poland.

In summing up Poland's accomplishments in marine shipping in 1946, one should mention: the conversion to peacetime trade operations; the return to Poland of the

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most important shipping enterprises, GAL, Polbryt, and Zegluga Polska; the substantial restitution of Polish vessels; the preliminary work to secure our share of reparations; and reestablishing, under the Polish flag, scheduled sailings from Gdynia and Gdansk to eastern and western ports of Sweden, Antwerp, London and Hull, the US, Brazil and Argentina, and Alexandria, Haifa, and Tel Aviv.

The rebuilding and development of the Polish merchant marine was treated very modestly in the Three-Year Economic Plan. The development is to be accomplished as much as possible without the use of investment funds, i.e., by securing vessels through reparations, reclaiming former Polish vessels, raising and rehabilitating sunken vessels, and, to a small extent, by building new vessels. By 1949, the fleet is expected to reach a capacity of about 260,000 gross registered tons, tripling Poland's 1946 tonnage of 94,698 gross registered tons. The expansion of the Polish merchant marine should be a function of Polish foreign trade augmented by transit trade. The volume of goods handled by the ports will determine the development of Poland's ocean shipping. Since a great part of Poland's overseas trade consists of bulk goods, coal and ore, great emphasis will be put on tramp shipping.

Simultaneously, the development of a network of regular lines will transform the Polish ports from mere transshipment ports to commercial ports. Emphasis will be placed primarily on the development of a dense network of auxiliary lines and lines connecting with countries with which Poland has renewed trade relations.

The plans for 1947 are: (a) to put into service the German ships, totaling 67,100 dead-weight tons, received through reparations; (b) to purchase one US Victory-type vessel of 10,000 dead-weight tons (c) to put into service the reclaims MS General Walter, the former Bielsko, 6,500 dead-weight tons. The total fleet will increase by 83,600 dead-weight tons.

According to the provisions of the Three-Year Economic Plan, orders were placed with domestic shipyards for six ore and coal carriers, each having a capacity of 2,500 dead-weight tons, and with foreign shipyards for one Hsl-type vessel of 1,500 dead-weight tons capacity and two Goole-type vessels, each of 1,125 dead-weight tons capacity.

Coastal shipping which started operation in late 1945 but did not begin to take on real form until the fall of 1946, also forms a part of the merchant marine. On 20 November 1946, Gryf (Polish Coastal Shipping in the Baltic, Limited) was formed. Stockholders of the company are: Zegluga Polska, Limited, Polska Zegluga Na Odrze, Polskie Drogi Wodne, and the urban communities of Gdansk, Gdynia, Sopot, Kolobrzeg, and Szczecin. The purpose of the enterprise is major and minor coastal shipping between Polish ports, especially: (a) transport of passengers, mail, and other freight in Polish vessels or chartered vessels; (b) execution of the over-all plan through pertinent operations; (c) organization of tourist travel and ocean trips; and (d) the building and maintenance of its own wharves and loading and warehousing facilities.

As provided for in the Gryf investment plan, repairs have been started on the wrecks left by the Germans along the Polish seacoast. In 1947, the following vessels were to be restored and put into operation: the passenger SS Telimena, 200 dead-weight tons, the freighter SS Sen, 200 dead-weight tons, the passenger MS Jolanta, 200 dead-weight tons, and the passenger MS Grazyna, 115 dead-weight tons, received as part of the reparations.

Repairs are to be completed on the following vessels: the passenger SS Diana, 490 dead-weight tons, the passenger MS Olimpia, 200 dead-weight tons, the passenger SS Benicowski, 1,900 dead-weight tons (also received as reparations), and several smaller vessels which will be used in minor coastal traffic.

The 5-year investment plan of the Gryf provides for the repair of wrecks which are raised and for the purchase of vessels for coastal service.

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