

# Wolne Związki Zawodowe

<https://wzz.ipn.gov.pl/wzz/the-free-trade-unions/3424,The-Free-Trade-Unions-of-Western-Pomerania.html>  
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## The Free Trade Unions of Western Pomerania

The Free Trade Unions of Western Pomerania was the third (after those of Silesia and Gdansk) successful initiative created by the Free Trade Unions (*Wolne Związki Zawodowe, WZZ*). The initiator of the creation of the WZZ in Western Pomerania was Jan Witkowski, a worker at the Lower Odra power plant in Nowy Czarnów near Gryfino. Its second leader, representing the Szczecin group, was Stefan Kozłowski, who at that time was a turner at the Polmo Mechanical Plant in Szczecin. The leaders of the Szczecin-Gryfino group met the leaders of the Warsaw KSS KOR, ROPCiO and members of the workers' groups in Silesia & the coast (Bogdan Borusewicz, Andrzej Gwiazda, Anna Walentynowicz, Lech Wałęsa, Krzysztof Wyszowski), drawing on the knowledge acquired from their experiences. Initially they operated independently of each other, and it was only under the influence of Warsaw that they started to coordinate their

opposition work.

They joined the editorial staff of the Warsaw periodical *Robotnik* [The Worker], and then, in March 1979, along with the Warsaw editorial staff, they prepared a Szczecin edition of that same periodical, publishing their names and addresses for public consumption. After preparations lasting more than a year, the informal leaders Jan Witkowski and Stefan Kozłowski – after consultation with Henryk Wujec – wrote the ‘Declaration of the Free Unions of Western Pomerania’, and on 11 October 1979, 10 people from the Szczecin and Gryfino groups signed it: Kazimierz Dobosz, Danuta Grajek, Tadeusz Kocielowicz, Stefan Kozłowski, Bronisław Modrzejewski, Zdzisław Podolski, Jan Witkowski, Mirosław Witkowski, Andrzej Kamrowski and Jan Paprocki. Jacek Kuroń passed on the report of the creation of the Western Pomeranian WZZ to Reuters and Radio Free Europe. Just one month later, after training from Henryk Wujec and Witold Łuczywo, the WZZ activists founded their own periodical *Robotnik Szczeciński* [The Szczecin Worker].

The aim of their activities was to raise the workers’ awareness of their rights. To this end, they distributed underground material among the workers in Szczecin and the surrounding areas (including *Robotnik*, the KSS KOR’s *Biuletyn Informacyjny*, ROPCiO’s *Opinia*, publications from NOW), distributed posters and leaflets, organised patriotic ceremonies (including celebrations of 3 May and 11 November) as well as commemorating the victims of December 1970; and they organised meetings with well-known

opposition activists such as Stefan Kisielewski, Jacek Kuroń, Jan Lityński, Antoni Macierewicz, Bogumił Studziński, Henryk Wujec, and Kazimierz Wóycicki. They also reached the students with their activities.

Towards the end of 1979 they created the Charter of Workers' Rights project. The purpose of this action was to formulate and draw the workers' attention to their basic rights, concerning not only decent wages, but also safety and working time, the lack of any organisation that would represent the workers (the official trade unions were not considered as such), as well as the lack of the right to strike.

The activists of the Western Pomeranian WZZ were very quickly subjected to repression. The officers of the Security Services [SB], using secret collaborators, took actions aimed at isolating the activists within the community, for example by making attempts to compromise them. The SB monitored a great deal of the trade unionists' activities, which allowed them to try and disrupt their activity. Files and court cases were prepared against them, which were used to monitor almost every step they took. Among the cases brought, we should recall in particular: the COV codename 'Senatorzy' [Senators] (aimed at continual supervision of the WZZ's initiatives and compromising them), the COR codename 'Kolporter' [Distributor] (exposing the brothers Jan and Mirosław Witkowski), the COR codename 'Rogacz' [Stag] (exposing Stefan Kozłowski), the COS codename 'Agitator' (Zdzisław Podolski), and the SOS codename 'Merkuriusz' [Mercury] (supervising the preparations for printing

*Robotnik Szczeciński*, with the aim of confiscating all the materials at the final stage of preparation). Searches, confiscation and 48-hour detentions became an almost daily routine for some of them. Mirosław Witkowski was suddenly called up to the Army (he was released eight months later after going on hunger strike, for which he went to hospital; he had been protesting at the denial of permission for the soldiers to watch the live TV broadcast of the Pope's visit to Poland). The SB's files show that the Western Pomeranian WZZ was deeply infiltrated by secret collaborators, which made the security services' task much easier: these included persons with the codenames 'Koper' and 'Ryszard' (Andrzej Kamrowski), 'Pająk' [Spider], 'Konstancja' and 'Klaudiusz' (Jan Paprocki) as well as 'Albin' (Jolanta Nowak).

Although the WZZ was only a small group of people, numbering just over a dozen (besides those mentioned above, their actions were supported by Józef Ignor, Waldemar Jadłowski, the brothers Andrzej, Jerzy and Zbigniew Jakubcewicz, Aleksander Krystosiak, Mieczysław Lisowski, the lawyer Roman Łyczywek, Jan Nowak, Michał Paziewski and Zbigniew Raczyński), they did a great deal at the end of the 1970s to raise awareness among the workers in the region. Despite this, in August 1980, the WZZ activists were not allowed to participate in the strike at the Adolf Warski shipyard in Szczecin. The Inter-Plant Strike Committee feared that the presence of the underground press and of activists associated with the KSS KOR would turn it into a political strike, which they wanted to avoid. Mirosław Witkowski was not allowed into

the shipyard, and the large amounts of *Robotnik* which had been delivered were burned.

Witkowski explained this by stating that they only had a few sympathisers within the Warski Shipyard. They tried not to worry about it, and supported the strikers by providing information on the situation in Szczecin to Western correspondents, who had also not been allowed into the shipyard. It must be stressed, however, that a significant role in the early stages of the strike was played by Aleksander Krystosiak, a worker from the Parnica repair yard, which had gone on strike first; he had cooperated closely with Stefan Kozłowski and the Witkowski brothers. It was Krystosiak who, on 18 August 1980, after organising the use of a boat with a group of WZZ co-workers (including Stefan Kozłowski and Zbigniew Jakubcewicz), sailed along the Oder river into the Warski Shipyard to pick up the workers and take them to the strike. Importantly, these activists prepared the 18 key demands of the strikers, which became the basis for the 36 demands which the Szczecin shipyard later approved. Despite this, Kozłowski was not permitted to play a greater role, and even his contact with the outside world was limited. For example, when Warsaw phoned him to get information about the strike, it was falsely reported that he was not in the hall.

The Western Pomeranian WZZ also influenced the Regional Public Transport Company to join the strike. This was determined by the attitude of Jan Nowak, Józef Ignor and Mieczysław Lisowski, who were linked to the WZZ; they set up the strike committee and also prepared the demands. We

must also remember that on 21 August Aleksander Krystosiak gave a lecture on the WZZ in the shipyard's common room for the representatives of the striking workplaces, proof of which is that the activists centred around the Western Pomerania WZZ were the most enlightened and best prepared to fight for the workers' rights. Krystosiak, however, was able to play that role solely because his links with the Free Trade Unions of Western Pomerania were not revealed.

After the founding of Solidarity, these pre-August activists continued their activity as part of the new trade union.

*Prepared by Marta Marcinkiewicz*

## Powiązane informacje



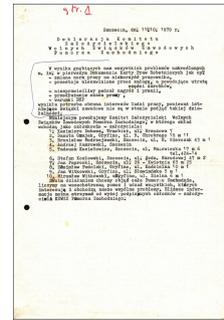
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WZZ Pomorza  
Zachodniego

11 X 1979



Intro



**Declaration of the  
Founding  
Committee of Free  
Trade Unions of  
Western  
Pomerania, 11 X  
1979**