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Record of Violence. The Socio-Political German-Jewish Relations in Free City of Danzig in the Years 1933–1939

Keywords:

Free City of Danzig (Gdańsk), Jews, Germans, Nazi, violence, repressions, propaganda, pre-war

Abstract:

The author focuses on historical evidence to answer the sociological problem how did the Jewish citizens of the Free City of Danzig, who had lived there for several generations, come to be considered strangers for the Germans ones and were forced to leave their hometown? The method chosen by the author is based on the chronological factor, showing how each subsequent day deprived Jews of the dignity and living space in their own city. The author mentions not only the laws and regulations concerning the Gdańsk Jews as a whole, but wherever possible he refers to the individual fate of a given person or family in order to evoke the terror to those days through the prism of the personal experiences. The author presented the history of Nazi repressions towards the Jewish community in the years 1933–1939 thus exposing the sources of German planned violence hidden by the Nazis under the guise of national propaganda.



How can we describe the German-Jewish relations in Gdańsk in the years 1933–1939? From the historical point of view and our knowledge about all the cruelties of the Second World War we perceive the years of 1933–1939 in the Free City of Danzig¹ as a foretaste of the coming war. Understanding the logic of these relations in Gdańsk enables us to predict what will happen in the following years 1939–1945 and why it was possible.

¹ The official recognition of establishment of the Free City of Danzig took place on 15 I 1920.

In the case of the Jews of Gdańsk the persecutions begin in the pre-war period, and the Jews were forced to emigrate, which began in 1933 when in the Free City of Danzig the NSDAP won the elections to the Senate and thus took power in the city.² It lasted without major breaks until 1940 or even longer. However, the situation of the Jews in Gdańsk was different from the Jews in Germany and Poland (in this case, after September 1939). They were not subject to direct extermination as long as the constitution of the Freie Stadt Danzig was in place. The German authorities in Gdańsk sought to repress their fellow Jewish citizens in such a way that the Jews felt they had no choice but to emigrate from Gdańsk.

In my opinion, the sources of such behavior can be found in the German policy of the first part of the interwar period, when Germany was controlled by European countries and the League of Nations, and wanted to present itself as a rule of law state. Therefore, by starting the persecution of Jews in the Free City of Danzig, which was under the protection of the League of Nations, the Germans tried to show that the “departures” of the Jews were voluntary and that to accuse the Germans for this procedure was unjustified. The answer to the question of what led to the exodus of the Jewish population is obvious, therefore the important question is how it could become a historical and social fact? Although this article is of a historical nature, its starting point is a question from the field of sociology: how did some of the citizens of the Free City of Danzig, who had lived there for several generations, come to be considered strangers and were forced to leave their hometown? Studying this issue becomes difficult precisely because some of the full-fledged inhabitants were considered alien and redundant by another part of citizens. How could a petty personal resentment turn into an machine of organised terror and ultimately after the outbreak of war lead to mass extermination? The research is hampered by the fact that the vast majority of Jews from Gdańsk recognised themselves as Germans, had assimilated and adapted the German culture, and considered themselves to be Germans of the Mosaic confession.

In this article the author focuses on historical evidence, but to answer this question exhaustively the availability of complete psychological and sociological studies in the future would be very welcome. The post-war socio-psychological experiments of Stanley Milgram and Solomon Asch give hope to understand the emergence of this type of persecution mechanism.³ This stereotypical way of perceiving Jews in Europe was very old and also in Gdańsk there was a judgment that Jews bring “nothing but all misfortune, infanticide and the shedding of Christian blood.”⁴ In his short study, the author will not be able to give a complete answer

² Already in the elections on 14 I 1930 to the Volkstag, the NSDAP obtained 12 MP seats. Celebrating this victory in the streets of Gdańsk, the Nazis committed excesses against their Jewish fellow citizens for the first time.

³ See also René Girard, *Kozioł ofiarny* (Łódź: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie, 1991).

⁴ Maria Bogucka, “Kupcy żydowscy w Gdańsku w pierwszej połowie XVII,” *Przegląd Historyczny* 4/80 (1989): 734–735.

to this complicated question, because it is beyond the scope of this article; to analyse all available data from the perspective of several scientific disciplines is a challenge for a book. However, the author will use historical material in such a way as to at least partially compensate for sociological and psychological deficiencies.

The method chosen by the author is based on the chronological factor, showing how each subsequent day deprived Jews of the dignity and living space in their own city. As often as possible, the author mentions not only the laws and regulations concerning the Gdańsk Jews as a whole, but wherever possible he refers to the individual fate of a given person or family in order to evoke the terror to those days through the prism of the personal experiences of those who lived it. As is mentioned above, the legal acts and force solutions consciously and ruthlessly introduced by the ruling Germans transformed Jews from full-fledged citizens into strangers, whose only and forever-shrinking option was just to keep themselves and their family physically alive. Fear, being a psychological category, becomes historically measurable when it affects not only individuals but entire social or religious groups. The Nazis deliberately wielded fear as part of their policy of exercising power. In this dimension, the experiences of Jews from Gdańsk was caused by fear and was a group response to fear and the experienced aggression.

The study is based mainly on the collections of the State Archives in Gdańsk: Senate of the Free City of Gdańsk (APG 260) and the Commissioner General of the Republic of Poland in Gdańsk (APG 259), and the collections of documents of the Jewish Community in Gdańsk, the Gdańsk Senate, and the press covering the events in the Free City of Danzig that occurred there. The second main group of material consists of the books of Samuel Echt, Erwin Lichtenstein⁵ and Grzegorz Berendt.⁶ They are all based on source material which they cite frequently, the two first authors having been active witnesses of the described events. Lichtenstein publishes in his book, in five chapters, as many as 54 original documents. In the introduction, however, he mentions that in the book he also includes his personal experiences. The third group of documents is based on personal memories. This group of evidence is related

⁵ Erwin Lichtenstein was the treasurer and the last trustee of the Synagogue Community, see: Samuel Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich* (Gdańsk: Maszoperia Literacka, 2012), 15. Cf. the editor of the journal *Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt*, see: Erwin Lichtenstein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig unter der Herrschaft des Nationalsozialismus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1973), VII, 20–21. *Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt* was a journal of the Gdańsk Synagogue Community (1928 – December 1939), see: Marion Brandt, “Gdański poeta i dziennikarz Erich Ruschkewitz (1904–1941?),” in: *Wokół Wielkiej Synagogi w Gdańsku. Dzieje lokalnej społeczności żydowskiej*, ed. Ewa Baryłewska-Szymańska (Gdańsk: Muzeum Gdańska, Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 2019), 330. According to Andrzejewski, it was published from 1928 to 1937/1938, Marek Andrzejewski, “Prasa żydowska w Wolnym Mieście Gdańsku,” *Buletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego* 2/102 (1977): 89. Generally, Jewish dailies and weeklies published in the Free City of Danzig were most likely in the range of 500–3,000 copies and were published in German. *Ibidem*, 88.

⁶ Berendt, *Żydzi na terenie Wolnego Miasta Gdańska (Działalność kulturalna, polityczna i socjalna)* (Gdańsk: Gdańskie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1997).

to the private experiences of Jews from those times. It is worth emphasising that Samuel Echt uses not only archival and historical materials, but in many cases his own testimonies and those of witnesses which he has collected. The other are related to collected materials of Hanna Domańska, the accounts of Mira Ryczke Kimmelman⁷ and the Hampel spouse confessions.⁸

The first organised repressions (1933–1935)

Gdańsk was a Free City, with a Senate and self-rule, and it also had a High Commissioner appointed by the League of Nations. The first serious troubles already foreshadowed the elections to the Volkstag in 1930, in which the NSDAP obtained 16.4% of the vote and became the second largest party in Gdańsk.⁹ From 1930, Albert Forster was appointed Gauleiter of the Gdańsk district of the NSDAP.¹⁰ Hitler made a short visit to Gdańsk on 5 April 1932, arousing anti-Jewish sentiment. Shortly afterwards, Forster gave a speech “Why are we Nazis anti-Semitic?,” in which he announced his future decisions of the Germans in relation to the Jews. In May 1933, after the Nazis won the Gdańsk elections, this gloomy scenario began to materialise.¹¹ Many Nazis came from Germany to the Free City of Danzig after 1933. They were not only engaged in verbally propagating the ideas of their Führer, but also began to commit physical attacks. After 1933, the change in the attitude of the German population became very clear.¹²

The first instances of anti-Semitic aggression described by the press, including the Warsaw papers, took place in 1932 and were treated by the editors exclusively as hooliganism. On 1 July 1932, *Kurjer Poranny* (published in Warsaw), with surprise and a slight hint of irony, reported that “The Gdańsk Hitlerites beat Jews and the political police pursued Polish waiters.”¹³ The next day, the pages of the same journal contain information about (an) “Attack on Two Jews in Danzig.”¹⁴

⁷ Born and raised in Sopot, exposed to German persecution, after many years in 1999 she founded a plaque commemorating the place where the synagogue in Sopot was originally located. This was the second one, because the first was stolen.

⁸ The account of the spouses Heinz Hampel and Dorothea Hampel-Schalit, a couple from a Christian-Jewish family, kept in the archives of the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Institute in Jerusalem, Berendt, “Małżonkowie Hampel. Miłość w cieniu nazizmu,” *Studia Judaica* 18/1 (2015): 224.

⁹ Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 258.

¹⁰ For further reading about Albert Forster, see *ibidem*, 273, 284–285, 365; Lichtestein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 29, 50; Dieter Schenk, *Albert Forster: gdański namiestnik Hitlera: zbrodnie żydowskie w Gdańsku i Prusach Wschodnich* (Gdańsk: Polnord-Oskar, 2002).

¹¹ See: Mieczysław Abramowicz, *Teatr Żydowski w Gdańsku i jego aktorzy*, in: *Wokół Wielkiej Synagogi w Gdańsku*, 295–297.

¹² See Relation of Mr. Hampel in: Berendt, “Małżonkowie Hampel,” 233.

¹³ APG, 260/2171, 1.

¹⁴ APG, 260/2171, 3.

This concerned the quite famous case of a rabbi (or rather, “raw”¹⁵ – a religious official) Meir Jacob Sagałowicz (also rendered as Sagalowicz or Sagalowitsch), which was reported in *Kurjer Poranny* on 5 July 1932: “The echo of the Jewish brawl in Danzig. Wrong and dumb methods of Gdańsk police.”¹⁶ The Jewish magazine *Radio* (published in Warsaw) wrote on 29 December 1932 in the article “The Gdańsk Patrol Guard” that Jews could not move freely and safely in Gdańsk. According to the editors, referring to Rabbi Sagalowitsch (original spelling), Jews had to pay from 2 to 6 Gulden to a Jewish organisation to protect them from beatings. However, due to the rabbi’s correction, *Radio* denied its earlier reports.¹⁷ It is worth emphasising that Sagałowicz, clearly scared of the whole situation and possibly intimidated, focused on denying rumors that Jews could form secret organisations. He did not demand to accuse the attackers or demand the introduction of order, and precisely on this denial. Most likely, he was afraid that the Germans would exploit this to accuse Jews of creating some unofficial association structures, that this would give rise to further persecution and accusations of mysterious and criminal Jewish provocations. In an article “Constant Attacks on Polish Jews in Danzig” on 6 July 1932 *Gazeta Polska* (published in Warsaw, right-wing orientation) emphasised the aspect of permanent physical violence against the Jewish population.¹⁸ The same phenomenon was described in detail in the *Ilustrowany Kurjer Codzienny* (published in Kraków) on 7 July 1932 titled “The Gdańsk Hitler Troops Keep Beating the Jews.”¹⁹

The attacks and the news about the insufficient protection of Jews became so frequent that the representative of the League of Nations in the Free City of Gdańsk, High Commissioner Prince Manfredi Conte di Gravina who held his office from 1929 to 1932, on 9 July 1932 emphasised in the official annotation that he had Jewish issues in mind (he repeated his declaration on 20 July 1932).²⁰ Such assurances, however, did not bring any kind of improvement, as we can see from the police records, when subsequent Jewish citizens (e.g., Jakob Wolf Fajn – 22 July 1932, Laja Fenigstein – 13 August 1932, Lejzorg Grinbaum – 17 August 1932) filed complaints against insults, beatings, assaults and looting. The vast majority of these events were discounted by the police with the dismissal, “The police have not yet arrested the perpetrators.”²¹ On 1 December 1933, no. 19 *Die Jüdische Welt* (published in Warsaw) addresses in a conciliatory tone the President of the Senate, Dr. Hermann Rauschnig (he was in office

¹⁵ See *Dictionary of Judaic Terms* prepared by Mieczysław Abramowicz in: *Echt, Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 508.

¹⁶ APG, 260/2171, 5.

¹⁷ APG, 260/2171, 103, 109.

¹⁸ APG, 260/2171, 9.

¹⁹ APG, 260/2171, 11.

²⁰ APG, 260/2171, 15, 21.

²¹ APG, 260/2171, 49, 57, 95.

in 1933–1934),²² and the text expresses the full “recognition of Gdańsk’s policy by the Jews.”²³

However, the reverberations of the acts of ostensible hooliganism were so great that on 8 July 1933, an article was published in the English *The Guardian* describing the persecution of Jews. Immediately, on the same day, there were objections from the Gdańsk Senate.²⁴ Another person from outside who stood up in defense of the Jews was Dr. Moses, an American businessman of Jewish origin from New York who was on a trade visit to Gdańsk. On 23 August 1933, he officially asked, what position does the Senate of Gdańsk take towards the Jewish population? And although the Senate assured of its commitment to respect equality before the law for all, the subsequent attacks on Jews (Towja Zilberstajn – 31 March 1934 and Chain Engelberg – 16 April 1934)²⁵ indicate a far-reaching discrepancy between declarations and facts (although it is necessary to mention a few isolated cases of court sentences for attacks on Jews).²⁶

These were judgments made mainly from outside: Poland, England, the United States. What were the German-Jewish relations from the perspective of Gdańsk? In the 28 May 1933 elections, the NSDAP obtained 53% of the vote and gained power.²⁷ From 26 July 1933, Gdańsk officials were obliged to use only “German greetings.” Therefore, if a Jew, on entering an office (his place of work), did not greet others with the words “Heil Hitler,” he could be considered an enemy of the state. Similar honours were to be given to flags with a swastika.²⁸ The same German greeting order was introduced into Senate schools, thereby segregating students into two groups.²⁹ On 28 June 1934, Forster stated, “For a National Socialist there is no such thing as a decent Jew. This race is and must be treated as our mortal enemy.”³⁰ Starting in 1935, Gdańsk officials had to swear allegiance to Hitler.³¹ Finally, on 29 August 1935, the Senate made changes to the criminal law. Henceforth, most acts were to be punished “on the common sense of the people.” This, of course, combined with anti-Jewish propaganda, caused more trouble for the Jews.³²

The takeover of power by the NSDAP was the time of the immediate dismissal of all Jewish directors and members of supervisory boards,³³ directors,

²² Cf. Lichtenstein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 11–14, 28–29, 30–32; Berendt, *Żydzi na terenie Wolnego Miasta Gdańska*, 154–157.

²³ APG, 260/2172, 55.

²⁴ APG, 260/2172, 2.

²⁵ APG, 260/2172, 67, 73.

²⁶ APG, 260/2172, 81.

²⁷ Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 271.

²⁸ *Ibidem*, 275.

²⁹ Berendt, *Żydzi na terenie Wolnego Miasta Gdańska*, 158.

³⁰ Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 285.

³¹ Berendt, *Żydzi na terenie Wolnego Miasta Gdańska*, 162.

³² Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 314.

³³ Hanna Domańska, Leon Lifsches, *Żydzi znad Gdańskiej Zatoki* (Warszawa: Tu, 2000), 7.

conductors, and musicians of bands and choirs.³⁴ For the mere fact of being a Jew, the Jews were dismissed from publishing companies and schools,³⁵ and all “academicians” (people with higher education) were dismissed from non-Jewish organisations. In 1934, the dismissal Jewish teachers became a fact.³⁶ The “Bar Kochba” sports club was forced to leave school halls (the Jewish children were persecuted in schools)³⁷ and was forbidden to participate in municipal sports competitions after defeating a team of Gdańsk policemen in a handball match in 1932.³⁸ Students of Jewish origin in schools were separated from the rest. Jewish students began to be harassed, and all this was approved by the senator for education and the state commissioner, Franz Schramm. During his matriculation exams Schramm asked questions such as “Why are songs sung about preparing knives for attacking Jews?”³⁹ In 1933, first phase of the boycott of Jewish doctors and lawyers began.⁴⁰ All the Jewish doctors, dentists and pharmacists working in non-Jewish hospitals and clinics were fired. Harassment against this professional group appeared every few years. Thus later, in 1937, the Senate ordered them to close the Medical Chambers by a decree that came into force on 1 January 1939. All medical offices were liquidated, and, at the turn of 1938 and 1939, the Jewish diplomas of doctors and pharmacists were revoked.⁴¹ In the same time, several Jewish newspapers were closed, for example, *Das jüdische Volk* as early as 1933,⁴² and *Danziger Echo*⁴³ in 1936.⁴⁴

In the field of everyday social relations, in 1935 anti-Jewish demonstrations took place on the beaches of Sopot and Brzeźno. Attacks on Jewish people and property were happening more and more often in the Free City of Danzig.⁴⁵ The propaganda cars with anti-Semitic banners were driving around Sopot in the high season, and

³⁴ *Ibidem*, 14, 128.

³⁵ *Ibidem*, 32, 42.

³⁶ Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 278–284.

³⁷ Domańska, Lifsches, *Żydzi znad Gdańskiej Zatoki*, 302.

³⁸ *Ibidem*, 87, 332.

³⁹ Berendt, *Żydzi na terenie Wolnego Miasta Gdańska*, 158.

⁴⁰ See: Lichtenstein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 13.

⁴¹ Domańska, Lifsches, *Żydzi znad Gdańskiej Zatoki*, 100–101; Lichtenstein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 72–74.

⁴² Domańska, Lifsches, *Żydzi znad Gdańskiej Zatoki*, 96.

⁴³ *Danziger Echo* was a periodical published and edited by Theodor Lövy, see Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 286. He was harassed and arrested in 1935 by preparing false evidence, and finally deported from the Free City of Gdańsk. See Andrzejewski, “Prasa żydowska w Wolnym Mieście Gdańsku,” 94. In July 1936, by order of the president of the Gdańsk police, the journal was suspended for 10 months on the pretext that the Gestapo found weapons in its rooms, thus this decision effectively put an end to the magazine’s activity, Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 319; Berendt, *Żydzi na terenie Wolnego Miasta Gdańska*, 183.

⁴⁴ Domańska, Lifsches, *Żydzi znad Gdańskiej Zatoki*, 207.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*, 168.

Nazi flags were hung on the pier in Sopot.⁴⁶ At the entrance to the beach in Sopot was a plaque with the inscription: “Jews are not allowed,” and right next to the plaque: “Dogs are forbidden.” This was meant to make it clear that Jews and dogs were to be treated by the Nazis in the same way. It should be added, however, that from 1933 to 1935, when local Jews in Sopot were forbidden to go to the beach, Jews coming from Poland and other countries could use it freely, as long as they had international passports.⁴⁷ A Jewish resident of Sopot (Mrs. Hampel) heard a German woman with a small child shout to the other one: “Emma, let’s go to the market, we’ll see a Jew beating in it.”⁴⁸ The first boycott (in the NSDAP era) of Jewish stores began on 1 April 1933, but without violent excesses.⁴⁹ Later, poles bearing a sign saying “Don’t buy from Jews and Poles”⁵⁰ were fixed in cement bases and placed in front of the Jewish shops. According to a German man by the name of Wilhelm Loeb sack, “Every Jew should have a stigma, just like a German buying from a Jew.”⁵¹ In the summer of 1935, a series of attacks by Nazi militias on Jewish stores in Gdańsk and Sopot took place.⁵² The Nazis attacked Jews shouting “It’s a Jewish pig.”⁵³ Most often, as in the case of Taudien’s patisseries in Sopot and Gdańsk, young perpetrators would drive up and shout anti-Jewish insults, which was often enough to scare away the customers.⁵⁴ In 1934, posters with the slogans “The Jews are our misfortune,” “Germans, wake up, let the Jews die!” appeared all over the city.⁵⁵ In the winter of 1934/1935, groups of German youth shouted: “Danzigs ganze Schande ist die Judenbande. Schmeisst die Juden raus! (The whole shame of Gdańsk is the Jewish gang. Throw out the Jews!),”⁵⁶ “Jews are also people, and lice are also animals.”⁵⁷ The Nazis introduced a method whereby the victims were blamed for the incident, acquitting the perpetrators for the acts of violence committed by them. And so, when the Nazis broke windows in Jewish shops, the Jews were guilty, because they had not closed the shops.⁵⁸

I have no doubt that the years 1933–1935 were the first phase of the serious Nazi repressions in Gdańsk. The serious Nazi repressive measures are characterised by two features. First, we see in them the seed of a well-thought-out policy – the dismissal of Jews from jobs and organisations in the attempt to make

⁴⁶ *Eadem*, *Zapomnieni byli w mieście* (Warszawa: Tu, 2001), 140; Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 362.

⁴⁷ Relation of Mr Hampel in: Berendt, “Małżonkowie Hampel,” 234–235.

⁴⁸ *Ibidem*, 234.

⁴⁹ Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 269.

⁵⁰ Berendt, “Małżonkowie Hampel,” 234.

⁵¹ See Berendt, *Żydzi na terenie Wolnego Miasta Gdańska*, 166.

⁵² Domańska, Lifsches, *Żydzi nad Gdańską Zatoką*, 166.

⁵³ Relation of Mr Hampel in: Berendt, “Małżonkowie Hampel,” 236.

⁵⁴ Lichtstein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 45; Domańska, *Zapomnieni byli w mieście*, 24.

⁵⁵ Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 284.

⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, 291.

⁵⁷ Berendt, *Żydzi na terenie Wolnego Miasta Gdańska*, 166.

⁵⁸ Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 316.

them second-class citizens. The second element is connected with excesses and hooliganism; members of the NSDAP enjoyed impunity in anti-Jewish protests. The persecutors were fully aware that the more they “annoyed” the Jews, the more appreciated they would be in the eyes of their principals and they were convinced that they would never be punished.

The years 1935–1937 were relatively peaceful, for the common people because the first enemy was the parliamentary opposition. In this time significant was a petition of the Union of Danziger Academics and the reaction of the League of Nations.⁵⁹ A Justice Commission of League of Nations found many of these Jewish complaints valid.⁶⁰ The principle was once again confirmed that a primitive brutality of German militants cannot be tempered by discussion and were afraid only of legal and economic consequences. In 1936, the sale of meat from ritual slaughter was prohibited, which in the case of people who strictly adhered to the principles of Judaism was also a repressive move.⁶¹ In 1937, the Germans ordered to place boards with names and surnames in front of shops. As a consequence, pickets appeared in front of the Jewish shops, preventing access to them.⁶²

From the organised machinery of violence to the terror of pogroms and economical exclusion (1937–1939)

At the turn of 1937 and 1938, an intensified period of repression began. The NSDAP, by taking away further rights from Jewish citizens, strongly undermined their economic privileges. On 3 October 1937, the right to repay obligations in installments (partial payments over time until paid in full) was withdrawn from Polish and Jewish companies, thus leading many of them to the brink of bankruptcy.⁶³ All service points run by Jews were closed.⁶⁴ On 19 October 1937, Jews were removed from their previous locations and transferred to worse, but much more expensive places.⁶⁵ A few days later, on 21 October, *Der Danziger Vorposten* (the official propaganda journal of the NSDAP in Gdańsk, previously issued as *Danziger Beobachter*) with undisguised joy announced on the front page that:

⁵⁹ *Ibidem*, 309.

⁶⁰ *Ibidem*, 313–314, 317.

⁶¹ Domańska, Lifsches, *Żydzi znad Gdańskiej Zatoki*, 93. It is worth noting that in Poland, in 1936, the possibility of performing ritual slaughter (*shekhita*) was limited to administratively designated quotas and from 1937 on, a complete ban on this slaughter was discussed. See Rafał Żebrowski, *Dzieje Żydów w Polsce 1918–1939* (Warszawa: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny, 1993), 22.

⁶² Domańska, *Zapomnieni byli w mieście*, 140.

⁶³ APG, 260/2172, 177.

⁶⁴ Domańska, Lifsches, *Żydzi znad Gdańskiej Zatoki*, 173.

⁶⁵ Cf. Berendt, “Polityka ekonomiczna Senatu Wolnego Miasta Gdańska wobec ludności żydowskiej (1933-1939),” *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis. Studia and Faszyczmem i Zbrodniami Hitlerowskimi* 23 (2000): 199–230.

“Jews [are now] completely separated,” and under the heading expressed indignation at the contestation of this sentence by the Jewish population (and then how they behave).⁶⁶

The year 1937 clearly marked the intensification and worsening of the persecution. The speech of Forster at the NSDAP congress was significant: “We also need to eliminate brazen Jewry in Gdańsk, against which we will launch a campaign in the near future.”⁶⁷ Newspaper headlines inform us about it; *Gazeta Gdańska* (published in Gdańsk, representing Polish interests) of 25 October 1937 reported: “Stormy Anti-Jewish Incidents in Danzig. Young Combat Troops Smashed Windows in More than 20 Shops.”⁶⁸ In the light of Nazi politics, the content of the publication of *Danziger Neuerste Nachrichten* on 25 November 1937 is surprising: “NSDAP Disapproves of Riots Against Jewish Shops.” However, it seems to be a kind of smokescreen against Western public opinion, and probably also an expression of concern that the riots weren’t under the full control of the NSDAP leaders.⁶⁹ This thesis would be confirmed by the article of 1 December 1937 in *Kurjer Bałtycki*, describing Poland’s reaction to the events in Gdańsk, with the important, though unfortunately only symbolic, opinion of President Mościcki: “My heart and my eyes are always directed towards Polish citizens in Gdańsk.”⁷⁰ On 15 December 1937, the synagogue authorities expressed their opinion on the case of “Silbernen Sonntag,” complaining about the guards placed in front of Jewish shops, which advised against buying in them (euphemistically speaking; in actuality, buyers were not allowed to enter).⁷¹ In 1937, the Nazis had decisive influence on the development of events. Mira Ryczke Kimmelman recalls that her babysitter was warned by her brother, a policeman, who told her parents that she (the babysitter) had to resign from work because “soon the Nuremberg Laws will go into effect here (in Gdańsk) and she will be punished if she remains with a Jewish family.”⁷² On 6 April 1937, the Swiss *Basler Nationalzeitung* reported that the Nuremberg laws would be introduced in Gdańsk.⁷³ These predictions turned out to be true, and in May 1938 Forster announced personally that he would introduce the Nuremberg Laws in Gdańsk.⁷⁴

In 1938 the Sopot mayor Erich Temp established a ghetto in Sopot, and attacks on shops and private apartments intensified. By the initiative of Forster a “beach

⁶⁶ APG, 260/2172, 257.

⁶⁷ Domańska, Lifsches, *Żydzi znad Gdańskiej Zatoki*, 181.

⁶⁸ APG, 260/2172, 261.

⁶⁹ APG, 260/2172, 263.

⁷⁰ APG, 260/2172, 291.

⁷¹ APG, 260/2172, 295; Lichtenstein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 56–60.

⁷² Mira Ryczke Kimmelman, *Echoes from the Holocaust. A Memoir* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1997), 3.

⁷³ Lichtenstein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 53.

⁷⁴ Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 365.

ghetto” has been also approved.⁷⁵ At that time, in Sopot, Jelitkowo, Brzeźno and even in Stegna, placards appeared informing that the Jews were not welcome in sea-side bathing areas.⁷⁶

The year 1938 left no doubt that the purpose of the machine of violence was to get rid of the Jews from Gdańsk. Boycotting and destroying Jewish property has become an almost everyday affair. On 28 November 1938 *Danziger Vorposten* reports about the expulsion from Gdańsk of people who do not favor the Nazi vision of the future.⁷⁷ The political apparatus continued to portray the Jewish people as a threat to the German element. The best example of this is the title of an article in *Der Danziger Vorposten* (from August or September 1938): “Gdańsk population defends itself against Jewish provocations,” showing a world unreal and completely ideologised, in which the persecuted Jews are “a threat to the existence of Germans in Gdańsk.”⁷⁸

1938 was an extremely difficult for the Jewish Community on all possible levels; the political, religious and social. The degradation of the Jews eventually affected the religious sphere as well. This tragic event was reported on August 1938 by both *Nowy Dziennik* (published in Warsaw) and *The New York Times* in the article: “Nazis Plunder Synagogue in Danzig.” The report states that on 29 August 1938, about 40 Nazi SA militants broke into the synagogue, demolished its interior, desecrated and tore the Torah scrolls. The police, summoned by the Jewish community for help, refused to provide assistance. An American newspaper reported that 30% of the population had already left the large and strong Jewish community in Gdańsk after being robbed and harassed. In addition, the city authorities announced that another “four hundred Jews would be taken from their homes in the city center.”⁷⁹ In turn, *Nowy Dziennik* published an article entitled: “Profanation of the synagogue and demolition of the Jewish People’s House in Danzig. The perpetrators – members of the Hitlerjugend.”⁸⁰ And really, the members of Hitlerjugend also attacked and destroyed the furnishings of the Ohel Icchok prayer house and threw stones at the synagogue in Mattenbuden.⁸¹

The culmination of the Nazi attacks in 1938 was “Kristallnacht (12/13 November).⁸² The Nazis attacked synagogues in Sopot (set on fire on each of two days),⁸³ Langfuhr and at Szopy Street (belonging to the “Polish” or “Mattenbuden” community,

⁷⁵ Domańska, *Zapomnieni byli w mieście*, 140–141.

⁷⁶ *Eadem*, Lifsches, *Żydzi znad Gdańskiej Zatoki*, 197, see also *eadem*, *Zapomnieni byli w mieście*, 134.

⁷⁷ (30 I 1938) Statement of the Polish Delegation of the Port and Waterways Council in Gdańsk on the Jewish issue, see Marek Andrzejewski, *Antyżydowski terror w Wolnym Mieście Gdańsku (1937–1939)*, *BŻIH* 1 (141), (1987): 116–120. Cf. Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 349–351.

⁷⁸ APG, 260/2172, 328.

⁷⁹ APG, 260/2172, 333.

⁸⁰ APG, 260/2172, 339.

⁸¹ Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 366.

⁸² In III Reich (Deutschland) it had happened on 9/10 November 1938.

⁸³ Lichtenstein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 77.

Mattenbunden 26, which was completely demolished in April of 1939). The synagogue in Sopot was set on fire and also completely destroyed. The Great Synagogue in Gdańsk avoided a similar fate thanks to the proximity of the Police Presidium and the decisive attitude of the officer on duty, who reacted positively to the demands of the Jews to defend the building against attack.⁸⁴ At least 120 Jewish apartments were also destroyed, including mainly the leading activists of the Jewish community. In November 1938, the NSDAP press office in Gdańsk considered the fire of synagogues in Sopot and Langfuhr to be “minor incidents.”⁸⁵ On 14 November 1938, *Der Danziger Vorposten* placed the responsibility for the situation on the Jews. The report read: “The Jews should atone.”⁸⁶ I will return to the issues related to the “Kristallnacht,” discussing them in the chapter considering emigration.

At this point it is worth focusing on the increasingly aggressive German propaganda. The events of the day elicited press comment on 15 November 1938 in a few articles in a typical manner by the main organ of Nazi propaganda, *Der Danziger Vorposten*: “Danzig is also cleansing itself of Judah [Jews – K.U.]. Gdańsk belongs to the German living space [in the original – Lebensraum].” On the next page, the journal expresses indignation about the possible Jewish retaliation: “Jews tried to demonstrate.”⁸⁷ On the next page, the editor expresses great joy that, “Jews are no longer allowed to attend German schools” (in the text, in German, there is an even more literal [i.e., insulting] description: “Juden dürfen nicht mehr deutsche Schulen bejuden”).⁸⁸ Subsequent articles in the press were increasingly aggressive. Finally, on 17 November 1938, the Nazi propaganda newspaper announced with undisguised pride, “Introduction of the Nuremberg Laws also in Danzig.” The same journal demanded: “All Jewish shops in Danzig have to disappear,” which does not mean that they are to disappear completely, but rather they are to change owners, for Germans ones, of course.⁸⁹ On 18 November 1938 the editors of *Danziger Neueste Nachrichten* assured readers that, “The Jewish question in Danzig will be resolved as soon as possible.”⁹⁰ The author hastened to report to its readers that “Jews are not allowed in” and named the places, mainly related to culture, to which Jews were forbidden to access; this concerned theaters, cinemas and hotels. In March, after another mob attack, the Gdańsk Jewish Theater closed its doors.⁹¹ By the decision of Adalbert Boeck on 17 June 1938, all

⁸⁴ *Der Danziger Vorposten* on 14 XI, see: Lichtenstein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 78; Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 375.

⁸⁵ Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 374.

⁸⁶ APG, 260/2172, 361.

⁸⁷ APG, 260/2172, 363, 365.

⁸⁸ APG, 260/2172, 369.

⁸⁹ APG, 260/2172, 375.

⁹⁰ APG, 260/2172, 373.

⁹¹ APG, 260/2172, 377.

the Jewish artists were excluded from the National Chamber of Culture, thus condemning Jews to the “cultural ghetto.”⁹²

The subsequent legislative decree basically deprived Jewish residents of the right to exist in Gdańsk. On 2 November 1938, the Gdańsk Senate published a decree/law concerning officials. Quote: “Only those who have German or related blood, or those persons with a spouse of German or related blood, can become a clerk.”⁹³ On 21 November, the Senate issued a decree on the protection of German blood and honour. On 4 December, the following law was introduced: “The Ordinance on the Expatriation of Unwanted Citizens.” This act allowed the city authorities at any time to deprive citizenship and rights of any person (read: a Jew), confiscate his property and recognise him as *persona non grata*. The newspaper described the case of six Jewish displaced families whom the English consul allowed to settle in Great Britain. The great problem of those who pondered emigrating was that all property, bank accounts and cash money of Gdańsk and foreign Jews in the Free City of Gdańsk was seized (in December 1938, in accordance with the decision of the Senate Foreign Exchange Commission, all Jewish bank accounts were frozen). This was explained by the need to exercise control over emigration.⁹⁴ The only Jewish bank, Jewish Public Bank, was deprived of the right to foreign exchange, the bank was forced to liquidate and the director (Dr. Leo Goldhaber) and cashier (Dr. Heinrich Pines) were arrested. Jewish companies were placed under the supervision of a probation officer appointed by the Tax Office.⁹⁵ In February 1939, the Senate implemented another law, which said that a citizen of Gdańsk loses his citizenship should he have spent five consecutive years abroad. With the outbreak of the War, after the city was annexed by the Third Reich, the Jews who remained were deemed stateless.⁹⁶

Summing up this period, the years 1937–1938 were a time of increasing repression of Jews. Lichtenstein describes the year 1938 as the year of pogroms, and he is right.⁹⁷ After the law on the protection of German blood came into force on 21 November 1938, the fate of the Jews was sealed. From then on, they were not even considered second-class citizens; they stopped being citizens at all. And for the NSDAP, they will soon cease to be human. Earlier, the Senate, at least made a show of taking the requests and protests of the Jews into account, however “Kristallnacht” put an irrevocable end to the period of uneven dialogue for the dictatorship.

⁹² Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 361.

⁹³ *Ibidem*, 378.

⁹⁴ APG, 260/2172, 395.

⁹⁵ Andrzejewski, *Antyżydowski terror*, 112–116; Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 296, 348.

⁹⁶ Domańska, Lifsches, *Żydzi znad Gdańskiej Zatoki*, 182.

⁹⁷ Lichtenstein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 70.

A one-way road to tragedy (1939...)

The year 1939 began the last stage of the persecution of the Jews before the war broke out. The decisions of the Nazi authorities became ruthless and their implementation was immediate. The Germans no longer camouflage the persecution of Jews, they even appoint uniformed police and SA units to conduct organised action against Jews. Jews are beaten up, their property is plundered and destroyed. The interior of the synagogue in Langfuhr that earlier had been vandalised was entirely destroyed inside. Attacks and arrests took place in Gdańsk, Oliwa and Sopot.⁹⁸ On 22 July 1939, the Senate of the Free City of Danzig approved the appropriation and confiscation of the remaining Jewish property.⁹⁹

The Senate successively issued an order to withdraw the commission for Jewish brokers and commercial agents.¹⁰⁰ By order of 9 January 1939, the new law forbade Jewish doctors their practice. From that date forward, Jewish doctors could not treat not only Germans, but also Jews (the German doctors had refused to treat Jews earlier). Thus, the Jewish population was deprived of medical care in what was the first, indirect permission to their death.¹⁰¹ On 1 February 1939, an ordinance was issued excluding Jews from practicing law and performing their duties as public notaries.¹⁰² On 20 July 1939, a decree was introduced that ultimately prevented Jews from participating in economic life and from ownership of property: "Decree on the Dejudaisation [Entjudung – in original, K.U.] of Gdańsk Economy and Gdańsk Real Estate." The Commissioner General of the Republic of Poland was concerned that Jews had been forced to pay tribute to the Emigration Fund and had been deprived of their rights to dispose of the property on the premises of the Free City of Gdańsk.¹⁰³ In his next letter on 22 August 1939, he also reacted to the depriving of Jews of their property rights. He did not approve the fact that representatives of Senate authorities had the right to sell Jewish property and, in accordance with the instructions of the Senate delegate (at least in theory), use it to support Jewish emigration.¹⁰⁴ The 4–5 March 1939 edition of *Danziger Neueste Nachrichten* informed about the final act of the Jewish exodus: "The Financing of the Jewish Emigration from Gdańsk by Merging into a Liability Community. Benevolent Promotion of Jewish Emigration by the Danzig Senate."¹⁰⁵ Confirmation of this state of affairs can be found in the same newspaper on 6 March:

⁹⁸ (9 I 1938, Bydgoszcz) Report of the Branch No. 3 of the Second Department of the General Staff, see Andrzejewski, *Antyżydowski terror*, 122–123.

⁹⁹ Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 441.

¹⁰⁰ Domańska, Lifsches, *Żydzi znad Gdańskiej Zatoki*, 171.

¹⁰¹ APG, 260/2172, 397.

¹⁰² Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 395.

¹⁰³ APG, 260/2172, 461.

¹⁰⁴ (No. 851e/G/63) APG, 260/2172, 477.

¹⁰⁵ APG, 260/2175, 71.

“The Securing of Jewish Emigration.”¹⁰⁶ The discussion on the regulation of Jewish emigration, so that it would, of course, bring tangible profits to the German legislators was held in this newspaper in the issue of 9 March.¹⁰⁷ With the outbreak of war, all property, everything belonging to Jews, was finally confiscated.¹⁰⁸

Particularly striking is the fact that behind all the ideological machinations of Nazi theorising, there was always human greed and unrestrained lust for Jewish property, as well as animal cruelty, claiming to have the right to life and death over others. My conclusions do not arise solely from the German behavior after the NSDAP took power, when the plundering of Jews was made a virtue, thus codifying and putting on a pedestal the lowest elements of human nature. Many earlier (and also later¹⁰⁹) documents confirm this incredible greed of the Nazis. The correspondence of top officers of the Supreme Command of the Polish Army describes the activities of the emigration camps in Gdańsk through which Jews emigrated to America. The behavior of the entire staff, especially doctors, had nothing to do with ethics and was designed to strip migrants of whatever assets remained to them (rendering them would-be emigrants). Shaving and haircutting for men and women cost a fortune here; doctors, before they allowed a person to emigrate, prescribed 3–4 weeks of treatment, which cost a fortune; food and accommodation in the barracks cost more than in a good-quality hotel.¹¹⁰ The issue of greed and jealousy, depriving others of their property as the basis of the violence and anti-Semitism, is still awaiting thorough and substantive interdisciplinary study.

Emigration as the only solution to survive

The ideas of emigration from Europe to Palestine and to create new country began to emerge quite early, and here I will only mention a few such initiatives. In the 1930's, a youth group “Brith Haolim” operating in Sopot began to organise special *hachshara* camps to prepare for work in Palestine.¹¹¹ The *hachshara* groups were also established by the Zionist Organisation in 1936 in Gdańsk.¹¹² The Zebulon association in cooperation with the authorities of Gdynia organised

¹⁰⁶ APG, 260/2175, 77.

¹⁰⁷ APG, 260/2175, 75.

¹⁰⁸ Kimmelman, *Echoes from the Holocaust*, 13.

¹⁰⁹ On 2 and 3 X 1939, an announcement was published in *Danziger Neueste Nachrichten* that managers (treuhanders) had been appointed for Polish and Jewish companies. On 5 IX a message was announced that all Polish property in Gdańsk (movable and immovable) would be confiscated. See also: Berendt, *Żydzi na terenie Wolnego Miasta Gdańska*, 277–278.

¹¹⁰ APG, 259/1491, 91/92.

¹¹¹ Domańska, *Zapomnieni byli w mieście*, 87.

¹¹² Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 330–331.

training for future Jewish fishermen planning to emigrate to Palestine.¹¹³ The group of young Jewish *chalutzim* met in Gdynia and prepared training sessions for a future life in Palestine.¹¹⁴ Berendt mentioned that the *hachshara* association with the kibbutz in Ostaszewo ceased to exist in 1938.¹¹⁵

However, the main emigration movement from Gdańsk was strictly connected with the subsequent German persecution of Jews. Izaak Landau was appointed the head of the emigration agency for people who wanted to leave for Palestine, and in June 1933 he went to Palestine with his family.¹¹⁶ After Germans banned Jewish doctors, lawyers, public servants and professors from practicing, the Jewish population began to shrink.¹¹⁷ The years 1937–1938 were marked by mass emigration of ordinary Jewish citizens and prominent members of the Jewish community.¹¹⁸ In the winter of 1937/1938, the life of the Gdańsk community was characterised overwhelmingly by emigration.¹¹⁹ Until the very end of the presence of Jews in the Free City of Gdańsk, the issue of emigration remained the main element of correspondence between the Jewish Community and the Senate. On 17 January 1938, the Synagogue issued a letter, in which it presented the obstacles established by the authorities that impeded the efficient conduct of emigration. One of them presented by Senate is “[...] that most states exclude the immigration of economically weak elements through their immigration conditions.”¹²⁰ In subsequent letters from 24 January and 29 March 1938, the Synagogue pointed to the inconvenience and difficulties related to emigration, at the same time reporting the catastrophic situation of the Jewish population. In these letters, we still see hope that the Senate will facilitate the procedures and help Jewish fellow citizens.¹²¹ On the same day, 29 March, the Synagogue asked Poles to issue Polish passports faster to Jewish citizens of Polish nationality.¹²² Jewish emigration, from Gdańsk as well, became an international problem. The problem was that no country really wanted to help Jews. On 24 March 1938, the *The Guardian* reported that 20,000 Jews came to Poland, mainly from Austria, Germany, Gdańsk and Romania.¹²³ Towards the end of 1938, the Nazi authorities in Gdańsk began to put more and more

¹¹³ *Ibidem*, 356; Agnieszka Wróbel, *Żydzi w Gdyni w latach 1926–1939* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2005), 10, 84–86.

¹¹⁴ Kimmelman, *Echoes from the Holocaust*, 12.

¹¹⁵ Berendt, *Żydzi na terenie Wolnego Miasta Gdańska*, 234.

¹¹⁶ Adam Szarszewski, “August (Aron) Simon Hirsch (1817–1894) and Izaak Landau (1884–1947),” in: *Wokół Wielkiej Synagogi w Gdańsku*, 308.

¹¹⁷ The friends of Mira’s parents began seeking visas to emigrate and her music teacher emigrated to exotic Manchuria. See Kimmelman, *Echoes from the Holocaust*, 4–5.

¹¹⁸ Lichtenstein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 74–76.

¹¹⁹ Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 355.

¹²⁰ APG, 260/2172, 307.

¹²¹ APG, 260/2172, 311, 315.

¹²² APG, 260/2172, 319.

¹²³ APG, 260/2172, 317.

pressure on the management of the Jewish Community to force Jews to emigrate from the Free City as quickly as possible. The president of the police, Helmut Froböss, even promised to put an end to the increasing attacks on Jews in exchange for their quick departure from the city. However, not all could afford it; the cost of travel for one person to Palestine was a fortune. In this situation, the board of the Jewish Community yielded to the Senate's blackmail and agreed to liquidate and sell its property. The money obtained in this way was to be allocated to emigration, especially for children and members of poorer families. The Nazis cynically called this action "supporting Jewish emigration." On 16 December, the Synagogue congregation's board considered emigration to be an absolute necessity: "The Synagogue Community in Danzig has the will to bring about an almost complete emigration of the Jews still living in Danzig by the end of 1939" and presented its conditions to the Senate. As a result of German exacerbations, it would apply to those Jews who, until 1 December 1938, had permanent residence (Wohnsitz) in the Free City of Gdańsk and had funds for this purpose. At the beginning, the commune envisaged the emigration of approx. 800–1000 Jews, which was to cost approx. 15–17 thousand Gulden. The emigration was also to be financed from the funds raised by the sale of real estate belonging to the Community. On 17 December 1938, the Jews of the Free City of Gdańsk decide to dissolve the community in order to collect the necessary funds for emigration. As stated above, the synagogue *kehilla* even contacted the Gdańsk police to deal with the matter effectively. In this time, the Jewish properties included the Great Synagogue, Mattenbuden Synagogue, Langfuhr Synagogue (Mirchauer Weg), cemeteries in Langfuhr and in Chełm, the Borussia Lodge,¹²⁴ the Oliwa Gate (am Oliwaer Tor 10) and the estate at Husarengase 7a.¹²⁵ On 9 January 1939, the Gdańsk Senate, which was represented by the NSDAP Kreisleiter Werner Kampe,¹²⁶ conducted negotiations with the Jewish community on behalf of Dr. Hermann Brodnitz,¹²⁷ who postulated that a fair price would be around a million Gulden (at least 800,000), while for the Great Synagogue the Senate proposed only 25,000 (eventually 30,000) and decided that this was doing the Jews a favor, because the Germans could have burned it down.¹²⁸ The blackmail by the Senate authorities left no other option than to accept the Nazi's conditions.¹²⁹ All property belonging to the Jewish community

¹²⁴ Lichtenstein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 78.

¹²⁵ *Ibidem*, 92.

¹²⁶ *Ibidem*, 58. Well known from persecution from October 1937.

¹²⁷ Cf. Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 414.

¹²⁸ APG, 260/2175, 9; Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 391–393; Lichtenstein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 84–94.

¹²⁹ The Commune also obtained permission to sell or transport some of the movable property from Gdańsk. As a result, the Community Archives from the Great Synagogue were placed in Jerusalem, and sacred objects and a collection of Judaica (including the collection of Gieldziński) were transported to New York, where – in accordance with an agreement concluded between the community board and American Jewish organisations – they were to remain there until their free return Jews to Gdańsk. Wooden pews were also sold to the Evangelical church in Nowy Port, Terlecki's organ was

with synagogues, cemeteries and additional real estate was sold for 330,000 Gulden.¹³⁰ This amount had to be earmarked for the emigration of Jews.¹³¹

In August 1938 there were still 140 Jews in Sopot.¹³² From 1938, the emigration of Jews from Gdynia (Poland) likewise intensified, both into the interior of Poland and to Palestine.¹³³ After the “Kristallnacht,” nearly all Sopot Jews had to leave the town.¹³⁴ The ruins of the synagogue in Sopot were then bought by the Senate of the Free City of Gdańsk for the amount of 16,000 Gulden, which in no way corresponded to its value.

The last service in the Great Synagogue took place on 15 April 1939. On 22 April, a tender was announced for the demolition of the synagogue. A few days before that, the small synagogue at Mattenbuden 26 was demolished. In the following days, the Germans built a wall around the Great Synagogue with the inscription: “Come, dear May, and free us from the Jews” (“Komm Liber Mai und mache von Juden uns jetzt frei”). On 2 May 1939, the final demolition of the Great Synagogue began.¹³⁵

From 1938, the Jewish communities managed to send over 10,000 children to London to protect them from the Nazis. Kindertransports departed from, inter alia, Vienna, Hamburg, Prague, Munich, Wrocław, and the Free City of Gdańsk.¹³⁶ Before the war, Jewish communities tried to arrange custody for children in many countries. Only Great Britain agreed (the Jewish representatives concluded an agreement with the government in London), but the US Congress, for example, refused. The transports took place with the consent of the Nazi authorities. Three of them departed from Gdańsk in 1939.¹³⁷ On the night on 2/3 March 1939, five hundred people left for Palestine.¹³⁸ On 4 March 1939, *The Times* published an article in which

sold to Kraków, and candlesticks were sold to Warsaw. The rich library of the synagogue community was taken to Vilnius, where it added to the collection of the Jewish Scientific Institute. See Domańska, Lifsches, *Żydzi znad Gdańskiej Zatoki*, 179. On 17 I 1939, the community obtained the consent of the police to transport the Lesser Geldziński collection abroad, Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 399–402.

¹³⁰ Berendt, *Żydzi na terenie Wolnego Miasta Gdańska*, 227.

¹³¹ Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 410.

¹³² Most of them were later loaded into freight cars by the Germans and taken to the General Government and later to the concentration camps, Domańska, *Zapomnieni byli w mieście*, 141.

¹³³ Wróbel, *Żydzi w Gdyni*, 62–63.

¹³⁴ Two fascinating exhibitions in the years 2018 and 2019 at the Sopot Museum (ul. Księcia Józefa Poniatowskiego 8, Sopot) showed the reality of the interwar period. The first one, entitled “Memory – Sopot Jewish Community,” refers to faint traces of a fairly significant Jewish minority from the pre-war period. The second one, “Silence before the storm, or the summer of 1939 in Sopot” clearly presented all the changes that took place in the city after the NSDAP took power and the last moments of peace in the life of the fascist city at that time.

¹³⁵ Lichtenstein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 97.

¹³⁶ *Ibidem*, 99–103.

¹³⁷ Abramowicz, *Kindertransporten. Exodus gdańskich dzieci żydowskich w przededniu Zagłady*, Paper presented at a scientific conference “Gdańsk, Gdynia i Sopot – Żydowskie wędrówki XX wieku,” Gdańsk 7 V 2008.

¹³⁸ So-called Astir Transport, see also Lichtenstein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 114–116.

was described the actualities of emigration for Gdańsk Jews. Its editors reported that the emigration took place in degrading conditions that were an affront to human dignity that were difficult to agree with. About 420 people survived the journey in extraordinarily difficult conditions.

All Jews were subjected to bodily inspections, the pretext of which was to search for concealed foreign currencies that according to the imposed law, Jews could not possess. Starting on 1 July 1939, the Gdańsk Senate no longer allocated foreign currency to Jews for departures from Gdańsk and demanded that people awaiting emigration had to perform manual labor.¹³⁹ Altogether, 1,272 people emigrated from January to August 1939. However, not all of the remaining Jews were lucky enough to emigrate. One Ms Hampel mentioned that she received an invitation from the United States, but it was too late. She was from a mixed family and Rabbi Dr. [Meir] Bieler informed her that first, full Jews [Volljuden] had to be sent abroad to save them from danger.¹⁴⁰ After the outbreak of the war, Jews continued to leave although some of the refugees died on the way (for example, 50 people were shot on the way to Palestine). The last transport left Gdańsk in August 1940 carrying 519 passengers headed for Palestine, but it was interned for the duration of the war on the island of Mauritius.¹⁴¹ According to the report of the synagogue community, in Gdańsk on 22 August 1939, 1,272 Jews left Gdańsk in the period between 1 January and 31 July 1939.¹⁴² Between March 1939 and August 1940, 1,193 Jewish people left Gdańsk in large groups.¹⁴³ In July 1939, *Jüdisches Gemeindeblatt* reported the departures of the last of the smaller groups to Bolivia (50 people), Shanghai (53 people), England and Palestine.¹⁴⁴ The American HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society) provided travel assistance.¹⁴⁵

In December 1939, Forster announced that Pomerania was free of Jews (Judenfrei). In October 1940, the German government suspended the issuing of permits to emigrate from the city.¹⁴⁶ Those who did not manage to leave met the fate of all Jews under the Nazi occupation after 1939. They were tormented, coerced to perform forced labor,¹⁴⁷ and brutally murdered. Most of the Jews remaining in the Free City of Danzig (approx. 650 people) on 19 September 1939, under the pretext that they lived near the route that Adolf Hitler was to pass from Sopot to Gdańsk, were arrested. They were to be released after the ceremony welcoming Hitler,

¹³⁹ APG, 260/2172, 437.

¹⁴⁰ Berendt, "Małżonkowie Hampel," 238.

¹⁴¹ Domańska, Lifsches, *Żydzi znad Gdańskiej Zatoki*, 188, 196.

¹⁴² Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 447–449.

¹⁴³ Zenon Nowak, *Dzieje Żydów na Pomorzu: Stan badań i postulaty badawcze*, in: *Mniejszości narodowe i wyznaniowe na Pomorzu w XIX i XX w.*, vol. 6, ed. Mieczysław Wojciechowski (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 1998), 35.

¹⁴⁴ Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 435, 440; Berendt, *Żydzi na terenie Wolnego Miasta Gdańska*, 242.

¹⁴⁵ Domańska, Lifsches, *Żydzi znad Gdańskiej Zatoki*, 187.

¹⁴⁶ Nowak, *Dzieje Żydów na Pomorzu*, 35.

¹⁴⁷ The memories of Ms Hampel are the shocking fact of this kind of humiliation and persecution, see: Berendt "Małżonkowie Hampel," 239.

but were instead taken directly to the Stutthof concentration camp.¹⁴⁸ On 24 October 1941, there were still about 200 Jews in Gdańsk. On 7 December 1941, 27 Jews (along with Erich Ruschkewitz) were deported to Riga.¹⁴⁹ On 9 December 1942, 15 December 1942, 15 March 1943 and 27 June 1943 they were sent from Gdańsk to the concentration camps in Teresin (Terezin, Theresienstadt), Bromberg (Bydgoszcz), Auschwitz, the Warsaw ghetto, and some of them by barges out to sea (to certain death). The last transport left Gdańsk on 24 July 1943 and consisted of 31 people was sent to Bydgoszcz. Only 22 people from mixed marriages survived the whole ordeal.¹⁵⁰

The attempts to counteract organised legislative and physical violence

It is important to deal with the oft-repeated stereotype that the Jews themselves deserved a tragic fate because they failed to defend their own rights. The example of the Jews from the Free City of Danzig completely refutes this stereotype and shows how many attempts were made by them to counteract Nazi attacks. The first one was the example of the *Danziger Judenschaft*, which on 7 August 1933 demanded that the rights and freedoms of the Jewish population be respected. It mentioned the assumptions for the functioning of the Free City of Danzig, i.e., equal treatment regardless of origin and religion, i.e., religious tolerance.¹⁵¹ The next appeal was thoroughly prepared and was issued during the meeting of the representatives of the Jewish Community with the Senate on 8 November 1934.¹⁵² The Jewish delegation submitted a letter on anti-Semitic behavior in the Free City of Danzig, in which it takes up the topics: “Absingen Judenfeindlicher Lieder, z. B. Wenn Judenblut vom Messner spritzt,” Beiordnung jüdischer Armenanwälte, Judenfeindliche Plakate, Beschwerden des Vereins jüdischer Akademiker; Angelegenheit “Stürmer,” Ehrenschatz für jüdischer Staatsbürger, Angeblicher Boykott gegen jüdische Statsbürger.”¹⁵³ In another letter, submitted on 15 September 1935, representatives of the Synagogue asked the President of the Senate why the Star of David was forbidden for children to wear in schools. At that time, wearing the Star of David was a privilege of the Jewish people (ruthlessly and

¹⁴⁸ Kimmelman, *Echoes from the Holocaust*, 13.

¹⁴⁹ Brandt, “Gdański poeta i dziennikarz,” 334.

¹⁵⁰ Domańska, Lifsches, *Żydzi nad Gdańskiej Zatoki*, 183; Nowak, *Dzieje Żydów na Pomorzu*, 35; Lichtenstein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 143.

¹⁵¹ APG, 260/2172, 29.

¹⁵² All the complaints submitted by Jews to the Senate in the years 1933–1935 in cases of unlawful treatment were collected in the archives of the Synagogue Community. See Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 288.

¹⁵³ APG, 260/2172, 105.

cynically used by the Nazis during World War II), and wearing it was a manifestation of religious affiliation and not an implicit party or Zionist propaganda.¹⁵⁴ The most famous appeal was a several dozen-page petition submitted by the Union of Jewish Academics in Gdańsk (Verein Jüdischer Akademiker in Gdańsk, Petition an der Völkerbund) on 8 April 1935 titled: "Because of the situation of the Jews in the territory of the Free City of Danzig."¹⁵⁵ The Academics enumerated a number of discriminatory facts using the statements of the Nazi leaders. For example, Forster's statement from 28 July 1934: "Another enemy we must not lose sight of is Judah. There is no such thing as a decent Jew for a National Socialist. This race is and remains our mortal enemy (Dieser Rasse ist und bleibt unser Todfeind) [...] For National Socialists personal contact with Jews is excluded."¹⁵⁶ And another one, published by Senator Huth in *Der Danziger Vorposten* on 15 July 1933: "Judah knows no [...] work, since he lives only from deceivers and swindlers." They also quoted the words of German street songs:

Hang the Jews, stand the Bosen on the wall'
 Not until the Jew bleeds
 Only then will Germany be completely liberated.

The Academics pointed to other Regulations of Medical Profession (12/01/1933, 03/07/1934, 31/08/1934) which limited and finally forbade Jews to practice the profession of a doctor. The petition was also sent to the League of Nations, where it was read and it turned out to be effective because it demanded that Germans verify the legal situation in Gdańsk.¹⁵⁷ On 21 October 1937, representatives of the Jewish Community filed another protest regarding the awarding of worse and worse commercial places on the streets during fairs and holidays and opposed the constant raising of fees.¹⁵⁸ On 27 October 1937, representatives of the Jewish Community (Judical Council, Dr. Rosenbaum and Senate Council, Berent) submitted a letter to the President of the Senate, in which they complained about the arrangements according to which penalties were imposed for buying in Jewish shops, preventing inheritances bequeathed to descendants after the death of the Jewish owner, and problems with emigration. They recognised that laws had been introduced deliberately to hamper the sale of Jewish property and the removal of property abroad. They wrote about the forced removal of Jews from the center of Gdańsk and the appointment of strictly limited hours of bathing in the municipal washrooms for them. The fact that

¹⁵⁴ APG, 260/2172, 121, 122.

¹⁵⁵ Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 309, ref. 257.

¹⁵⁶ Lichtenstein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 29.

¹⁵⁷ APG, 260/2173, 1–127.

¹⁵⁸ APG, 260/2172, 147.

they had no illusions about the policy of the Gdańsk authorities is evidenced by the sentence: "We have the impression that this is a planned action aimed at exterminating the Jews in Danzig".¹⁵⁹ In the press response of 4 November 1937, the Senate, taking a stance on the accusations then appearing, stated that there was no question of pogroms and attacks on Jews in schools. Mira Ryczke Kimmelman confessed that the Jewish students were not allowed to attend German schools. School friends did not want to talk to her and teachers ignored her.¹⁶⁰ The World Jewish Congress at the meeting in Genf maintained its earlier position that Jews cannot appear in the streets without serious consequences and reiterated that it was the police themselves who give the attackers the signal to assault Jews.¹⁶¹ In October 1937, the Nazis permanently took part in anti-Jewish actions. The document indicates that no perpetrators were arrested, but the situation was exploited to arrest Jews on the pretext of illegal meetings. The violence was managed by Heymann, Forster's personal clerk. In response, the Jews sent back their entry cards to the casino in Sopot.¹⁶² This was one of the methods of responding to the NSDAP's programmed anti-Semitism. In this case Jews boycotted the German casino. On 28 October 1937, *Gazeta Gdańska* describes a situation in which the Sopot casino was empty for this reason. It was an attempt to make the Germans reflect by using the economic argument.¹⁶³

In the light of the main German slogan of 1937, i.e., "Arisierung,"¹⁶⁴ we realise that none of these attempts were effective enough. One can only ask the question, what else had to be done, apart from monitoring the public opinion of Gdańsk and Europe, and trying to talk to the authorities by means of requests and protests? And the answer to this question is difficult even today. Without their own state or military representation, Jews could only appeal to the rulers" common sense.

Strict assessment of Polish actions and intentions

On 3 December 1938, the representative of Poland, the Commissioner General of the Republic of Poland in Gdańsk, Marian Chodacki, pleaded with the President of the Senate to protect Polish citizens (including those of Jewish origin) and

¹⁵⁹ APG, 260/2172, 215, 525.

¹⁶⁰ Kimmelman, *Echoes from the Holocaust*, 5. Even in Polish gymnasium the Jewish students were treated improperly. They had to sit at desks separated from the Polish students. About bench ghettos on Polish universities Echt has mentioned, Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 351.

¹⁶¹ APG, 260/2172, 247–251; Lichtenstein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 61–64.

¹⁶² (December 1937, Bydgoszcz) Report of the Branch No. 3 of the Second Department of the General Staff. See Andrzejewski, *Antyżydowski terror*, 112–116.

¹⁶³ APG, 260/2172, 273.

¹⁶⁴ The term "Arisierung" is difficult to translate, but practically means seizing Jewish property.

pay them compensation.¹⁶⁵ On 23 January 1939, also the foreign ministers of France, England and Sweden issued a joint statement against persecution of the Jewish population. They appealed to the Senate to take the appropriate measures: "Of anti-Semitic measures."¹⁶⁶ On 26 January 1939, the Senate received another letter from Minister Chodacki, pleading on behalf of Polish citizens. In response, the Senate of the Free City of Gdańsk condemned all anti-Jewish riots.¹⁶⁷ Earlier, the German policy on 26 October 1938 claimed that the Jews in the Free City of Danzig had never been persecuted, there were no attacks and pogroms, and the situation of the Jews was so good that even those from Poland wanted to emigrate to Gdańsk.¹⁶⁸ The continuation of this ideological line can be seen on 26 January 1939, when German officials proclaimed that a thousand Jews had left Gdańsk in October of the previous year. Purportedly, the Germans were concerned that some Jews, penniless and marooned in Europe, would starve and die of poverty, which could cast a shadow on German policy in Gdańsk.¹⁶⁹ In this case, the German were in no way worried about the fate of the Jewish victims, and wanted only to make a hypocritical attempt to cover up the true situation.

The report on 31 January 1939 makes us realise that Poles were fully aware of the situation and knew that Jews had to emigrate. The British were also aware of this (especially after 7 February 1939, when one thousand Jews arrived in Trieste, five hundred from the Free City of Gdańsk and five hundred from the Third Reich) but they decided to let only Jews with visas into the United Kingdom.

On 20 March 1939, concerned that the Gdańsk authorities had forbidden Jews to use any legal services, the Commissioner General of the Republic of Poland in Gdańsk again submitted a note to the Senate.¹⁷⁰ In another letter on 24 April 1939, he asked the Senate about the situation of Polish citizens recognised as Jewish citizens by Gdańsk legislation, requesting that their bank accounts be unblocked. He pointed to situations in which inability to withdraw money from blocked accounts made it impossible to pay fees and taxes on time, and thus may result in bankruptcy or loss of real property.¹⁷¹

The earlier actions and omissions of actions, as well as the speeches by Chodacki, strengthened the opinion of the Jews of Gdańsk that Poland represented in Gdańsk only the interests of the Polish state and was not interested in the fate of Jews with Gdańsk citizenship. Echt emphasises that the Jews of Gdańsk neither

¹⁶⁵ APG, 260/2172, 383; Berendt, *Żydzi na terenie Wolnego Miasta Gdańska*, 246–247 (Chodacki). Cf. Lichtenstein, *Die Juden der Freien Stadt Danzig*, 64, 68.

¹⁶⁶ APG, 260/2172, 419.

¹⁶⁷ APG, 260/2172, 423.

¹⁶⁸ APG, 260/2172, 523.

¹⁶⁹ APG, 260/2175, 595.

¹⁷⁰ APG, 260/2172, 441.

¹⁷¹ (No. T 851/c/G/16) APG, 260/2176, 73.

asked for nor expected help from the Polish authorities.¹⁷² He cites Hungary, Italy and Poland as being under the influence of Nazi propaganda.¹⁷³ According to Echt, the situation of Jews in Poland was not much better than it was in Germany.¹⁷⁴

Certain behaviors of Polish representatives may have given rise to a lack of trust in Polish politics. When the Gdańsk opposition asked for help from Poland in 1936, the Polish government refused it, and Foreign Minister Józef Beck assured Berlin that Poland did not intend to interfere in Gdańsk's internal policy.¹⁷⁵ During a conversation with Greiser in November 1937, Chodacki stated that he was interested in the Jewish question insofar as it concerned Polish citizens.¹⁷⁶ According to Echt, whenever Poland supported the High Commissioner in his efforts to protect constitutional rights, it was of great importance for the rule of law in Gdańsk.

It is a very delicate issue from both the Polish and the Jewish perspective. The inclusion of the Polish state in the same league as the avowed fascists Hungary and Italy is difficult for the Polish side to accept, especially from the perspective of the Polish experience of the war. This issue definitely requires further and balanced study.

Summary

The scale of the German persecution is completely disproportionate to the number of Jewish citizens¹⁷⁷ of the Free City of Gdańsk. A total of 4,311 Jews¹⁷⁸ were known to have lived in Sopot in 1929 (the year that the last statistical survey was carried out) and 5,873 were known to have lived in Gdańsk, constituting 2.5% of the total population. When taking into account the entire territory of the Free City of Gdańsk, there were 10,448 Jews in the area in 1929.¹⁷⁹ According to Burckhard (*Meine Danziger Mission 1937–1939*) on 1 October

¹⁷² Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 366

¹⁷³ *Ibidem*, 368

¹⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, 323–327. For further reading, see interesting study of Sylwester Kielbasiewicz, *Obraz Żyda w historiografii polskiej okresu międzywojennego* (Toruń: MADO, 2005).

¹⁷⁵ Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 322–323.

¹⁷⁶ Berendt, *Żydzi na terenie Wolnego Miasta Gdańska*, 204.

¹⁷⁷ The complicated national, social and economic structure of Jews in Gdańsk. See Andrzejewski, "Prasa żydowska w Wolnym Mieście Gdańsku," 87. Even in small Sopot, the Jews formed two communities. The first was of a German-national character. The Jews who had settled in Sopot for a long time belonged to it. It was set on fire by SA fighters and burned down completely. Jews from Russia and Poland belonged to the other community created after World War I. They did not have a separate house of prayer. They used the large hall in Pommerschenstrasse. See also Relation of Mr Hampel in: Berendt, "Małżonkowie Hampel," 232.

¹⁷⁸ Domańska, Lifsches, *Żydzi znad Gdańskiej Zatoki*, 196.

¹⁷⁹ APG, 260/2006, 25.

1937 there were only 7,479 Jews in the Free City of Gdańsk.¹⁸⁰ However, according to the Statistical State Office, there were 10,427 Jews in Gdańsk on 1 October 1937, and 6,101 on 1 February 1939.¹⁸¹ Statistically, Jews never amounted for more than 3–4% of the total population.¹⁸² According to Domańska, as a result of persecution in Germany, no less than 100,000 German Jews came to Gdańsk in 1936. Jews from the East and Poland also came, but it should be remembered that both German and Eastern Jews treated Gdańsk only as a transit base for their further journey, i.e., in this case, to escape.

This article presents the history of the persecution of Jews and the formation of the German terror apparatus in the Free City of Danzig which gradually and systematically limited the freedom of Jews. From a historical point of view, we can describe the facts, even the most tragic ones. However, as I mentioned in the introduction, it is up to the sociological and psychological sciences to answer this question: How could a situation unfold, in which within a few years, changes of such great nature could occur that for certain citizens of the city? How certain citizens not only ceased to be fellow citizens, but were no longer human beings? How did the German citizens come to believe that the best thing to do, even the right and proper thing to do, was to humiliate them, rob them, beat them and banish from civic and legal life those who did not or could not leave? This article presents the step-by-step process of depriving Jews of their rights and dignity, but it does not answer the question of how it is possible that the role of the ideal

¹⁸⁰ Echt, *Dzieje Żydów Gdańskich*, 352.

¹⁸¹ See Andrzejewski, *Antyżydowski terror*, 126; see also Berendt, *Żydzi na terenie Wolnego Miasta Gdańska*, 244.

¹⁸² For comparison, there were fewer Jews in the entire Pomeranian Voivodeship than in the Free City. Only after 1926, under the conditions of clear, though short-term economic stabilisation, we observe a slow influx of Jewish people to Pomerania from the lands of the former Congress Poland. In April 1934, the Pomeranian Province was inhabited by 3,400 Jewish people. Three years later, thanks to the expansion of Gdynia, the number of Jews increased to 6,504 people/0.69% of the total population of the voivodeship, and many of them registered for a temporary stay in Gdynia. Since 1936, the number of communes has decreased due to departures to the Americas, Palestine, and sometimes to other regions of the country. The decisive influence was the fear of German aggression. However, exact statistics on the mentioned departures were not kept. The situation in the Pomeranian Province changed significantly after 1 V 1938, as a result of the act of the change of the borders of the provinces: Warsaw, Pomeranian, Poznań and Łódź. Due to the new administrative division, the Pomeranian Province was inhabited by 45,000 Jews, which constituted 2.3% of the total population. See Zofia Waszkiewicz, "Położenie prawne gmin wyznaniowych żydowskich w województwie pomorskim (1920–1939)," in: *Gminy Wyznaniowe Żydowskie w województwie pomorskim w okresie międzywojennym (1920–1939)*, vol. 4, ed. Jan Sziling (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 1995); Mirosław Golon, *Żydzi, Ukraińcy, Rosjanie, Białorusini i Cyganie na Pomorzu Gdańskim po II Wojnie światowej*, in: Wojciechowski, *Mniejszości narodowe i wyznaniowe*, 229–272. On the situation of Jews in Gdynia before the war: Wróbel, *Żydzi w Gdyni*; Domańska, *Zapomnieni byli w mieście*, 186.

Nazi citizen should be perceived as the one who robs and murders his former fellow citizens. Was the intrusive propaganda and artificial treatments in creating “official” law the reason?

Only a few Polish Jews, former residents of the Free City of Danzig, remained in Gdańsk. In postwar Gdańsk, the Jewish Community – not without problems – was reborn.¹⁸³ From the information obtained from its deputy chairman, Mr. Michał Rucki, I learned that none of the pre-war Jews living in the Free City of Danzig or their descendants belonged to the contemporary Jewish communities. Currently, there are three Jewish communities in Gdańsk: the Orthodox Jewish Community, a branch of the Union of Jewish Religious Communities in Poland; the Independent Community of Jewish Religious in Gdańsk; and Beit Trójmiasto, associated with the progressive movement, being part of the “Beit Polska” Union of Progressive Jewish Communities.¹⁸⁴

In this “record of violence,” the survival and rebirth of the Jewish communities is an extremely positive aspect, because although the Germans destroyed the Jewish population in Gdańsk in the years 1933–1939 (and continuing, from 1939 to 1945), in the longer term it prevailed. In this respect, the Jews of Gdańsk and the Tri-City live on, and succeeding chapters of their history continue to be written.

¹⁸³ Grzegorz Berendt, *Żydzi na gdańskim rozdrożu (1945–1950)* (Gdańsk: Uniwersytet Gdański, 2000); *idem*, *Żydowskie instytucje religijne i religijność Żydów w województwie gdańskim w latach 1945–1996*, in: *Nierzyskokatolickie kościoły i grupy wyznaniowe w Gdańsku*, ed. Władysław Pałubicki (Gdańsk, Koszalin: Bałtycka Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna, 1998), 21–37.

¹⁸⁴ Paweł Frankowski, *Grupy wyznaniowe w Gdańsku w warunkach współczesnych procesów globalizacyjnych* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, 2005), 164–170, 277–280; <https://sztetl.org.pl/pl/miejscowosci/g/35-gdynia/123-gminy-zydowskie/70873-gmina-postepowa-beit-trojmiasto>, accessed on 6 I 2022.