Anna Novikov

Shades of a Nation

The Dynamics of Belonging among the Silesian and Jewish Populations in Eastern Upper Silesia (1922–1934)

fibre

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EINZELVERÖFFENTLICHUNGEN DES
DEUTSCHEN HISTORISCHEN INSTITUTS WARSCHAU

34

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Violetta Vollrath: ‘Standpunkt vertreten’

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Dedicated to all the victims of physical and emotional violence

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Introduction

Innovation, Methodology and Literature Survey

This volume narrates and examines the unique story of the nationalization of local population groups in an interwar Central European border area. It traces the dynamics of belonging to and affiliation with two not-entirely-national societies: the Silesian and the Jewish in the Eastern Upper Silesia region. This area was transferred from Germany to Poland after World War I and experienced an intensive process of nationalization (or what will be referred to as *Polonization*). My study focuses mostly on the city Kattowitz (or Katowice)[1], which after the shifting of the border became the capital of the new Polish Silesian *Voivodeship*. Together with its regional features, Eastern Upper Silesia and Katowice, the general questions of national belonging and nationalization, of being a multinational state and of the linguistic or religious definitions of minorities versus their own self-perceptions were common to successor states during their interwar existence.

This study concentrates on a time period of thirteen years, from 1921 (the year of the plebiscite in Upper Silesia) until 1934, when Poland and Germany signed the non-aggression pact. Both the plebiscite and the signing of the non-aggression pact were crucial for the self-definition of

[1] The following German, Polish or German-Polish forms for places and groups are used (in accordance with the period being discussed): Bielitz / Bielsko: Bielitz before 1922, Bielsko after 1922. Górnoślązacy / Szlonzoki / Upper Silesians / Silesians – The first ethnic group my dissertation focuses on is territorially and officially defined as the Górnoślązacy group but calls itself Szlonzoki or Ślązacy. My dissertation will use the English variant of their self-designation, Silesians. Kattowitz / Katowice: Kattowitz before 1922, Katowice after 1922. Königshütte / Królewska Huta / Chorzów: Königshütte before 1922, Królewska Huta between 1922–1934, Chorzów after 1934. Ostoberschlesien / Polnisches Schlesien / Województwo Śląskie / Silesian Voivodeship / East Upper Silesia: Because of the complicated history of Upper Silesia there are many synonyms in German, Polish and English for this area. In order to avoid any semantic tension and to remain unbiased, I have decided to use the English variants of the area I am focusing on after 1922: either Silesian Voivodeship or Eastern Upper Silesia. Województwo / Voivodeship: Province. Wojewoda / Voivode: Province Governor.

Upper Silesian minorities. At the time of the plebiscite, the Jews and the Silesians had to make a decision as to their national affiliation, when neither of these groups considered themselves completely German or Polish. Therefore, after the borders shifted, both groups would have been candidates for the process of *Polonization*.

Focusing on the Jewish and the Silesian test cases, in a wide and comparative context of international political and diplomatic background, enables me to place these two 'micro' history cases within the 'macro' history of Central Europe between the wars. Concentration on Katowice is essential since this city, affected by the shifted borders, became the center of the Polish Silesian autonomous region and consequently took on an immense symbolic meaning in the eyes of Poland, Germany, and western European Powers states, and was significant for the League of Nations and the Court of Justice in The Hague.

For the Polish State, this city symbolized the victory of Poland over Germany and the end of many years of the *Germanization* of its western borderlands. For Germany, Katowice became a symbol not only of the loss of one of its most important eastern industrial cities and of an area rich in coal, but also of all the former Prussian territories which were transferred to Poland. For the powerful European states as France, Italy or Great Britain, their stance towards this city (as well as towards the whole area of Upper Silesia) reflected in fact their own position not only in favor of Poland or Germany but moreover, towards the generally unstable postwar balance of power. Finally, for the League of Nations and for the Court in The Hague, this city was of great significance as a capital of an important region within a new successor state. Katowice was a symbol for a place where the postwar agreements on minority rights were to be kept in a proper way. It was not incidental that this city was chosen by the former Swiss president Felix Calonder as his place of residence. He lived in Katowice between 1922 and 1937 during his activity as a head of the Mixed German-Polish Commission for Upper Silesia.

Eastern Upper Silesia and Katowice as politicized areas of international importance are highly applicable within my methodology of examining 'macro' history through 'micro' history. In such an area, the nationalization process of minorities at a 'micro' level reflects lesser-known aspects of a 'macro' political and diplomatic history of interwar Europe. My approach shows how the process of the *Polonization* of two minorities in this area provoked valuable political and economic international discussions. This study creates a link between 'micro' and 'macro' histories by tracing the implementation into the daily life of the Jewish and Silesian

minorities of international or internal political decisions within the process of nationalization. Such a methodology examines the process of nationalization or *Polonization* as a tool which provides a rare opportunity to trace the mutual influence between two types of history and to observe Central European history in a wider context. It contributes to the understanding of the influence of 'micro' history on a 'macro' history of the relationships between the minorities and the authorities in the national discourse of the twentieth century.

During the last decades two scholars in this area, namely Józef Chlebowczyk and Maria Wanda Wanatowicz, referred in their works: *Ludność napływowa na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1922–1939* (1982), *Inteligencja na Śląsku w okresie międzywojennym* (1986) and *On Small and Young Nations in Europe: Nation-forming Processes in Ethnic Borderlands in East-Central Europe* (1980) to the questions about the self-definition of the Silesian population. However, in their highly informative works, these scholars continued to represent the Silesians within the theoretical frameworks which were created much earlier, without a wider, international interpretation of the Silesian test case, and they concentrated mostly on the Polish part of Upper Silesia after the plebiscite.

Other studies, for instance, by Marek Czapliński in his books *Historia Śląska* (2007) and *Dzieje Śląska od 1806 do 1945 roku* (2002) or by Ryszard Kaczmarek and Piotr Greiner *Leksykon mniejszości w województwie śląskim w latach 1922–1939: Zarys dziejów, organizacje, działacze* (2002) and Kaczmarek's article 'Zwischen Regionalismus, Autonomismus und Separatismus. Das Elsass und Oberschlesien, 1871 bis 1945' (2006), are significant because of their informative value, yet still do not have an entirely sufficient analytical-comparative element in their examination of Eastern Upper Silesia in the interwar period. Recently a book by Andrzej Michałczyk *Heimat, Kirche und Nation: Deutsche und polnische Nationalisierungsprozesse im geteilten Oberschlesien 1922-1939* (2010) was published. This research is almost the only one which focuses on the period with which my study deals. However, his book deals with only one aspect of nationalization, namely religion, and is therefore is completely different from the processes, systems and research questions of this volume.

German scholars in recent years have shown an increased interest in this area and topic. Due to the post World War II frontier changes in Poland, it is difficult to know whether this interest was caused by purely scholarly aims or rather by a wish to penetrate a German narrative into this currently Polish area. Therefore, most of these scholars focused more

on the former 'German' parts of Upper Silesia and less on the history of the Eastern parts of the area. The later generation of German scholars started to deal with the history of Upper Silesia in a comprehensive and comparative way, not exclusively pro-German, and began raising new research questions. The book by Kai Struve, *Oberschlesien nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg: Studien zu einem nationalen Konflikt und seiner Errinerung* (2003), or the volume from Kai Struve and Philipp Ther, *Die Grenzen der Nationen: Identitätenwandel in Oberschlesien in der Neuzeit* (2000), are examples of such new directions in German research. However, little study has been dedicated to the history of Eastern Upper Silesia and of the Silesian minority in the interwar period.

Thus, instead of a broad researching of the area as a trans-cultural border phenomenon, and of representing it contextually together with other border regions, the scholars working on the history of Upper Silesia have often continued to create either 'Polish' or 'German' history. In addition, these 'histories' have had internal restrictions which made the research of this complicated, transnational area even narrower: economic history, political history, social history etc., as though these strict divisions represent the reality of the region.

Some studies about Silesian Jewry have also been done. So, Wojciech Jaworski in his book *Ludność żydowska w województwie śląskim* (1997) or Aleksandra Namysło in her article 'The Religious Life of Katowice Jews in the Inter-War Period' (2001) display the history of the Jewish communities in the cities of Upper Silesia from their beginnings until the end of World War II. These studies, which represent the genre of micro-history and are rich sources of information, are deficient with regard to the international-regional context. They fit the strict fields of Jewish history, without locating it in the broader inter-community or international context. Although a large part of the Silesian Jewish community consisted of German Jews, almost no one has examined this part of the Silesian Jewish community within the German Jewish context. Marcin Wodziński, in his article 'Languages of the Jewish Communities in Polish Silesia (1922–1939)' (2002), examined and compared different Jewish communities in Polish Upper Silesia. However, Wodziński did not concentrate on the German Jewish community and its unique experience as a result of the border shift, nor on the legal-diplomatic and international background outside Jewish history, which is the focus of my study.

The history of the Polish B'nai B'rith organization is has been barely examined until recently. Some studies of a generally informative character have been done by Leon Chajn: 'Związek Stowarzyszeń Humanitarnych

B'nei B'rith w II Rzeczypospolitej' (1975), Bogusława Czajecka *Archiwum Związku Żydowskich Stowarzyszeń Humanitarnych 'B'nei B'rith' w Krakowie, 1892–1938* (1994), and Hanna Domańska *Gdański Zakon Synów Przymierza: Dzieje żydowskiego wolnomularstwa w Gdańsku i Sopocie lata 1899–1938* (2002). A recently published and prominent study by Anna Kargol *Zakon Synów Przymierza: Krakowska Loża 'Solidarność' 1892–1938* (2013) for the first time has made a comparative analysis of the historical role of the organization within the Second Polish Republic. To the best of my knowledge, no research on the Silesian B'nai B'rith has been done so far and this study aims to fill that gap.

In recent years, another group of scholars who have dedicated themselves to the research of Upper Silesian history have come onto the scene: the Silesians themselves. One of the most prominent representatives of this group is Tomasz Kamusella and his works: *Silesia and Central European Nationalisms: The Emergence of National and Ethnic Groups in Prussian Silesia and Austrian Silesia, 1848–1918* (2007) and *The Politics of Language and Nationalism in Modern Central Europe* (2009).

On the one hand, by publishing his work in English, Kamusella succeeds for almost the first time in presenting the history of the Silesians beyond the contexts of the German or Polish languages. His works are done in a comparative way, dealing with Silesians in the context of other Central European border ethnic groups. On the other hand, however, to some extent the newest studies made by local Silesian scholars once again return to the same structures for interpreting the region's history which were adopted by their Polish and German scholarly opponents. Additionally, almost all these studies were made either about the pre-World War I period or the post-World War II period, skipping the important interwar existence of the area with all the changes it experienced during that time.

Two significant studies dedicated to the history of Upper Silesia were recently made by the English-speaking scholars Timothy Wilson and James Bjork. These works, both of which deal with the Silesian minority, are unbiased and comparative, displaying new approaches and research questions. However, Timothy Wilson's book *Frontiers of Violence: Conflict and Identity in Ulster and Upper Silesia, 1918–1922* (2010), a study dedicated to a comparison between Upper Silesia and Northern Ireland, concentrates mostly on the plebiscite and the Silesian uprisings and does not deal with the later interwar period which is the focus of my study. The book of James Bjork *Neither German nor Pole: Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland* (2008) examines different processes which took place within the Silesian community and its

interaction with the German and Polish society, but it focuses on the religious life of the Silesian community within Prussia until the end of World War I, before the plebiscite and without analyzing the interwar period.

Up to this point, therefore, there has been a lack of comprehensive studies on the interwar history of the area of Upper Silesia (especially Eastern Upper Silesia) and its population. Nor do the studies adopt the broad context of international Central-West European discourse, done by a neutral researcher – neither part of the Polish, German or Silesian school, and not restricted by the rigid outlines of an exclusively Jewish, Polish, German or Silesian history, whether it be through an economic, social or political lens.

This study elucidates this period of the interwar history of the area. It is my hope that my unbiased scholarly position permits me to approach such sensitive topics as self-definition, identification and nationalization without prior emotional attachments. Such a position, together with knowledge of the several languages which were in use within the region, enables me to examine my research questions in a comparative way, and to represent them in a language which is free of local semantic burdens, thus allowing my study to be more a part of a broader field of research. It also enables me to focus on the two test cases, keeping in mind the geo-political background of the Upper Silesian region. Placing two border area minorities into the broader field of Central European social and political developments enables this study to approach their 'micro' histories from angles which until now were not used in their cases (nationalization it minority schools, inculcation of *Polonization* via school subjects, *Polonization* of an adult B'nai B'rith group, psychological factors which brought minorities to accept the identification from 'above', etc.). On the other hand, such a comparative look at the topic enables me to properly place these 'micro' history cases within the 'macro' history of interwar Central Europe, where despite the regional differences, the main questions of nationality, national state versus multi-ethnic state, and the national, ethnic, religious and linguistic definition of minorities, remained common questions for many border areas.

The central methodology of this work is based on archival sources which have been hardly examined at all. Its innovation lies not only in a discovering of sources, but also in their interpretation. Without minimizing their importance, generations of scholars dealing with this area have examined its matters and subjects through the prism of various theoretical

constructions: ideological, nationalist, or regionalist, attempting to fit the complicated history of Upper Silesia into previously created frameworks.

Abandoning these theoretical restrictions and regional biases and, for the first time in the research of the interwar Eastern Upper Silesia, giving voice to the sources themselves, is the basis of this study's innovative approach. It enables me to represent the history of the processes of nationalization in the area in all their complexity, and to examine their connections to internal state policies and to international relations. The release of the sources from disciplinary restrictions brings them to a deeper and broader point where the anthropological, sociological and psychological issues of social and cultural micro-history can be examined in an interdisciplinary context. Among the other questions of this inquiry, I examine the essential historical-sociological question which previously has merely been mentioned in the scholarly research. This issue is called, in my own terminology, the 'migration without migrating' of communities which with the border shift were themselves shifted into a new reality, and their subsequent reaction to it.

Such an approach to the sources enables a broader and transnational interpretation of the questions of self-definition which were common to other border societies, in other successor states, in the whole area of Europe, especially Central Europe. My book traces the process of the implementation of nationalization from 'above' into the daily life of border minorities. It examines the whole phenomenon of nationality and its creation, and it is applicable not only to this specific successor state, but to many other areas of Europe. It reveals questions of flexibility and the uncertainty of the nation building process and its dependence both upon international political and diplomatic decisions, as well as on the internal situation within the state.

Questions of self-definition, which differ from the national definition given by authorities and from forced inculcation of nationalism created by a state, are relevant issues in many regions of the world – even today. This study aims to assist in tracing the interwar sources of conflicts and thereby also provide a better understanding of the process of the inculcation of national identity, and its dependence on motives which are far from national and ideological within societies which previously had defined themselves in terms different from those of Western Europe. It is my hope that such an understanding can promote changes in the education of the younger generation and ideally decrease violence and zealotry.

This study examines the Jewish and the Silesian societies as two equal border minority groups, with their shared space and background (an area

hardly studied together in the research literature). Although the Silesian and the Jewish groups in the region were not similar in terms of their social levels, confessions, and values, they had co-existed from the eighteenth century onwards in the cities of Upper Silesia and shared the same urban space. They are, therefore, similar in several ways: both the Jews and the Silesians were influenced by the political and the social postwar changes: they were divided by the new boundary line and each group was represented on both sides of the border. Sometimes, families were divided, with members living in both Germany and in Poland. Additionally, both the Jews and the Silesians were the 'veteran' communities in the region and their reaction to the Polish and Jewish newcomers from the eastern parts of Poland and from Galicia was similar. Finally, in the postwar peace treaties, both these communities received the same minority status and each in its own way both became targets for nationalization and *Polonization* as directed by the state authorities. Therefore, in this study both the Jews and the Silesians reflect various perspectives of this complicated process and its two directions – from above and below.

Chronological Framework

The plebiscite of 1921 and the German-Polish pact of 1934 are the chronological framework of my book, and both of these events created active international debates as well as internal discussions within the Polish State concerning the national definition of the Silesian and Jewish societies in the process of their further nationalization and their rights as 'minorities'. In fact, these two groups of the population were often used by the Central and Western European politicians in their international diplomacy, and as well by the Polish authorities in their internal policies. In the mid-thirties these minorities were still the subjects of the same state and international policies, but at this time without the possible defense coming from the League of Nations. Therefore, the changes which occurred in Poland in 1933-1934, both at the international and domestic levels, highly influenced the situation of the Silesian and the Jewish societies of the Silesian *Voivodeship* in 1934 and in subsequent years.

According to the postwar treaties, the borders of the newly created successor states (among them Poland) were drawn not entirely according to the lines in which different ethnic groups were settled. Therefore, some of these groups were divided by the new frontiers and the term 'national minority' started to be used. Accordingly, as a result of these peace trea-

ties and agreements, following the change in the border, these new minorities obtained special rights. These rights aimed to allow the members of ethnic groups to keep their own languages, customs and religion within the new states.

In the area of Upper Silesia, where the eventual German-Polish border had to pass, the process of creating minority rights legislation took longer in comparison to some other European border areas, since according to the Treaty of Versailles the final border could only be created after the plebiscite which was to take place two years later in March 1921. Therefore, until the final decision from the plebiscite, both the German and Polish governments tried to influence the non-national Jewish and Silesian border populations to be 'nationalized' according to their own demands.

The Silesian Test Case

In the case of the Silesian group, I concentrate on one of the most important litmus tests for nationalization – the education system. Here the significance of the changes pursuant to the process of *Polonization* was substantial. On the one hand, a new Polish language education system was created. On the other hand, minority schools for the German-speaking population were set up. In fact, the two types of state schools divided children from the same society, in the same area, and tried to create, in a brief time, two different national affiliations – Polish and German. Methodologically, the process is observed largely from 'above', i. e. from the authorities' correspondence, directives, school programs and reports. The whole study of this section, dedicated to *Polonization* within the Silesian minority, will be in the background or the *leitmotif* of the international diplomatic discussions, and the supervision which the League of Nation carried out in the area until 1934.

Dealing with the Silesian society one should take into account that in fact there were three major ethnic groups which inhabited the area of Upper Silesia. Gradually, due to the process of industrialization in the region and the development of its rich coal mines, these groups of the former rural local population in their new places of work became commingled with the Germans or the German-speaking educated manager team and the ethnic Slavic-speaking workers coming from northern or eastern border areas of Prussia, Russia or Galicia.

Each group brought its own language or dialect which with time, due to coexistence and common work, created a *pidgin* and later a special

creole language, whose versions differed from one area to another in Silesia. In addition, during the nineteenth century, especially during its second half (in some measure in opposition to the *Kulturkampf* of Bismarck), and at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Polish nationalists from the Great Poland area started to be active within the Silesian societies, teaching them Polish and attempting to inculcate the ideals of the Polish national revival.[2]

The first group was represented by Silesians, both Catholics and Protestants, living in Eastern Lower Silesia. The second group was the Moravs (or *Morawce* in Czech), a Catholic group which belonged to the archdiocese of Olmütz. In the first half of the twentieth century they lived mostly in the southern part of Upper Silesia.[3] The third ethnic group is the Upper Silesian one, whose members called themselves Silesians. In order to avoid a mismatch in my study, I will call this group Silesian as well, following therefore their self-definition. It is a mostly Catholic German-Slavic *creole*-speaking ethnic group, who lived in most of Upper Silesia and belonged to the Breslau (and later after the border was shifted, Katowice) archdiocese and used the western-Slavonic dialect.[4]

Nationalization through Education

The education of school children, which was an issue in the previous centuries, was an influential tool of nationalization and together with other forms of social communication has been applied by the state bureaucracy and authorities in different areas in the world. Viewing multiple test cases from Europe, Asia and the United States, one notices a similar

[2] Marek Czapliński, 'Śląsk w 2. połowie XIX i na początku XX wieku (1851–1918)', in Marek Czapliński, Elżbieta Kaszuba, eds., *Historia Śląska* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2007), 326-384; Tomasz Kamusella, *Silesia and Central European Nationalisms: The Emergence of National and Ethnic Groups in Prussian Silesia and Austrian Silesia, 1848–1918* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2007), 72-84, 272-274; Tomasz Kamusella, *Szlonska mowa: Język, Górny Śląsk i nacjonalizm*, vol. 2 (Zabrze: Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, 2006), 67-81; Hunt T. Tooley, *National Identity and Weimar Germany: Upper Silesia and the Eastern Border, 1918-1922* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 14-20.

[3] More about *Wasserpolnisch* cf. Kamusella, *Silesia*, 126; Timothy K. Wilson, *Frontiers of Violence: Conflict and Identity in Ulster and Upper Silesia, 1918–1922* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 69-71.

[4] Kamusella, *Szlonska mowa*, vol. 2, 33-38; Tomasz Kamusella, *Szlonsko: Esej o regionie i mieszkańcach* (Zabrze: Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, 2006), 72-82.

use of an education system by the authorities in different historical periods. The differences between the test cases were caused by the geographical and social circumstances of each area in the world, while the main structure of the relationship between the social communications (among them the educational system) and the powers remained rather the same.

In Eastern-Central Europe the matter of schoolchildren's education became one of the most important components in the fight for the self-definition of the newly recognized national-linguistic minorities within the borders of the interwar successor states. After 1918 this demand became a particular challenge, since the new borders did not suit the ethnic shapes of the local populations. This was often done against their own desire for a national-ethnic division, already expressed in the mid-nineteenth century. From these minorities' point of view, the collapse of the empires and the newly established frontiers did not assist them in reaching their goals.[5] Robert Evans has analyzed the tense relationships among the Czechs, Slovaks and the Hungarians after 1918 within the Czechoslovakian State.[6] Demands for the education of children in the language of the minorities already existed before World War I and strengthened after the war within the newly created borders.

For instance, this was the case not only among the Upper Silesians, but also in the German and Danish societies in the area of Schleswig. In this bi-lingual territory which had been disputed for a long period at the end of the nineteenth century, two national movements started to develop in a parallel way – the German and the Danish ones. After the plebiscite of 1920, the area was divided, with the northern part of Schleswig passing to Denmark. There the studies of Danish language were renewed, while the German minority immediately started to prepare and develop a German-speaking education system. The Danish minority in Germany started to work to mirror the Danish-speaking school education.[7]

Within the Sorbian population in the areas of Lusatia (Lausitz), the education of children before and after World War I was conducted in

[5] Robert J. W. Evans, *Austria, Hungary, and the Habsburgs: Central Europe c. 1683–1867* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 129-132.

[6] Robert J. W. Evans, 'Hungarians, Czechs, and Slovaks: Some Mutual Perceptions, 1900–1950', in Mark Cornwall, Robert J. W. Evans, eds., *Czechoslovakia in a Nationalist and Fascist Europe 1918–1948* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 109-122.

[7] Karen Marghrethe Pedersen, 'Die deutsche Minderheit in Dänemark und die dänische Minderheit in Deutschland', in Robert Hinderling, Ludwig M. Eichinger, eds., *Handbuch der mitteleuropäischen Sprachminderheiten* (Tübingen: Günter Narr Verlag, 1996) [hereafter: *Handbuch*], 32-56, here 38-41.

German, and the Sorbian language was used in the private but not in the public sphere. There was a difference in the authorities' treatment of the Lower Lusatia (Niederlausitz) of the Sorbian minority, which belonged to Prussia, and the Upper Lusatia (Oberlausitz), which belonged to Saxony and was rather tolerant of the national Sorbian movement.[8]

A fight for education in the 'national mother tongue' and against the *Germanization* of the Czech children was promoted by local nationalists in the Czech lands from the second half of the nineteenth century through the beginning of the twentieth century.[9]

Among the many other cases of the Central-European border minorities that experienced several geopolitical and linguistic shifts, I will mention one of the most linguistically complicated cases, that of the Croatians within the south European area of Ödenburg / Sopron between Austria and Hungary. Within the territory of Hungary between the wars, the Croatian community, similarly to other European minorities, started to organize Croatian speaking-cultural centers, and even more significantly, a Croatian-speaking school system.[10] In contradistinction to the Silesian case, because of its difference from the two other official languages of the area, the language of the Croatian minority was interpreted neither by the Austrian nor by the Hungarian authorities as 'German' or 'Hungarian', which protected the minority from the further *Germanization* or *Magyarization* in linguistic terms. Therefore, the Croatian society could continue to keep its linguistic self-definition more clearly than the Silesian population, whose language became a base which was then given a national German or Polish interpretation by the authorities.

The Jewish Test Case

In the case of the Jewish community, I concentrate on the B'nai B'rith Silesian lodges *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* to which the German-speaking elite of the Jewish population of Katowice belonged. My study examines the process of nationalization, or in other wards *Polonization*, which occurred among this voluntary, adult, mostly educated and mid-to-upper

[8] Madlena Norberg, 'Die Sorben-slawisches Volk im Osten Deutschlands', in Handbuch, 61-77, here 61-63.

[9] Zahra Tara, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1948* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2008), 16-39.

[10] Ralph Jodlbauer, 'Die Burgenländer Kroaten', in *Handbuch*, 77-118, here 81-84.

level society. However, being the biggest and the most influential lodge in the area of Polish Upper Silesia, *Concordia* plays a leading role in my research. The second Silesian lodge this dissertation mentions together along with *Concordia* is *Michael Sachs* (which was located in Königshütte or Królewska Huta and later – Chorzów). It did not belong to the community of Katowice and often depended on the decisions of *Concordia*.

The Jewish group had started to settle in Upper Silesia at the beginning of the eighteenth century after receiving the *Toleranzpatent* from the Emperor Charles VI. At the end of the eighteenth century, the ideas of the French Revolution, together with the ideas of the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskala) and other state changes, brought the Jewish population in Prussia towards a process of increasing freedoms.

Several Prussian laws, especially the 1812 *Edikt betreffend die bürgerlichen Verhältnisse der Juden* when the Jews gained the status of *citizens*, gave the Jews of Upper Silesia a freedom of settlement, possession of property, choice of profession, and opportunity for study at the universities. When Kattowitz gained city status in 1865, a small Jewish community already existed there, which grew rapidly in the following years.[11]

The Independent Order of B'nai B'rith (Sons of the Covenant) was founded in New York by German Jewish migrants in 1843, with its aim being humanity, tolerance and charity. Some of these migrants in their past had belonged to Freemasonry and para-Masonic organizations, and following those traditions, the new organization was created according to the Freemasonic structure. The organization was called the 'Order', its departments named 'lodges' and its members 'brothers'. After the first lodges of B'nai B'rith started to appear outside the United States, they became subordinated to the 'Grand Lodges' (one for each state) which represented the local lodges at the state level, dealt with their issues, and were subordinated directly to the Grand Lodge of the United States. The Order established a special initiation rite, which in the case of B'nai B'rith was based on Jewish mysticism as well as important milestones from Jewish history and mythology. The first activists of the Order sought to

[11] Jacob Cohn, *Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde Kattowitz O.S.* (Kattowitz: Buch und Kunstdruckerei Berlitz, 1900), 1-46; Gabriela Wąs, 'Dzieje Śląska od 1526 do 1806 roku', in Czapliński, Kaszuba, *Historia Śląska*, 122-275, here 244-245; Czapliński, 'Śląsk', 284-285, 330; Marcin Wodziński, 'Languages of the Jewish Communities in Polish Silesia (1922–1939)', *Jewish History* 16, 2 (2002), 131-160. More about the history of Silesian Jews cf. Marcin Wodziński, '"Walking in the Steel Boots of Faith ...": Anti-Semitic Journalism in the Voivodship of Silesia 1922–1939', in Marcin Wodziński, Janusz Spyra, eds., *Jews in Silesia* (Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka, 2001), 99-124.

bring together different parts of Jewish society and to unify them under the ethical and intellectual values of Judaism.[12]

In 1882, the Order founded its first European lodge in Berlin, for the first time expanding the field of its activity beyond the borders of the United States. The German Order had numerous ties to the districts in the United States and different European countries, and also provided material assistance particularly to the Jews in Eastern Europe and to the development of Jewish studies in different universities. Its program, in addition to charity, also focused on emphasizing Jewish identity, Jewish history and traditions in a modern, scholarly way, and it spread rapidly through the German Reich.

In connection with the plebiscite on the partition of Upper Silesia, the Order had mobilized its members to participate in the referendum, as had most of the German-Jewish organizations, urging them to vote for this area to remain under German State control. After certain parts of Upper Silesia fell to the control of the Polish Republic in 1921, several lodges that had belonged to the German District now found themselves in Polish State territory. The three Upper Silesian lodges (later called just 'Silesian lodges'), which were shifted with the border were: the *Concordia* lodge in Kattowitz, the *Michael Sachs* lodge of Königshütte and the *Austria* (and later *Ezra*) lodge in Bielitz.

Concordia was amongst the oldest B'nai B'rith lodges in Germany, created as the fourth German lodge. It was founded in 1883 and was the largest among the three lodges in Eastern Upper Silesia (and later the third largest lodge in the territory of Poland).[13] The *Michael Sachs* lodge was founded in 1903. The third lodge in Bielitz was established in 1889, but had less in common with the two other lodges, since Bielitz was located in the Cieszyn Silesia. The region of Cieszyn Silesia had belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire and not to Prussia, as *Concordia* and *Michael*

[12] Hanna Domańska, *Gdański Zakon Synów Przymierza: Dzieje żydowskiego wolnomularstwa w Gdańsku i Sopocie lata 1899–1938* (Gdynia: Uraeus, 2002), 74-80; Cornelia Wilhelm, *Deutsche Juden in Amerika: Bürgerliches Selbstbewusstsein und jüdische Identität in den Orden B'nai B'rith und Treue Schwestern, 1843–1914* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2007), 60-81; Leon Chajn, 'Związek Stowarzyszeń Humanitarnych B'nei B'rith w II Rzeczypospolitej', in Leon Chajn, *Wolnomularstwo w II Rzeczypospolitej* (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1975), 517-577; Bogusława Czajecka, *Archiwum Związku Żydowskich Stowarzyszeń Humanitarnych 'B'nei B'rith' w Krakowie (1892–1938)* (Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 1994), 9-11.

[13] Ludwik Hass, *Ambicje, rachuby, rzeczywistość: Wolnomularstwo w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej 1905–1928* (Warszawa: PWN, 1984), 333.

Sachs lodges had. Being located in Bielitz, *Ezra* eventually had different traditions and was active among different parts of the population than the two other German Prussian Silesian lodges.

An archive of the Polish Grand B'nai B'rith Lodge was located in Kraków. In 1924, when the Polish District XIII was created, Leon Ader, a prominent lawyer who was educated in Vienna and was a bilingual German-Polish speaker and a well-known Order activist, was chosen to be its head.[14] During all the years of his tenure, Ader conducted a broad correspondence with multiple B'nai B'rith lodges in Poland and abroad: in Europe, the United States and Palestine. Therefore, in addition to its wide international correspondence preserved it its archive, the Grand Lodge kept all the information and correspondence which had any link to all the lodges in general, and to each one in particular within the whole territory of interwar Poland.[15]

Internal Chronology and Description of Chapters

This study focuses on the Jewish and Silesian cases during the same time period. Each of these cases demands a different internal chronology. Despite the similar minority status of these two communities within the Silesian *Voivodeship*, their character, structure and history created milestones which differed one from another. The same methodological approach which this research applies to both these cases demands a different examination of each category: either from 'above' or from 'below', in the international context or in the internal Polish, in the European oriented collaboration with a League of Nations and the Hague Court or in the context of the Jewish organizational network, which was oriented towards the United States. Finally, the nature of each case: a new education system for children oriented towards the future versus the well-established adult organization which had to deal with the 'here' and 'now', also dictates a different chronological approach.

[14] More about the Viennese Jewish culture and the Viennese B'nai B'rith in the turn of the century and during the World War I see in David Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna and the First World War* (London: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001).

[15] More about the 'Jewish Plot' theory and its sources see in Johannes Heil, *'Gottesfeinde' – 'Menschfeinde': Die Vorstellung von jüdischer Weltverschwörung (13. bis 16. Jahrhundert)* (Essen: Klartext, 2006), 9-64.

Therefore, the sub-chapters of this book will be divided according to this internal chronology of the two groups, sometimes overlapping one another and sometimes not. In the Silesian case, to which the first part of this study is dedicated, the first sub-chapter generally deals with the period of 1922–1926, from the signing of Geneva Convention until the *Coup* by Piłsudski. This chapter will be divided through emphasizing certain milestones which followed the process of the creation and development of the education system in the Silesian *Voivodeship*. This study plans to check the influence of the crises which took place in Germany in the autumn of 1923, the opening of German-speaking minority schools in 1924, and the process of nationalization in both types of schools through school subjects, programs and text books, mainly in 1924–1926. The subjects which were studied by Silesian children during these two years were also influenced by some important political events. I examine whether political reality was being reflected in the ideological level of the school subjects and in the outside-of-school education (for instance educational films, holidays and ceremonies, which were much more flexible than programmed studies or schoolbooks and could reflect more rapidly each internal and international political change).

In the next chapter my study deals with two cases which are almost unknown in research: the issue of what were called 'Maurer's Children' and the case of the children born 'out of wedlock' (as they were regarded during the interwar period) both of which attracted significant international attention between 1926 (when the whole matter started to appear) until 1928 (when the High Court of Justice in The Hague made its decision, which was valid until 1931). Both cases brought the questions of minority definition, bilingual children, and self-definition versus the state's demands for new citizens to the level of international discussion. These questions, which were deemed essential during the interwar period, are still vital and relevant in many parts of the world even today. Until now both cases have not been addressed in the transnational research of the Central European border areas.

Finally in the part dedicated to the *Polonization* of Silesians, I deal with the period of 1928–1933. There I try to show the implementation of the ideals of *Sanation* and the creation of the new Polish citizen in the post-*Coup* state, governed by Piłsudski until the next significant event, Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of Germany in January 1933.

In the section dealing with the members of the *Concordia* lodge and its relationships with the Polish State, the Polish Grand District, the lodges from abroad and the Jewish population of Katowice, the chronology is

divided according to the main changes which the lodge experienced during this period.

So, the first chapter of the second section focuses on the period from June 1922, when Kattowitz together with the whole region of the Eastern Upper Silesia was shifted to the Polish State, up to May 1926 when the *Coup* occurred. However, the interpretation of these events together with the further internal division of the sub-chapters differs from the Silesian case. Certainly, the shift of the region to the Polish State was of great importance for all the Silesian population. However, the signing of the Geneva Convention was the event which brought a stronger and more immediate impact on the lives of Silesians and the education of their children. At the same time, for the German Jews of Kattowitz, devoted as they were to the German State and to German culture and language, the shift to the Polish State became a traumatic and painful event, which changed the course of their lives and their surrounding reality.

The next event significant to the members of the two Silesian lodges came in 1924, the year of the creation of the Polish B'nai B'rith District. Although the lodge *Concordia* celebrated its 40-year anniversary in 1923 and earlier in that same year had refused to join the planned Polish District, it seems that 1924 was a milestone when two parts of the same organization started to share the territory of the same state, but were not unified either organizationally or ideologically.

This study will check whether in 1925, with the weak situation of the Polish State and after the Locarno Treaties were signed, this situation was interpreted differently in the case of the state authorities and the education system in the Silesian *Voivodeship* from the case of *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs*. The assumption is that during these complicated months, the Polish authorities would try to strengthen the implementation of the pro-Polish ideology within the education system of this sensitive border area. Therefore, the weakness of Poland would only alienate the German Jewish members of *Concordia* from the Polish District and strengthen their pro-German ambitions in the hopes for geopolitical changes in favor of Germany.

The next sub-chapter in the section dealing with the Silesian lodges will start and end in May 1926, focusing on the tense days immediately after the *Coup*, at the time when important developments both within the Silesian lodges and at the international organizational level took place.

The third chapter deals with the period between June 1926 until November 1927, when the Silesian lodges *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* were finally incorporated to the Polish District. I will examine the reasons for

this incorporation. Presumably, this event occurred due to the intensive negotiations internal to the Order in Poland, Germany and the United States, and due to the process of *Sanation*. The whole process of incorporation, however, can be regarded as a step towards *Polonization*.

Finally, this book focuses on 1928–1933, when *Polonization* took place among the Silesian lodges' members who had recently joined the Polish District and had started to be active in matters of Polish Jewry. Similarly to the section dedicated to the Silesian population, this chapter concludes in 1933. However, the impact of Hitler's nomination as a Chancellor and the National Socialist aftermath naturally influenced the self-definition and the activity of the members of the Silesian lodges much more than they did Silesian society in general. Although this society, especially its pro-German part, experienced changes as a result of this important world event, both at the international and the national level, the crisis which wrought the self-definition of the former German Jews was nonetheless more violent.

Therefore, in order to examine the precise changes in the self-definition of the Silesian lodges' members and to explore their meaning, I decided to add an additional chapter, dealing with the year 1933. There, this study deals with the organizational and linguistic changes which took place within *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* during that year. I would also like to check whether these changes were the results of the process of *Polonization* and whether it would be possible to say that in the end of 1933 through the beginning of 1934 this process was completed successfully.

Thus, despite the same geographic location of the two minorities, the chronological and thematic division of the chapters in both sections is not identical and is prescribed by the inner narrative of each test case. So, the mutual influence of 'macro' and 'micro' history, the influence of international diplomacy, the manner in which national identity was perceived by the authorities versus the self-definition of the two minorities, and finally the process of *Polonization* all created different accents within this internal periodization of the two minorities' thirteen-year history. Although I plan to examine each year of this period, my assumption is that in the case of education system within the Silesian community, due to this internal periodization, the main changes would appear between 1923 and 1925, from May 1926 till 1928, and during the first months of 1933. Therefore, the chapters dealing with these years focus on certain events which occurred during these years in a much more precise and detailed way than on the others.

However, in the case of the Silesian B'nai B'rith lodges, besides the concrete events of 1922 and 1924, the second part of the period of my research (from the end of 1926) is much more crucial than the first one regarding the process of *Polonization* and the shifts in the members' self-definition. As was mentioned before, a significant weight will be given to 1933, which is regarded with the same importance for these lodge members as 1922 when they were first shifted to Poland. Nevertheless, 1933 was even more critical for these former German Jews than 1922. In the beginning of this period, due to the frontiers' shift and the borders of the new state, the reality around them changed.

In 1933, these Silesian B'nai B'rith members were at the end of an almost ten year process of gradual changes, which comprised simultaneously an internal mental component and an external, organizational one, influenced by political, social and economic changes. Both these parts of the process might have had mutual impact, which prepared the members of *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* for the deep transformation within the former German Jewish brothers which occurred in 1933.

Despite these chronological and thematic differences in this book, its primary structure, comparative character, research questions, time period and the topic, allows the unification of the two main sections, creating a link between them and therefore providing a homogeneous character to the whole study. The same approach to both cases and the same methodology of working with primary sources against the background of international diplomacy will also create the scholarly frames to keep these two sections together and support their equality. In addition, these two sections are united by two main events which will open and close my book and in the same measure are crucial for both societies with which my study deals: the Upper Silesian plebiscite of 1921 and the Non-Aggression pact of 1934.

Historical Background of Upper Silesia

Now, the complicated history of Upper Silesia will be briefly outlined. In the Middle Ages, the area of Silesia belonged to the Polish rulers coming from the first Polish ruling dynasty, the Piasts. In the fourteenth century, Silesia passed to Bohemia and belonged to the Czech Crown. During the War of Austrian Succession in 1742, most of the area was moved into Prussia by King Frederick II and was then called 'The Province of

Silesia'.[16] After World War I, according to the Treaty of Versailles, the order was given to conduct plebiscites in disputed European regions in order to finally stabilize these questionable borders according to the demands of local societies and in order to clarify which society would be the major population of the new national successor states, and which group would become the official national minority.[17]

Due to its high industrial importance, the Upper Silesian region was the most significant among the areas conducting a plebiscite. The decision to be made was to determine whether the territory should be part of Germany or of the resurrected Polish State. Immediately after the end of World War I, it became an area which generated intensive international discussions and tensions, and these discussions were the background of each political or social development in the area during the interwar period. Thus, it was decided that the plebiscite was to be held on March 20, 1921 in the whole disputed area of former Prussian Upper Silesia. During the period preceding the voting, nationalist activists of both the German and the Polish states used different tactics and propaganda to persuade the voters in the region and to strengthen their national patriotism. The German-Polish tension increased and ended in a wave of unrest and violence, which was manifested in the first two Silesian Uprisings in 1919 and 1920.[18]

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[16] Evans, *Austria*, 123-124; Jolanta Tambor, *Oberschlesien-Sprache und Identität* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2011), 30-31; Tooley, *National Identity*, 7-10; Wąs, 'Dzieje Śląska', 122-275.

[17] Another two plebiscite areas were the disputable area of north Schleswig which after the plebiscite of 1920 was divided to the North Schleswig belonging to Denmark with the German minority there and to the South Schleswig belonging to Germany with the Dutch minority respectively, which was already mentioned above and the East and West Prussian areas Allenstein and Marienwerder. Cf. Sarah Wambaugh, *Plebiscites since the World War*, vol. 1 (Concord: Rumford Press, 1933), 48-103; Hunt T. Tooley, 'German Political Violence and the Border Plebiscite in Upper Silesia, 1919–1921', in *Central European History* 21, 1 (1988), at 56; Pedersen, 'Die deutsche Minderheit', 32-56. More about the interwar plebiscite area of Memel cf. Ruth Leiserowitz, *Sabbatleuchter und Kriegsverein: Juden in der ostpreußisch-litauischen Grenzregion 1812–1942* (Osnabrück: fibre Verlag, 2010), 287-312.

[18] Wilson, *Frontiers of Violence,* 28-29, 103-104; Tooley, 'German Political Violence', 58-80; Andreas Kiesewetter, *Dokumente zur italienischen Politik in der oberschlesischen Frage 1919–1921* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2001), 9-24; Tooley, *National Identity,* 141-196. More about the roots of nationalism in the East-Central European region in general and of Polish nationalism in particular cf. Miloš Řezník, *Za naši a vaši svobodu. Století polských povstání (1794–1864)* (Praha: Argo, 2006), 17-24, 323-339; Miloš Řezník, *Pomoří mezi Polskem a Pruskem. Patriotismus a identity v Královských Prusech v době dělení Polska* (Praha: Karolinum 2001), 137-140.

Nevertheless, the plebiscite took place, as arranged, on March 20 and resulted in 59.6 % of the votes in favor of Germany. After the results of the plebiscite were received, the Allies became involved in the decision as to which state (Poland or Germany) the territory should belong. In July they reached a common agreement to pass the matter to the League of Nations for a final decision on the fate of Upper Silesia. Thus, the League was the one who decided about the partition of the area.[19]

As a result, Upper Silesia was divided, leaving the area named 'Eastern Upper Silesia' on the Polish side, with Katowice as a capital of the region which was to have the character of an autonomous region. The Prussian Silesian province that remained in Germany was reorganized and divided into two provinces: Lower Silesia and Upper Silesia. Cieszyn Silesia, a smaller part of the Silesian area, which had previously belonged to Austro-Hungary, became part of the Czechoslovakian State, leaving Cieszyn Silesia with the city Cieszyn now located on the newly created Polish-Czechoslovak border.

In 1920 according to the Spa conference it was divided between the two states, yet despite the division the region continued to be a subject of dispute between Poland and Czechoslovakia.[20] After the final division of Upper Silesia, the League of Nations on May 15, 1922 worked out a Geneva Convention between Poland and Germany, or as it is called the 'Upper Silesian Convention'. In it the German and Polish states agreed upon economic and political provisions in the Upper Silesian area and signed agreements concerning minority rights for 15 years.

In order to resolve disputes and complaints from both sides, a Mixed Commission was organized. It was to receive any complaints from the Polish population in the German part and from the German population in the Silesian *Voivodeship*. The representatives of these groups also had the right to petition the League of Nations in such cases when their rights were impaired. Among its duties, the commission had to prepare letters to the Court of Justice in The Hague. The commission consisted of two German and two Polish members, and its head was the former president

[19] Wilson, *Frontiers of Violence*, 30, 105-107; Tooley, 'German Political Violence', 87-98; Kiesewetter, *Dokumente*, 38-89; Tambor, *Oberschlesien-Sprache*, 32-34.

[20] Karl Cordell, Stefan Wolf, eds., *Germany's Foreign Policy towards Poland and the Czech Republic: Ostpolitik revisited* (London: Routledge, 2005), 26-27.

of Switzerland, Felix Calonder.[21] Therefore, Upper Silesia not only belonged to two states, but also had a special international status.

These details are important since the Geneva Convention and the Mixed Commission played an essential role in the persistent struggle between the German representatives in Polish Silesia and the Polish State. In November 1921, the German activists in Polish Silesia founded the *Deutschoberschlesischer Volksbund für Polnisch-Schlesien zur Wahrung der Minderheitsrechte* (*Volksbund*) with the head office in Katowice. One of the directions of *Volksbund's* activity was submitting petitions to the League of Nations, when in their opinion, the rights of the German-speaking minority in Polish Silesia were impaired.[22]

[21] Georges Kaeckenbeeck, 'Convention Germano-Polonaise Relative A La Haute Silesie', in Georges Kaeckenbeeck, ed., *The International Experiment of Upper Silesia: A* Study *in the Working of the Upper Silesian Settlement 1922–1937* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1942), 568-822, here 573-575; Stanisław Komar, *Górnośląska Konwencja Genewska pomiędzy Polską i Niemcami 1922–1937* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Śląskiego, 1937), 14-15; Tomasz Falęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo mniejszościowe na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1922–1939* (Katowice: Śląski Instytut Naukowy w Katowicach, 1970), 24-25; Jan Łączewski, *Michał Grażyński (1890–1965): Sylwetka polityka* (Częstochowa: Wydawnictwo Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogicznej, 2000), 44-45.

[22] P. Kazet, 'Niemieckie ugrupowania polityczne w Polsce', *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, 2 (1927), 110-121, here 112-113; Stanisław Mauersberg, *Szkolnictwo powszechne dla mniejszości narodowych w Polsce w latach 1918–1939* (Warszawa: PAN, 1968), 49; Matthias Kneip, *Die deutsche Sprache in Oberschlesien: Untersuchungen zur politischen Rolle der deutschen Sprache als Minderheitensprache in den Jahren 1921–1998* (Dortmund: Universität Dortmund, 1999), 59.

I. Creation of the Polish and the German Minority Education Systems in the Silesian Voivodeship

1. 1922–1924: The Laws from the Authorities and the Reaction of the Population

After the signing of Geneva Convention, the Polish government together with the new government of the recently formed autonomous Silesian *Voivodeship* started the process of creating a new educational system. This process was extremely complicated, since '[t]he Polish State inherited from the invaders [...] three different school systems, which did not provide a sufficient basis on which to build a united education system [...]'.[1] The character and the future of one of the most important state systems were discussed by the members of the new government during 1918, when the Second Polish Republic was created.[2]

On February 20, 1919, an education committee of 31 members was established. Most of the members were persons who had close dealings with matters of education: primary, secondary and high school teachers, and professors.[3] The committee received the edicts, and sent confirmation to the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. Some of the edicts, like the 'Temporary System of the School Authorities', were controversial subjects about which there had been discussions. This law was of great importance, since its aim was the unification of the state school system and its future character. The matter of the education system's unification was, therefore, discussed for a long time and the school administration of all the state regions were constituted with a more or less similar character,

[1] Jolanta Szablicka-Żak, *Szkolnictwo i oświata w pracach Sejmu Ustawodawczego II Rzeczypospolitej* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Sejmowe, 1997), 13.

[2] Bolesław Reiner, *Wyznania i związki religijne w województwie śląskim (1922–1939)* (Opole: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Śląskiego w Opolu, 1977), 228.

[3] Szablicka-Żak, *Szkolnictwo*, 42-44.

though not before 1922.[4] The first five edicts of the committee were of the greatest importance for the new Republic. For instance, the earlier edict about the general school education for children between the ages 7-14 was ratified. Schools had to be created in every area where the number of schoolchildren was more than 40. The other four edicts dealt with the teachers: the teachers' education, their disciplinary responsibility, and the teachers' salaries. Three years later, in September 1922, the law about the professional qualifications of the teachers in the secondary schools and in the teachers' colleges was passed.[5] The edict about the German-speaking schools from February 7, 1919 superseded the law from September 12, 1917, previously issued in the Kingdom of Poland (a puppet state planned by Germany and Austro-Hungary after their conquest of the territory of the former Congress Poland in 1916-1918 that had been seized by Russia). The edict from 1919 also eliminated the German-speaking school communities and the German State School Association (*Niemiecki Krajowy Związek Szkolny*). Due to this law, the council of ministers (*Rada Ministrów*) had to define the conditions for the further existence of the German-speaking schools.[6] In the same year a new German organization (the first German school organization in the Polish Republic), Allgemeiner Deutscher Schulausschuss, was created in Bydgoszcz (former Bromberg). Its aim was patronage of the German schools in the territory of the Polish State.[7]

In general, in 1924, after four years of the existence of the Polish Sejm, '15 school laws passed (and five were amended), the construction of the new school system, of a unified system of school administration, and the matters of teachers' education were resolved and the work of the teachers at all education levels was regulated'.[8]

The Prussian education system was the most effective and the most functional one among the three which the Polish Republic inherited from the Russian, Prussian, and Austro-Hungarian states.[9] During the rapid process of creating the new system of education, the Ministry of Educa-

[4] Ibid., 53-54, 68-69; Reiner, *Wyznania,* 13-19; Wanda Garbowska, *Szkolnictwo powszechne w Polsce w latach 1932–1939* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Nauk, 1976), 13.

[5] Garbowska, *Szkolnictwo*, 18-20.

[6] Szablicka-Żak, *Szkolnictwo*, 160.

[7] Falęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo*, 15.

[8] Szablicka-Żak, *Szkolnictwo*, 105.

[9] Ibid., 17.

tion overcame multiple obstacles in the eastern parts of the state. For instance, in the former Polish Kingdom territory, no compulsory education existed before the creation of the Polish Republic and there was no common educational system. The percentage of school participation was lower than 50 percent. In 1922 about half of the children of school age still could not attend school because of a shortage of school buildings, many of which were destroyed during the war. The qualifications of the teachers were extremely low.[10]

In Galicia the percentage of participation in schools was higher, and the school system was more developed than in the Kingdom, but the pedagogical level there was low and about 95 percent of the children attended only the four years of primary school. The schoolchildren, both in the former Kingdom and in Galicia, often could not participate in the school lessons because of a basic lack of desks, heating in the classes, schoolbooks, and even clothes.[11]

Upper Silesian schools were the last ones to be reformed: that is, after the eastern schools and even after similar ones in former Prussia located in Greater Poland (Wielkopolska), or in Polish Pomerania (Pomorze Gdańskie, Pommerellen), which finally passed to the supervision of the Polish Ministry of Education in January 1920.[12] By 1922, a large part of the state's energies had been directed towards the re-creation of the system in the areas of the former Polish Kingdom (Królestwo Polskie) and to some measure in the former Austro-Hungarian lands; yet the major part of the well-organized Prussian structure of Upper Silesia was left unchanged. For instance, the division of the 26 districts was left in place: 7 urban (miejskie, Stadtkreise) and 19 rural (wiejskie, Landkreise). All these districts were divided into main and secondary school inspectorates (inspektoraty główne, inspektoraty poboczne).[13] The former city of Kattowitz and its suburban area were still to be divided into the inspectorates Katowice I, II, and III.[14]

[10] Ibid., *Szkolnictwo*, 18-20; Garbowska, *Szkolnictwo*, 16.

[11] Szablicka-Żak, *Szkolnictwo*, 17-25, 69-70.

[12] Ibid., *Szkolnictwo*, 22.

[13] The former German: 'Inspektoren im Hauptamte', 'Inspektoren im Nebenamte'.

[14] Archiwum Państwowe w Katowicach [State Archives in Katowice], Śląski Urząd Wojewódzki, Katowice [Silesian Governor's Office, Katowice, hereafter: UWSL], 27, Wydział Społeczno-Polityczny [Department of Social and Political Affairs, hereafter: SP] 198, p. 12.

Due to official compulsory education in the Prussian areas, all the children in Upper Silesia attended at least elementary school. In 1922, the Polish part of Upper Silesia comprised 34,400 pupils in 600 schools.[15] Here the difficulties which the Polish government experienced were different: not a poor level of teaching or a shortage of schools, but a lack of Polish-speaking teachers. Most of the teachers in the schools of Upper Silesia were German speakers, except for the Polish language instructors or the priests.[16]

In the 'Upper Silesian Convention', the German and Polish states agreed not only upon economic and political provisions for the Upper Silesian area, but also signed agreements concerning minority rights in this area for 15 years, till the year 1937.[17] The convention emphasized the role of the right to minority education. Together with other articles, article 68 (which was also article 8 of the Minorities Treaty of June 28, 1919), emphasized that the minorities both in the German and Polish areas of Upper Silesia 'shall have an equal right to establish, manage and control at their own expense [...] schools and other educational establishments, with the right to use their own language [...]'.[18] In addition, the next article, article 69, demanded that both countries provide

> [...] a public educational system [...] in areas in which a considerable proportion of Polish nationals resided who speak a language other than Polish, [have] adequate facilities for ensuring that in the elementary schools instruction shall be given to the children of such Polish nationals through the medium of their own language.[19]

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[15] Szablicka-Żak, *Szkolnictwo*, 21; Klemens Trzebiatowski, *Szkolnictwo powszechne w Polsce w latach 1918–1932*, vol. 1 (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1970), 36.

[16] Szablicka-Żak, *Szkolnictwo*, 21; Garbowska, *Szkolnictwo*, 12.

[17] Kaeckenbeeck, 'Convention', Art. 64, 601.

[18] The whole paragraph is: 'Polish nationals who belong to racial, religious or linguistic minorities shall enjoy the same treatment and security in law and in fact as the other Polish nationals. In particular they shall have an equal right to establish, manage and control at their own expense charitable, religious and social institutions, schools and other educational establishments, with the right to use their own language and to exercise their religion freely therein.', Kaeckenbeeck, 'Convention', Art. 68, 604.

[19] Ibid., Art. 69, 604-605. In these articles the two vague terms: 'a considerable proportion' and 'other than Polish speech' opened the door to multiple discussions and correspondences between the Polish authorities, the inhabitants of the area, the pro-German and pro-Polish organizations and the League of Nations in the matter of the minorities' schools in the following years. The same was true of the next phrase in the same article: 'This provision shall not prevent the Polish government from making the teaching of the Polish language obligatory in the said schools.' Later on, this rather ambiguous sentence received

Articles 105-132, dedicated to matters of education, placed upon both states the obligation to maintain educational institutions for minorities, both public and private, in the language of these minorities. In these articles certain details prescribed the future function of these institutes, their maintenance and their legal and economic status, which had to be similar to the other state's educational institutions. In addition, the rights of the schoolchildren and the teachers are detailed. For instance, in order to open an elementary school for a minority, a minimum of 40 children of non-Polish speakers but Polish nationals from the same school district was required.[20] In order to open a secondary school, for a minority there had to be at least 200 such pupils. The opening of the higher state schools demanded at least 300 applications from those legally responsible for the children.[21] The teachers in the minority schools and classes also had to belong to this minority, and to teach in the minority's language.[22]

However, the Geneva Convention demanded as well a measure of loyalty from the minorities towards the state they lived in, with article 133 insisting that 'in the lessons given at school, the national and intellectual qualities [...] are not improperly depreciated in the eyes of the pupils'.[23] It seems that this requirement was later useful to the Polish authorities in their desire to promote Polish identity in the minority schools.

It is possible to see, therefore, that from the very beginning of the existence of the Silesian *Voivodeship*, its school system depended in large measure on the appropriate articles of the Geneva Convention, and, sometimes, on the possibility of their liberal interpretation.[24] It meant not only the obligation to create a minority, German-speaking school system, but also to accept the fact that a large part of the Silesian citizens in the

a slightly different interpretation from the Polish government regarding the number of hours of the Polish language in the minority schools.

[20] Ibid., Art. 106, 623. In articles 106-107 it was also decided that in the case that there were less than 40 children in the same school district, but more than 18, a minority class would be opened in the Polish speaking school.

[21] Ibid., Art. 117-122, 628-630. In the case of the secondary schools, if there were less than 200 applications, the minority classes for at least 35 pupils had to be opened, and in the case of the higher schools, when there were less than 300 applications, such classes for at least 25 pupils had to be created.

[22] Ibid., Art. 123, 630.

[23] Ibid., Art. 132, 635.

[24] More about the meaning and the interpretation of the articles dedicated to the minority language of the Geneva Convention cf. Kneip, *Die deutsche Sprache,* 62-66.

new Polish State would have to be recognized as German speakers and would grow up as Germans. The rapid and effective foundation of the minority schools reflected the measure of influence that the League of Nations had on both the German and the Polish states, and the importance of the convention in the minorities' education, in both sides of Upper Silesia.

The significance of the Geneva Convention in the beginning of the 1920s is highlighted by the fact that in other regions of the German State where no minority rights provisions were made, minority schools were seldom established during almost the whole of the interwar period.[25] In Poland, which due to the Small Treaty of Versailles had to support the education of its minorities in the whole territory of the state, the matters of minority schools in the Silesian *Voivodeship* received special importance and attention.[26]

A short time after the signing of the convention, the Polish State started the process of creating minority schools in the Silesian *Voivodeship*. Apparently, even after the final decisions of the League of Nations and the signing of the Geneva Convention, the Polish authorities still were not particularly concerned about the results from such a step and doubted whether it would damage the 'national interests'.[27]

In autumn 1923, the representative of Poland in the Mixed Commission wrote a letter to the *Voivode* (the governor) of the Silesian *Voivodeship* regarding the matter of opening minority schools. There the

[25] Waclaw Łypacewicz, 'Liczba Niemców w Polsce i Polaków w Niemczech', *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, 2 (1927), 121-126; Richard Blanke, *Orphans of Versailles: The Germans in Western Poland, 1918-1939* (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1993), 206. It seems that after 1926 in the German State some improvements were made concerning the legal status of the schools for Danish minority, cf. Eugeniusz Zdrojewski, 'Szkolnictwo polskie w Niemczech', *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, 1 (1933), 5-28, here 18-19. In the end of 1928 the German government issued a 'Decree for the Regulation of the School System for the Polish Minority.' However, the restrictions against the minority schools in Germany were renewed from 1933, cf. Edward D. Wynot, 'The Poles in Germany 1919-1939', *East European Quarterly* 30, 2 (Summer 1996), 172-187.

[26] Szablicka-Żak, *Szkolnictwo*, 133-142; Mauersberg, *Szkolnictwo powszechne*, 15-25; Falęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo*, 23-24. The paragraphs of the Small Treaty of Versailles concerning the education of the minorities were much more abstract than the ones of the Geneva Convention in the same matter. Unlike the Geneva Convention, they lacked more concrete information and details concerning the minority education in Poland and, therefore, were given to interpretation and even neglect.

[27] UWSL, 27, Wydział Oświecenia Publicznego [Department of Education and Public Improvement, hereafter: OP] 1120, p. 10.

representative emphasized the importance of opening such schools, since negative decisions by the Polish government in these matters would affect the Polish minority in the German part of Upper Silesia.[28] As a result, both Polish and German minorities became simultaneously 'hostages' in the states they lived in; the conditions for one depended on the conditions of the other.

The process of creating the minority schools was accompanied by a protest from the pro-Polish Silesian population, especially in the rural areas. Indeed, a certain wave of such protests started in 1923, when in the autumn of that year the first minority schools in the *Voivodeship* were opened, according to the decision of the Mixed Commission, and these protests continued until 1924.[29] However, not the local population, but mostly the pro-Polish or the Polish nationalist patriotic organizations organized letters of protest, petitions and protest gatherings against the opening of the minority schools in the Silesian *Voivodeship*.[30] Nonetheless, altogether the complaints against the opening of the German-speaking schools in Polish Silesia were few; in general they came from four places. Protests were lodged from several villages and towns: Nowa Wieś, Knurów, Rybnik and Siemianowice.[31]

In Nowa Wieś, a local pro-Polish community wrote an official protest against the opening of the German-speaking school in their municipality. The protesters emphasized that their community was 'a clearly Polish community' and saw the opening of the minority school as a continuation of the Prussian process of Germanization in the present Polish State.[32] They neither objected to the Germans nor the German-speaking applicants for minority schools, but the 'current deafness and the defects of the government'.[33]

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[28] UWSL, 27, OP 1120, p. 10. '[...] protection of the Polish Upper Silesia from the certain detriments or national injuries can in the mutual way affect the interests of the Polish minority in the German part of Upper Silesia.'

[29] UWSL, 27, OP 1120, p. 9.

[30] For instance, Związek Obrony Kresów Zachodnich, Towarzystwo Polek, Związek Powstańczy, Związek Sokół, Związek Harcerzy, Związek Zarządu Oświaty, and others. UWSL, 27, OP 1128.

[31] UWSL, 27, OP 1128, pp. 2, 3, 6, 7-11.

[32] UWSL, 27, OP 1128, pp. 2-3. 'The Nowa Wieś community is a Polish workers' community, where there are no any real Germans ... we did not fight for the further germanization in Poland.'

[33] UWSL, 27, OP 1128, p. 2.

These words both 'cancelled' the eligibility of the applications, since they were made only by *Germanized* Poles and not by Germans, and what is more they showed the authorities what pitiable results improper governmental policy could create.

An additional meaning hidden in these words was the manifestation of a tension that continued in the Silesian *Voivodeship* even after the shifting of the border. These people had recently experienced the World War and heard about the geopolitical changes in which new states arose and Germany lost its territories. They went through the plebiscite, the uprisings, the shifting of the border and the new reality within Poland, which itself was not unified at all. The general political situation both in Germany and in Poland during the years 1921-1923 was unstable.

Just a year after the war with the Soviet Union and the Riga peace treaty, Poland again felt a threat from its western and eastern neighbours arising from the Treaty of Rapallo signed between Germany and Soviet Union in April 1922, when both states normalized their diplomatic relations.[34] Because of the Polish-Lithuanian War and the debates that followed about the final frontiers, the future of the Polish eastern borders was unclear as well. Lithuania did not recognize the demarcation line established by the League of Nations. Long-lasting disputes over Wilno (or Vilnius) and the broken-off diplomatic relations with Lithuania did not encourage stability within the Polish State.[35]

The economic situation was no better than the political one: inflation rose and financial instability increased. At the end of 1922 domestic matters ended in a crisis as well; the first Polish president, Gabriel Narutowicz, was assassinated by one of his right-wing opponents five days after being elected. At this point, Piotr Wandycz described the situation as follows: 'Poland found itself on the brink of a civil war.'[36]

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[34] Mauersberg, *Szkolnictwo powszechne*, 10; Werner Benecke, *Die Ostgebiete der Zweiten Polnischen Republik: Staatsmacht und Öffentliche Ordnung in einer Minderheitenregion 1918–1939* (Köln: Böhlau Verlag, 1999), 24-25; Carole Fink, 'Beyond Revisionism: The Genoa Conference of 1922', in Carole Fink, Axel Frohn, eds., *Genoa, Rapallo, and European Reconstruction in 1922* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 11-28.

[35] William Fiddian Reddaway, *The Cambridge History of Poland*, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 532-534; Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Price of Freedom: A History of East Central Europe from the Middle Ages to the Present* (London: Routledge, 1992), 201-203.

[36] Piotr S. Wandycz, *The United States and Poland* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1980), 184.

One can say, therefore, that in the first years of its existence, the Polish Republic was a new-born state, assembled from three dissimilar parts with different political, economic, and social traditions, whose borders were unsettled, whose government and administration lacked a unified point of view, and whose existence was not ensured.

It seems that a large part of the Silesian population, even the pro-Polish one, for various reasons was disappointed with the Polish state and government policy and, therefore, took a cautious approach towards the process of *Polonization*, on the one hand, and the process of creating minority schools on the other.[37] Therefore, a large part of the Silesian population either preferred to send their children to the German-speaking schools, or to maintain a neutral position towards these schools. The sources show that the process of the opening of the minority schools was not unified from the perspective of the central Polish government, from that of the local authorities, and from the local population as well.

On July 3, 1923 the Silesian *Voivode* sent all the school inspectors of the Silesian *Voivodeship* a directive demanding that they consider all the applications to the minority schools before the beginning of the school year 1923-1924. These applications had to be given by the persons who were legally responsible for the education of the children and submitted 9 months prior to the beginning of the school year. At this stage, in order to determine the mother tongue of the child it was enough to make an oral or written declaration by the person legally responsible for the child.[38]

One of the matters under intense discussion during the summer and autumn months of 1923, during the process of creating schools for the minorities, was the problem of an 'improper application', or the retraction of applications by the parents. According to article 106 of the Geneva Convention, in order to open a minority primary school there had to be a minimum of 40 applications. Very quickly a problem arose; even when there were many more than 40 applications from the school area, some of them were rejected because they were not properly submitted. In addition, others were withdrawn by the applicants themselves, sometimes leaving less than the forty necessary applications.

Several letters from the different areas of the Silesian *Voivodeship* were sent to the central authorities. There the inspectors claimed that because

[37] Judy Batt, Katarzyna Wolczuk, eds., *Region, State, and Identity in Central and Eastern Europe* (London / New York: Frank Cass Publishers, 2002), 115.

[38] UWSL, 27, OP 1120, pp. 1-3.

of the insufficient number of applications (after disqualifying the improper ones and the multiple retractions), the minority schools in these areas could not open.[39] The relatively large number of such cases might suggest that they were biased and wanted to prevent the opening of these schools. One might assume that at least a part of the sudden retractions were probably made under social or economic pressure from the local community or the local authorities. This assumption is supported by a letter from the Polish representative in the Mixed Commission and the government of the Silesian *Voivodeship* to all the counties (*starostwa*), the school inspectors, the police directors, and the city councils of the *Voivodeship*. It emphasized the importance of preventing any cases of 'violence or terror aimed at inducing the submitting or the cancelling of applications to create the minority school institutions'.[40] Another measure adopted to prevent forced retractions was the decision to create the minority schools with the number of applications submitted at the beginning of the process, and not from the final number. In addition, the following school year it was decided to accept children whose parents had recently retracted their applications.[41]

It seems that since the end of the school year (from the summer of 1922 and during the autumn of 1923, when the German-Polish borders in the area shifted), there was a limited amount of organized instruction for the schoolchildren. Many of the German-speaking teachers moved to Germany and not enough Polish-speaking teachers were present in the area of the new Polish Silesia.[42] However, on November 22, 1923, when the minority schools had already been officially opened, the *Volksbund* sent the Silesian *Voivode* a reminder of the letter that had been sent a month earlier. In that letter, the organization demanded that minority schools open for 6,680 schoolchildren from the whole *Voivodeship*.[43] In the meantime, a certain number of the Polish-speaking schools were already open in Polish Silesia. Some of the above-mentioned children

[39] UWSL, 27, OP 1129, p. 93.

[40] UWSL, 27, OP 1120, pp. 4-5. Against these acts the above mentioned authorities had 'to oppose with the whole energy and to use with the whole severity the law prescriptions, mandatory in this matter'.

[41] UWSL, 27, OP 1120, pp. 4-5.

[42] UWSL, 27, OP 1129, pp. 1-4.

[43] UWSL, 27, OP 1129, pp. 1-4. In general, the amount of the schoolchildren, mentioned by the *Volksbund* was 6,774. However, 94 of them attended the German Evangelical school, which had three classes and, as it seems from the document, was private.

were directed to the Polish-speaking schools, in spite of their parents' applications to the minority schools. These children were called 'Poles' by the Polish authorities and 'Germans' by both the *Volksbund* and the parents during their registration. The *Volksbund* tried to make its own 'gradation' of the 'Germanness' of the children who applied to the minority schools. It differentiated among various groups: first, those who were 'clear' (*reine*) Germans, that is, children who did not know the Polish language and whose parents did not talk to one another in Polish. Then there were those German children who knew both German and Polish, and then children who belonged to the Evangelical community, but spoke only Polish. However, all these groups were considered by the organization as 'Germans'. Hence, one can see here the vagueness of the term 'nationality' or the 'language affiliation' of these children from the beginning of the division into the language schools and the first attempts to create a 'nation' in Polish Upper Silesia.

This letter of the *Volksbund* is also evidence of an additional matter in the process of the creation of these minority schools. The Polish authorities, after active debates and a process of preparation for opening schools in the autumn of 1923, ended up delaying the opening of the German-speaking minority schools in the area. This decision was probably related to the political situation in Germany, which in the autumn of 1923 was close to a crisis. On September 26, Germany declared a state of emergency due to the economic disaster and the violence in the Ruhr area. On the same day the new Chancellor, Gustav Stresemann, called an end to the passive protests against the French and the Belgian occupation of Ruhr.[44] One could argue that it was a measure of reconciliation within the German government to sacrifice this area to France and Belgium.

Less than a month later, in October-November, the separatist movements increased their activity and seized power in the south-western parts of Germany. In the Rhineland, through a *coup* on October 21, a *Rhenish Republic* with a separatist government supported by France was created.[45] Three days later, on October 23-24, during the Hamburg Uprising, the German Communist Party tried to seize power in the city area. Two

[44] Jonathan Wright, *Gustav Stresemann: Weimar's Greatest Statesman* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 202-206; Eberhard Kolb, *Die Weimarer Republik* (München: Oldenbourg, 2002), 51-53.

[45] Ibid., 53; Margaret Pawley, *The Watch on the Rhine: The Military Occupation of the Rhineland, 1918–1930* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007), 67-72; Ruth Henig, *The Weimar Republic, 1919–1933* (New York: Routledge, 1998), 36.

weeks later, on November 8-9, the *Munich Putsch* occurred.[46] Three days after this attempt, in neighbouring Palatinate, a *Government of the Palatinate Autonomy* was formed.[47]

With these circumstances, the Polish government could take a wait-and-see position, since the state of things in Germany could change at any moment. One of its considerations may have been that German Upper Silesia would follow the fate of the Ruhr area, and therefore the future of the area and of the Geneva Convention agreements would be vague. Probably, there may have been a slight hope that, using the model of the Ruhr area as background along with the recently created autonomous regions, the unstable political situation and the economic crisis of Germany, the European powers would revise the borders of the whole of Upper Silesian area in favour of Poland. France, a strong ally of Poland after its support of the *Rhenish Republic* and its invasion of Ruhr, could eventually assist in a similar act in the coal region on the eastern German border.[48]

However, just a month later, in December 1923 and into the beginning of 1924, both the political situation in Germany and the situation of minority education in Poland changed. The newly born autonomous regions collapsed and the German authorities returned to these areas; a new Coalition Government was created. France reached an agreement with Germany and left the Ruhr area. On December 8, Germany signed an economic treaty with the United States, which was the beginning of economic improvement in conjunction with the subsequent Dawes Plan.[49] Whether or not the Polish government had an illusory expectation of a probable re-uniting of the whole of Upper Silesia under the Second Polish Republic, it had to give up this idea. The delayed process of creating the minority schools in the Silesian *Voivodeship* was taken up anew.

On January 14, 1924 a first lyceum for minority German-speaking girls opened. The planned opening of a minority high school (*liceum*) could not be accomplished because of a 'lack of teaching staff'. Instead, on

[46] Kolb, *Die Weimarer Republik*, 54-55; Henig, *The Weimar Republic*, 36-37.

[47] Celia Applegate, *A Nation of Provincials: The German Idea of Heimat* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 144-146.

[48] Henryk Bułhak, 'Sojusze systemu wersalskiego: Warszawa – Paryż – Bukareszt – Praga', in Andrzej Koryn, ed., *Od Wersalu do Poczdamu: Sytuacja międzynarodowa Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej 1918–1945* (Warszawa: PAN, 1996), 43-63, here 45-47, 51.

[49] Kolb, *Die Weimarer Republik*, 66-70; Gottfried Niedhart, *Die Außenpolitik der Weimarer Republik* (München: Oldenbourg, 2006), 18-19.

December 31, 1923, the secondary school (*szkoła średnia*) for boys opened.[50] In August 1924 the City Council of Katowice announced the opening of a higher vocational school (*Oberrealschule*) and with instructions about how to register to study there. However, the city authorities still could not find enough German-speaking teachers who were required to be Polish citizens. According to the letter of the *Volksbund* to the *Voivode*, there were discussions during the spring and the summer months about whether the teachers with German citizenship could teach in this state minority high school.[51]

Nevertheless, at the same time, during the summer of 1924, the city council made efforts on the one hand to finalized the teaching personnel for the school before the beginning of the school year, and by this act to satisfy the higher authorities and the German organizations. On the other hand, the attempts made to complete the list of the school personnel only included those who were Polish citizens. Two weeks before the beginning of the classes, the city authorities were still looking for a history and geography teacher.[52] Nevertheless, the school opened, officially named *Miejskie Gimnazjum Matematyczno-Przyrodnicze im. Mikołaja Kopernika*, and consisting of 13 Polish-speaking and 9 German-speaking departments.[53]

2. 1924–1926: Educational Materials in Both Types of Schools; School Libraries, Teachers, Educational Films, Religion in the Schools: The Fight against the Reduction of Polish Language Lessons in the Minority Schools

It seems that until May 1926 (when both the *Sanation* politics of Piłsudski and *Polonization* of the Silesian *Voivodeship* by the new *Voivode* Michał Grażyński intensified) there was no organized policy of *Polonization* in the area of Polish Silesia, including in the sphere of education.[54] The Polish government and the local authorities did issue and carry out laws

[50] UWSL, 27, OP 1139, pp. 36-37.

[51] UWSL, 27, OP 1139, pp. 11-13, 45.

[52] UWSL, 27, OP 1139, p. 45.

[53] UWSL, 27, OP 862, p. 1.

[54] Kneip, *Die deutsche Sprache,* 70-71.

dealing with the opening of the Polish-speaking and the minority schools in Silesia. The wave of new teachers, who were native Polish speakers from the eastern parts of Poland, also made their contribution. However, one can say that in 1924–1926 there was still no planned and systematic way for promoting the language and the values of the new state to the schoolchildren, both in the Polish-speaking and the minority schools in Silesia.[55] Within the sphere of education, the endless process of reorganization and unification of the state, in general, and the Silesian *Voivodeship* in particular, coupled with the unstable political situation of the region, numbered among the probable causes for the lack of clear a *Polonization* policy.

In addition, it seems that the Polish government had to be more careful with its politics of *Polonization* in the western parts of the country than in its eastern borders area, due to the restrictions of the Geneva Convention and the sensitivity of the League of Nations to minorities' rights there. One can see this difference in the governmental policy towards minority education in different parts of Poland in the example of *Lex Grabski* from July 1924. *Lex Grabski* was a law, passed by the Minister of Education, Stanisław Grabski. According to this law, the restrictions on minority schools in the eastern parts of Poland, especially on the minority schools in the Ukrainian language, were established. Instead of its implementation, the so-called 'utrakwistyczne' bilingual schools were created that would teach both in Polish and Ukrainian. Therefore, *Lex Grabski* clearly placed Polish as the official language in areas of eastern Poland and eastern Galicia that were not entirely Polish-speaking. As a result, the number of the Ukrainian-speaking schools declined. The new bilingual schools were perceived by the Ukrainian population as pro-Polish and assimilative, infringing upon their interests. Therefore, the number of Ukrainian private schools increased, as well as the antagonism of the Ukrainian population towards the state.[56]

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[55] Ludwik Regorowicz, *Szkolnictwo w Województwie Śląskiem 1926–1932* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Śląskiego, 1932), 5-7. This book is obviously written in a clear pro-Sanation and in pro-Piłsudski way. Nevertheless, there is a chance that the author indeed noticed and expressed some difference between the situation in Silesian education before and after May 1926.

[56] Larry Wolff, *The Idea of Galicia: History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 384; Ryszard Torzecki, *Kwestia Ukraińska w Polsce w latach 1923–1929* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1989), 95-97; Paul R. Magocsi, *A History of Ukraine* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 594; Benecke, *Die Ostgebiete*, 255-265, Mauersberg, *Szkolnictwo powszechne*, 68-86. For instance, in the

This example of the different treatment of minority rights reflects the special status of the education system in the Silesian *Voivodeship* due to League of Nations supervision, in comparison to the process of *Polonization*, which intensified during these years in other parts of Poland.

Religion

Although the issue of building *de novo* the different subjects to be taught in the school was complicated within the Polish Republic, in general, and in Silesian *Voivodeship* in particular, the issue of religion in the education system was among the most difficult and controversial. It involved essential questions, like the character of Polish public education, the relationship between Church and the State, the question of confessions 'other' than Catholic, and the measure of Church intervention in the creation of the new Polish citizen. This subject raised again the extremely complicated question of defining nationality-versus-confession-versus language. This issue existed in pre-war Upper Silesia, and continued to remain quite relevant in the new Polish Republic.

Discussions about the role of religion in the education system started together with general debates about the character of education in the future Polish Republic, even before its creation (as mentioned above).[57] In the period between November 1918 and March 1921 (i. e., between the official creation of the Polish Republic and the adoption of the Constitution) multiple debates took place among several political parties concerning the role of religion in the new state, and the relationship of the Church to the secular authorities and within the education system.[58] Most of the results were summarized in the March Constitution, which was accepted on March 17, 1921 and which proclaimed Poland a democratic republic. The Constitution emphasized the equal rights of all its citizens,

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higher classes of these bilingual schools most of the studies had to be in Polish language while the studies in Ukrainian were restricted.

[57] Bolesław Reiner, *Konkordat i jego wpływ na klerykalizację oświaty w Polsce międzywojennej* (Opole: Wydawnictwa Instytutu Śląskiego w Opolu, 1964), 3-8.

[58] For instance, there was a program by a Socialist-oriented Ksawery Prauss, the first Polish Minister of Education in years 1918–1919, where he emphasized the importance of creation of secular schools and secular school authorities. In 1919, in Warsaw, the Polish 'Teacher's Sejm' took place, were part of the debates were dedicated to the matter of the education and religion. Marian Leczyk, *Druga Rzeczpospolita 1918–1939: Społeczeństwo, Gospodarka, Kultura, Polityka* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 2006), 140-141; Reiner, *Konkordat*, 10-26.

regardless of their nationality or confession. Article 111 proclaimed: 'Citizens are guaranteed freedom of conscience and confession. No one [citizen] can be restricted in his rights as enjoyed by other citizens because of his confession and religious convictions.'[59]

The Constitution however proclaimed in Article 114 that 'the Roman Catholic confession, being the religion of the majority of the people, takes the first place among the equally important confessions in the state'.[60]

At the same time the secular character of public schools was decided, making the confessional schools a part of the private education system. Yet, Article 120 of the Constitution emphasized:

> In every academic department, whose program includes education of youth under the age of 18 and which is completely or partially supported by the state or the self-governmental bodies, the study of religion is obligatory for all the students. The management and the supervision of religion studies belongs to the proper religious association with the main right of supervision reserved to the state school authorities.[61]

Here the authors of the Constitution were trying to find a 'balance of power' between the State and the Church in important matters of education for Polish citizens. So, this statement in the Constitution was interpreted by later research, during the PRL (People's Republic of Poland), as evidence of the 'clerical' character of the Second Polish Republic.[62] Yet, one could say that matters of religion in the education system in interwar Poland were more complicated, and depended on the fragile balance between the secular and multi-confessional religious authorities, the agenda of different political parties, and on the year in which the decision was accepted. For instance, on February 10, 1925, a Concordat between the Polish State and the Holy See in the Vatican was signed. It included 27 articles, which guaranteed the Catholic Church in Poland many more rights than were given to it by the March Constitution. The Church obtained the privilege of organizing its religious and social activities according to its canon laws, and with less coordination of these matters with the Polish State. In the same year, the new Katowice diocese was finally

[59] *Konstytucja 17 Marca 1921 R.* (Warszawa: Księgarnia Gustawa Szylinga, 1921), 21.

[60] *Ibid.*, 22.

[61] *Ibid.*, 23.

[62] Bolesław Reiner, *Walka o świeckie podstawy prawne systemu oświatowego w Polsce (1918–1921)* (Opole: Wydawnictwo Instytutu Śląskiego w Opolu, 1964); Reiner, *Konkordat.*

created (the former one was in Breslau), which included all the territory of the Silesian *Voivodeship*, together with the Cieszyn Silesia.[63]

The Concordat influenced the system of education as well. Religion classes became obligatory in all the schools and the Church received the right to nominate the teachers of religion, to supervise their moral and pedagogical activity, and to remove them. Additionally, in contradiction to the March Constitution, the state school authorities could no longer be the main supervisors of religion studies, passing this right on to the Church officials.[64]

In the new Silesian *Voivodeship* there co-existed (sometimes, in the same community) pro-German Catholics and pro-Polish Catholics, pro-German Evangelicals and pro-Polish Evangelicals, along with German-speaking, Yiddish-speaking or pro-Hebrew Jews and Polish-speaking Jews. Parents in all these communities had to decide to which school to send their children: public or private, German-speaking or Polish-speaking. In the same school (especially in Katowice, where 'mixed' schools with German-speaking and Polish-speaking classes existed) during the religion lessons, pupils had be divided, in addition to their language division, and this separation sometimes did not suit their parents' self-definition.[65] According to both the March Constitution and the Geneva Convention, the state had to provide every confessional minority a right to its religious activity in its mother tongue.[66] In addition, if children in elementary schools belonged also to the 'linguistic minority' and numbered at least 12, according to the Geneva Convention, 'minority religion courses' had to be established when applied for.[67]

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[63] Reiner, *Wyznania,* 105-106, 108-109, 133-135; Jerzy Myszor, *Historia diecezji katowickiej* (Katowice: Drukarnia Archidiecezjalna, 1999), 41-44.

[64] Reiner, *Konkordat*, 8-9; Myszor, *Historia diecezji*, 194-195.

[65] For instance, one of such examples was a case in Cieszyn Silesia. There in the beginning of 1923 a Polish-speaking father of two daughters, a Pole who came from Łódź, wanted to send them to the Evangelic seminary. He wished to send both of them to the minority school, but only one of the girls was registered by the authorities in the German speaking school, the other in the Polish speaking school. Their mother belonged to the Orthodox confession, the father was Evangelic. In his application he was mostly interested that his daughters participate in any religion lessons: either the Evangelic or Orthodox. The authorities decided that the girls should grow as Evangelists, since there was no private teacher of Orthodox confession in Cieszyn. UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 1.

[66] *Konstytucja 17 Marca*, Art. 110-111 and 113, 21; Kaeckenbeeck, 'Convention', Art. 83-96, 614-618.

[67] Kaeckenbeeck, 'Convention', Art. 107, 623.

It seems that in the case of Silesia, not only did both these legal decisions overlap with one another, but they also did not take into account the complexity of the area's identities, trying to identify the population through the usual prism of either confession or language. One could therefore say that for the area of Silesia, such divisions eventually were 'artificial', sometimes dividing the same communities or societies. In this case, the 'minority language children' (pro-German Silesian Evangelicals, pro-German Silesian Catholics or pro-German Jews) could benefit from both of the legislations and demand a teacher of religion, for 12 students and not 20, as with all other groups. All the other language majorities (pro-Polish Catholics, pro-Polish Evangelicals and pro-Polish Jews), on the other hand, were subject to the decisions of the March Constitution.

It is interesting that the Jewish community of Silesia was clearly identified by both authorities through the prism of religion. Similarly to the Evangelical groups of the population, although the German-speaking Jewish children were considered a 'minority' and had the same rights from both the aforementioned pieces of legislation, the Polish-peaking Jewish pupils, even though belonging to the same confession and community, were regarded as a 'language majority' and were therefore subject to the decisions of the March Constitution.

As a result, in the Silesian *Voivodeship's* schools, religion lessons had to be given to the German-speaking Catholics, to the Polish-speaking Catholics, to the German-speaking Evangelicals, to the Polish-speaking Evangelicals and to Jewish children in the German or Polish speaking schools (there were no Yiddish public schools).

The State demanded that the school authorities make a confessional division (except for the Jewish children) together with the national one.[68] Thereby, confessional definition (at least Christian) was separated by state authorities from the national identification in the early stages of the Silesian *Voivodeship's* existence. From their point of view, language was a preferable identifier, rather than religious beliefs. Therefore, at this point it was more important to the authorities that the new Polish citizen would grow up a Polish speaker, rather than as a faithful Catholic. This statement is supported by the fact that in the March Constitution, after long debates and controversies, the character of the state public schools was stated as secular, and not as confessional.[69]

[68] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 50.

[69] Reiner, *Wyznania*, 110-113.

Taking into account the recent shifting of the borders, the constant moving of population, the exiting by large masses of the pro-German intelligentsia and priests, and the shortage of Polish-speaking teachers or Evangelical pastors, one could imagine that during the first years of the Silesian *Voivodeship's* existence, it was difficult to supply all the schools with a desirable number of religion teachers or priests for every confession in its mother tongue. In addition, there were also private confessional schools in the *Voivodeship*, which also had to be supplied with teachers of religion.[70] For instance, after the plebiscite, several Evangelical pastors and most of the teachers of evangelical confession left the territories which had to create the new Silesian *Voivodeship*.[71]

The situation of the religious education for Polish-speaking Evangelical children was among the most complicated. These pupils attended public Polish schools, but for their lessons in religion, Polish-speaking teachers of Evangelical confession were required. As was mentioned, according to the Geneva Convention there was a need for at least 12 children of the same confession in the school in order to apply for 'minority religion courses'.[72] Even though there were a number of Polish speaking Evangelicals in the interwar Silesian *Voivodeship* and there were some Polish-speaking Evangelical pastors, it seems that they were dispersed over the whole area without being concentrated in certain areas, including in the capital of the Silesian autonomous region of Katowice.

The state of things was even more complicated, since the Silesian *Voivodeship* itself was created not only from areas of former Prussian Upper Silesia, but also from former Austrian areas. The majority of Evangelicals from Cieszyn Silesia belonged to the Church of the Augsburg confession (Evangelisch-Augsburgische Kirche), which had existed since the Reformation. It was the second largest confession in the Silesian *Voivodeship* area and, in the territory of Silesia, was concentrated mostly in the Cieszyn section.

Evangelicals from the Prussian part of Silesia mostly belonged to the Prussian United Church (Unierte Evangelische Kirche). This Church was

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[70] Henryk Czembor, *Ewangelicki Kościół Unijny na Polskim Górnym Śląsku (1922–1939)* (Katowice: Didache, 1993), 60-61.

[71] Henryk Czembor, 'Kościół ewangelicki na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1919–1921', in Zbigniew Kapała, Jerzy Myszor, eds., *Kościoły i związki wyznaniowe a konflikt polsko-niemiecki na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1919–1921* (Bytom: Muzeum Górnośląskie w Bytomiu, 2005) [hereafter: *Kościoły i związki wyznaniowe*], 59-74, at 56; Czembor, *Ewangelicki Kościół Unijny*, 60.

[72] Kaeckenbeeck, 'Convention', Art. 107, 623.

established in Prussia in 1817 by King Frederick William III as a merger of the Reformed Church and Lutheran Church and it was the third largest confession in the Silesian *Voivodeship*.[73] The whole Evangelical community was, therefore, not homogenous at all; each part of it required teachers of its own confession, of its own denomination and in its own language (though it was not always clear which language: Polish or German).

Taking into account all of this complex background, one could assume that eventually there were not always enough children to create classes in the Polish-speaking public secondary schools.[74] According to Czembor, especially in the urban areas of the *Voivodeship* and its northern parts, most of the members of Evangelical parishes were 'Germans' (in this work they will be called 'German speakers'), while the Polish speakers comprised a minor part of these parishes. This German-speaking majority of the *Voivodeship's* Evangelicals suffered from an essential shortage of teaching staff and teachers of religion, many of whom crossed the Polish-German border towards the German part of Silesia. In such circumstances, the Polish-speaking Evangelical minority eventually felt this shortage more than their German-speaking brothers from the same confession.[75]

Only the Polish-speaking classes of the Catholic confession were in a relatively better situation due to the fact that most of the pro-Polish clergy remained in the *Voivodeship*. In addition, in 1921–1925, a group of about 64 priests moved to the *Voivodeship* from the German part of Upper Silesia. However, the pro-German Catholic community could not use its confessional priority in the state, so that by the end of 1922 between 56 to 66 of the 200 pro-German priests working in the Polish part of Upper Silesia decided to cross the frontier towards the German section, which caused a noticeable shortage of religion instructors.[76]

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[73] Reiner, *Wyznania*, 137-147; Czembor, *Ewangelicki Kościół Unijny*, 13-19.

[74] UWSL, 27, OP 31, pp. 11, 12, 12a.

[75] In 1921 in Upper Silesia were about 60,000 Evangelists. In 1922, after the division of the area, in the Silesian Voivodeship there were about 40,000 Evangelists. Urban Evangelist parishes lost sometimes more then 50-60 percent of their members. Czembor, *Ewangelicki Kościół Unijny*, 38-39, 43, 60-61; Czembor, 'Kościół ewangelicki', 56.

[76] This 'migration' of the pro-German and the pro-Polish clergy to and from Silesian Voivodeship was complicated due to the canon law. But according to Article 93 of Geneva Convention, the 'transitional period' of relocation of the clergy in Upper Silesia had to be finished by July 1 1923. Henryk Olszar, 'Wymiana księży śląskich w okresie plebiscytu i powstań śląskich', in *Kościoły i związki wyznaniowe*, 195-209, esp. 129, 199, 204-207; Kaeckenbeeck, 'Convention', Art. 93, 617; James E. Bjork, *Neither German nor Pole:*

Taken together, this brought the director of the state gymnasium of Katowice to a decision in spring 1924, namely, to gather these Polish-speaking Evangelical children, both boys and girls, from all the secondary schools of the city, and to conduct their studies of religion, organizing them into two classes. Even a 'decent Polish-speaking' pastor was found for this purpose. However, the Department of Education did not support this idea, because of an ambiguity in the number of Polish-speaking Evangelical children. Instead, the authorities proposed that the children attend the religion lessons with the above-mentioned pastor in a 'private way'.[77]

In addition to these 'technical' problems, the Silesian population and clergy were apparently disappointed by the state's legislation concerning the number of weekly hours dedicated to religious instruction in schools. Despite the Constitution's article 120, emphasizing the importance of religion lessons in Polish public schools, it is evident from the sources that both religious authorities and some part of the local population in the Silesian *Voivodeship*, from the first years after its shift to Poland, complained about the state's insufficient attention in the matter of religion lessons in the schools. The complainants even compared this inadequate care to the former Prussian policy![78]

Apparently, the Geneva Convention and the special statute from 1920, which together with the Constitution created the legal basis of the Silesian *Voivodeship* (and provided it with its autonomous status), brought the *Voivodeship* authorities (especially the religious) a feeling that the situation regarding the studies of religion could slip out of their control at any moment.[79]

State legislation required about two weekly hours of religion lessons in the public schools within the whole state, except in the Silesian autonomous region. In the summer of 1924, the Silesian church authorities sent a letter to the Department of Education in the Silesian *Voivodeship* demanding that four weekly hours of religion studies, as was required dur-

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Catholicism and National Indifference in a Central European Borderland (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2008), 256-259.

[77] UWSL, 27, OP 31, pp. 11, 12, 12a.

[78] UWSL, 27, OP 31, pp. 13, 13a, 14, 29, 30, 101, 101a, 102.

[79] Reiner, *Walka*, 112. In the 'Statut Organiczny' (Organic Statute) of the Silesian Voivodeship from July 15 1920, it was mentioned that the Silesian Sejm could create its own legislation in the matters of general education. However, the matters concerning the role of religion in the Silesian education were still not entirely clear, since in could legislate in the issues of confessions, but it excluded the '"ecclesiastical affairs", within the scope of the international politics (Concordat)'. Dz.U.R.P. nr 73, poz. 494, Art. 4.

ing the Prussian rule, remain in effect. The authors of the letter expressed their fear that the Silesian *Voivodeship* would share in the fate of the whole Polish state education system with a reduction in religion lessons. Sources for such an apprehension were the 'Program Published by the Ministry of Religion and Public Education', and the fact that a 'part of the teachers in Silesia considers the reduction in the amount of the religion hours from four to two as desirable [...]'.[80] This statement referred to the recent congress of teachers from the whole state, among them the teachers' organization *Ognisko* (Fire) in Katowice. At this congress a question was raised about the possibility of reducing the weekly hours of religious education in the Silesian *Voivodeship's* schools, similar to the reduced hours in other public schools state-wide.[81]

There were two additional issues (which became increasingly significant with time) which underlay their fear, as it was clearly expressed by the Silesian priests in their letter and in their long explanation of the necessity of four weekly hours of religion in Silesian schools. The first one was a tension between the Polish State and the Silesian autonomy. The second issue was an additional tension between the local Silesian population and the Polish newcomers from the south-eastern parts of country.

As was mentioned above, the Silesian *Voivodeship* as an autonomous region had a right to pass its own legislation, which could differ from state decisions. Eventually, the Silesian Church administration could also make decisions in several matters, among them matters of religion in the education system of the *Voivodeship*. It seems, however, that the legislative and the power-distinctions between the autonomy and the state were not clearly defined (understandably, bearing in mind the huge number of bureaucratic matters that were created by the border being shifted and which demanded rapid solutions). Therefore, very soon after the creation of the autonomy, a tension between this relatively independent body and the state authorities arose.

[80] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 13.

[81] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 29. It seems, however, that this demand of teachers was condemned to failure. In the beginning of January 1925 one of school inspectors of the Voivodeship reported that the arrangements of the Department of Public Education are coordinated with the Holy See. Taking into account the Concordat, which was signed several days after the letter was written and the sources from a year later, one could assume evidently, that the 'coordination' between the State and the Church resulted in an agreement of about four weekly hours of religion in the Silesian Voivodeship.

In these circumstances, the Silesian Church authorities probably tried to use some newly found momentum and ensure special privileges in the field of religious education before the *status quo* could be changed. Additionally, there might have been an attempt to demonstrate the Silesian Church authorities' final word and the autonomy's legislative power over against the state Ministry of Education's decisions. This assumption is supported by a quotation from the above-mentioned letter, where the Church authorities wrote that '[u]ntil the autonomy of the Silesian *Voivodeship* is in force, we do not see any legal title to insert a change in the matters of hours of religious instruction as given in the pattern of the ministerial program'.[82]

It seems that not only the authorities, but also the local communities of the *Voivodeship* were concerned about the possibility of a reduction in the hours of religious instruction. For instance, the 'cartel of the Catholic associations of the Świętochłowice community' prepared and signed a petition to the *Voivodeship* school authorities against such a reduction. The Director of a public school in the area of Pszczyna, in his letters to the Department of Education in Katowice, emphasized that 'religion was the favourite subject among the [school]children'.[83]

In a paradoxical way, religious authorities in Silesia tried to convince the Polish State of the importance of four weekly hours of religion in schools by giving them the same reasons given to the Prussian State several decades earlier: language. In their letter, these authors emphasized that the 'lack of language skills among the Upper Silesian children makes the study's instruction significantly difficult for the teacher and forces him to proceed more slowly, and the more so the more difficult the topic is'.[84] According to these authors, while in the entire territory of Poland two weekly hours of religion was eventually enough for the proper-Polish-speaking children, in the area of Silesia the issues of language and religion were connected. Not only was the language here interpreted as a tool to achieve the desired religious aims, but also religion was represented as a possible assistance in better acquiring the Polish language.

Both the State and the Church had to benefit from this demand, which on the one hand could be interpreted as regionalist and opposing state decisions, but on the other hand, also as serving state interests. The Silesian Church authorities kept the proper religious level among the local

[82] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 13.
[83] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 39.
[84] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 31.

youth, keeping them away from dangerous secular influences and within the bounds of the traditional community. The State gained within its western borders (which were rather unstable) a large group of pro-Polish local citizens, with a proper knowledge of their 'mother tongue' (which in the opinion of both the State and the Church was Polish).

The local clergy in the same area had made a very similar demand regarding language to the Prussian authorities at the end of the nineteenth century. When, according to Bjork, studies of religion in the schools occupied three to four hours a week, Bishop Kopp proposed to the Prussian Minister of Education the introduction of an extra fifth hour of religion class in primary schools. The explanation was the difficulty for Polish (i. e. Silesian) children to understand instruction in German. Eventually, this step aimed to improve both the children's understanding of religion and their knowledge of the German language. While Polish activists saw this proposal negatively being against the Polish-speaking Catholics, this solution fit in well with the Prussian policy of *Germanization*, as well with the majority of local clergy. National allegiances were subordinated in favour of the Church.[85]

Therefore, linguistic identity, which Polish nationalists tried to emphasize in the Upper Silesian region in order to bring about a national revival, became a tool for the Silesian clergy in its negotiation with the Prussian officials. One can say, therefore, that the Prussian authorities and the Polish nationalists had a common base, interpreting the identity of the local population through the prism of language, each one with its own interests, using religion for their own aims. At the same time, the Church identified Silesians through the Catholic confession and made use of language as well: not as a goal, but as an instrument.

As it turned out, the experience of the World War, the plebiscite, the Silesian Uprising, the shifting of the border, and the new reality within the Second Polish Republic, did not change these basic interpretations, which continued their parallel co-existence: the State's national-linguistic on the one hand, and the Church's confessional-religious on the other. The post-plebiscite reality was new, but at least some of the tactics remained the same as those used in Prussia (one of which will be mentioned later in the chapter).

The second tension that arose dealt with the position of Polish newcomers versus the local Silesian population. In the beginning of this chapter, I referred to special problems, different from the general Polish ones,

[85] Bjork, *Neither German no Pole*, 65-75.

which confronted the system of education in the Silesian *Voivodeship* during the first years of its existence. Among them, the most central was the shortage of Polish-speaking teaching staff. According to Wanatowicz, a small percentage of both the pro-Polish and the pro-German Silesian populations in the region before and after the plebiscite were educated. In 1919 most of the Silesians with higher education were priests.[86]

After the creation of the Silesian *Voivodeship*, and during its whole inter-war existence, the number of teaching staff of local origin remained relatively low. For instance, according to Wanatowicz, in primary schools Silesians were about 34.6 percent of the whole teaching staff, while immigrants from other parts of Poland comprised about 59.4 percent.[87] Most of these immigrant teachers came from Galicia, some others from the former Polish Kingdom. Most immigrant teachers in the elementary schools descended from workers and peasant families, while most of the secondary school teachers among the immigrants belonged to the *petty bourgeois* and intelligentsia.[88]

One can assume that the religious views of at least a part of these educated male and female newcomers differed from those of the traditional, religious, Silesian community, devoted to its region and to its priests, who, as was already mentioned above, formed the majority of the local intelligentsia. For instance, the community of Świętochłowice was scandalized by teachers' statements that 'they cannot teach children things that they themselves do not believe in'.[89]
This, together with other complaints from the local population and priests about the outrageous behaviour and the shocking secular views of immigrant teachers, reflects the differences in their religious views and the existing tension between the two groups.

In the letter of the Świętochłowice community, both male and female teaching newcomers were keenly criticized for a final demand to change their employment places to 'Silesians by birth'.[90] This letter is a valuable source of information and displays some of the reasons tension existed between the immigrants and the local population. It also demonstrates

[86] Maria W. Wanatowicz, *Inteligencja na Śląsku w okresie międzywojennym* (Katowice: Uniwersytet Śląski, 1986), 26.

[87] Ibid., 28.

[88] Ibid., 29-30.

[89] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 29.

[90] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 29.

what specific behaviour from these Polish teachers did not suit the Silesian community.

Secular female teachers were the first targets of discontent and complaints. They were criticized because of their amoral behaviour, their improper appearance, and their attempts to combine work and married life. According to the letter, these teachers had to be immediately dismissed from their workplace, in view of their smoking or announcing plans to marry.[91]

These requirements were explained in detail, giving a glimpse of the self-definition of the Świętochłowice community versus 'strangers'. Children of society, which meant a traditional one, especially teenagers, had to be 'protected from a demoralization', being caused by teachers. A teacher, in the community's opinion, had to 'in the education of children observe harmoniously all the postulates which contribute to a better and a moral education of the young generation'.[92] Only a Silesian-born teacher could know the best way to the 'soul of the Silesian child'. Such a teacher had a

> precise understanding of the most vital feelings of the child entrusted to him [...]. It is possible to expect this also from teachers who originated from other state districts, but unfortunately their adaptation to the necessary needs of our Silesian people has demonstrated from their side very weak results.[93]

Polish teachers were not 'adapted' to the needs of the Silesian people. Instead, being deeply devoted to the Catholic faith, they 'disregarded the Catholic religion and gave the children entrusted to him in this respect a bad example'.[94]

Instead of being examples of modesty and chastity, as women in any traditional society had to be, female immigrant teachers were described as showing a 'half-naked breast and cigarette in their mouth [...]'.[95]

Married female teachers were criticized even more than singles for several reasons. First of all, according to the authors' opinion, from marriage onwards, women had to devote themselves to a 'new mission'. Then, a pregnant teacher could corrupt the children, while they 'examine in a hot temper these things, which absolutely cannot influence the development of better moral elevation among the young creatures'. Finally,

[91] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 29.
[92] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 30.
[93] UWSL, 27, OP 31, pp. 30-31.
[94] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 30.
[95] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 30.

frequent sicknesses and disappearances from work (because of pregnancy) 'are reasons of interest among the children, in whom because of these reasons passion [...] is being raised'.[96]

In the opinion of the Świętochłowice community, women could not combine their private life with their work. A division between the public and the private was clear, as well as the traditional religious perception of woman as a source of passion and of shame.

One could state, however, that this letter was written from a relatively small place, while in Katowice, a capital and a large city, the society may well have been less traditional and religious. However, because of the urban and industrial character of Katowice, where large masses of immigrants attempted to find work, it seems that tension between the immigrant teachers and the local population was very high.[97] In addition, because of the history of the region, at least some part of the children studying in the public primary and secondary schools in Katowice probably came from small rural communities, strongly tied to Silesian traditions and religion. The importance of religion classes for both Catholic and Evangelical confessions was actually true for both small communities as well as larger cities.[98] It seems, therefore, that at least a part of the Świętochłowice community requirements were common to many other areas of the Silesian *Voivodeship*.

One can conclude that within the Second Polish Republic, Church authorities and the local clergy, together with the local Catholic organizations, continued to emphasize the confessional identification of the Silesian population. However, it also seems that during the first years of the new *Voivodeship's* existence, regional particularities of the autonomy and its independence, as well as of the local teachers, took on a high level of importance for these religious institutions and organizations.

This significance was heightened probably by the desire of the local clergy to maintain the former, 'traditional' or religious definition of the self and the surrounding population versus the state process of *Polonization*. This new process included a threat of secularization, community destruction, and the loss of authority for the local clergy itself. During the first years after the borders' shift, the Silesian Church officials (who until 1925 still belonged formally to the Breslau diocese) tried to negotiate with Polish state authorities as to their previous privileges,

[96] UWSL, 27, OP 31, pp. 30-31.

[97] Wanatowicz, *Inteligencja na Śląsku*, 37-46, 84-102.

[98] UWSL, 27, OP 31, pp. 12, 12a, 14, 48a, 49.

stressing the 'special' or the 'traditional' character of the Silesian *Voivodeship*. Due to these regional peculiarities, the successful integration of the Silesian community into the Polish State in their opinion could eventually be possible through proper religious education and keeping the closed community structure. Therefore, there was a need to educate as soon as possible a generation of local, Silesian teachers (instead of having secular newcomers who were Poles, but foreign to the regional self-definition of Silesian clergy). The local Catholic authorities understood, however, that during the subsequent years there would still be a need for immigrant teachers in the Silesian *Voivodeship*. Therefore, to minimize the 'damage', every teacher of religion was required to receive a 'canonical mission' before starting to work.[99]

The Catholic portion of the Silesian population was not the only group disappointed by the state policy regarding religious education; during the first years of the Silesian *Voivodeship's* existence the Evangelical and Jewish communities both tried to defend their rights to keep classes of religion. Unlike their Catholic compatriots, these confessions did not receive the privilege of four weekly hours of religion studies. This situation gave rise to written correspondence between the communities' representatives and the authorities, revealing thought-provoking facts about the self-definition of the local population.

In June 1925 representatives of the Evangelical Church in Polish Silesia wrote a letter to *Voivode*, in which they enumerated their complaints concerning the poor management of religion studies among the Evangelical schoolchildren in *Voivodeship*.[100] In their words, 'the number of hours of Evangelical religion is often significantly shortened'. In many cases there was only one hour of religion class a week, while in the same schools the Catholic children received four hours of religious education per week.[101] Some of the children had no religion lessons at all. The Evangelical clergy required, therefore, that the authorities assign to their confession the same number of hours given to the Catholic public schools.

Among other complaints, the authors of the letter mentioned the suspicious religious background of some of the religion teachers. For

[99] UWSL, 27, OP 31, pp. 14, 15. 'Misja kanoniczna', a 'canonic mission', signed both by a diocese bishop and lay authorities, is a special permission to teach religion classes given to a qualified teacher after passing special exams as well as his directing by these authorities to a certain school.

[100] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 48.

[101] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 48.

instance, in the gymnasium of Królewska Huta, a mathematician who had not even received permission to teach religion was teaching it. The high school in Katowice was not much better, since the study of Evangelical religion was in the hands of a former Catholic priest, who had become an Evangelical pastor in Poznań, but then left the community without a report and moved to Katowice. Some other teachers, working in minority schools, in spite of being Evangelicals and having a permit to teach Evangelical religion, had a poor knowledge of German and, according to the letter's authors, did not belong to the German minority and could not teach in minority schools.[102]

This letter permits a closer examination of the fascinating identity tactics used by the Evangelical Silesian community. In this society, a minority in the region after its shift to Poland, some pro-Polish members still defined themselves as 'pro-German'.[103] But, apparently the Silesian Evangelical clergy turned to the same tactic that was used by the aforementioned pro-Polish Catholics: the use of the linguistic authorities' identification as a tool to gain the proper number of religion classes for the children. Thus, emphasizing the 'minority' character of Evangelical community and its 'minority' rights, they used the same identifying terms that the state authorities applied to them: 'language minority' or 'national minority'. In other words, in both cases, the Catholic and the Evangelical, it was easier to demand a certain number of hours of religion and proper teachers by emphasizing the linguistic part of their identity instead of the confessional one.

Apparently, this attempt was successful, since according to Czembor, in September 1925 a conference was organized in which the representatives of Evangelicals and officials of the Silesian *Voivodeship* participated. There they decided to support the application of Evangelicals, and subsequently to treat them according to the articles of the Geneva Convention (while it is not entirely clear whether the pro-Polish children were included as well), and to provide Evangelical teachers of religion for every

[102] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 48a.

[103] Czembor, *Ewangelicki Kościół Unijny*, 20-123. Before 1922 in the territory of Upper Silesia which was shifted to Poland, there were about 88,000 Union Evangelists (in comparison to 920,895 Catholics). After 1922 their number sharply decreased due to the mass migration to Germany, and in 1931 in the territory of the Silesian Voivodeship there were altogether about 77,269 Evangelists of all denominations (in comparison to 1,195,036 Catholics). Reiner, *Wyznania*, 84-88; Czembor, *Ewangelicki Kościół Unijny*, 44.

group of 12 children studying in the Catholic schools (and not of 20, as was demanded by the March Constitution).[104]

During July-August, before the conference, the *Voivodeship* authorities in Silesia sent a directive to all the school officials in the region with a requirement to report on the Evangelical children and teachers, both in Catholic and Evangelical schools, who were studying in the areas they directed. At that point officials had to present all the information concerning Evangelical children who did not have religion classes at all. Then these confessional minorities had to be 'divided according to their nationality'.[105] This task was an uneasy one for the local officials, since in reality public schools of the *Voivodeship* were divided not according to confession, but according to 'nationality' or the language of the pupils. Most of the 'Evangelical' schools belonged to the German minority, with some percentage of pro-German Catholics there as well, while in 'Catholic' schools pro-Polish Evangelicals studied together with the pro-Polish Catholics.

For instance, from the Second School District of Katowice, which was an urban one, it was reported that the majority of Evangelical children participated in the German minority school. In the 'Catholic' schools, which were apparently public Polish-speaking schools, there were some Evangelical 'pro-Polish' children and some pro-German ones. Some of their religion teachers were pro-Polish and some were pro-German.[106] In Katowice itself, the vast majority of Evangelical schoolchildren as well as their teachers were described by the authorities as 'Germans' and eventually attended the German-speaking minority schools.[107] In the more rural areas, the number of pro-Polish Evangelicals attending the 'Catholic' schools increased, sometimes becoming a majority.[108] One can understand the complexity of the situation, given the fact that the Silesian population, according to its own definition, was categorized differently by state and religious authorities.

Obviously, there was no possibility for creating special schools according to all these divisions and for finding a sufficient number of teachers, or distributing the children among the existing schools.

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[104] Czembor, *Ewangelicki Kościół Unijny*, 62.

[105] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 50.

[106] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 76.

[107] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 70.

[108] UWSL, 27, OP 31, pp. 52, 57, 61, 63, 66, 67, 75, 76.

One can find significantly fewer sources on the matter of religious instruction in public schools in the case of the Jewish community in the interwar Silesian *Voivodeship*. Because of a lack of sources, this research will, therefore, not concentrate on this point, but just mention two particular exchanges of correspondence between the communities of Cieszyn and Bielsko.

In February 1926 the heads of the Jewish community of Cieszyn, together with the school management, contacted the Department of Education in Katowice with a request to supply a teacher of Judaism for the Jewish children attending the Polish-speaking public gymnasium. The letter emphasized that these children had never had studies in the Jewish religion, even though the number of students was increasing from year to year.[109]

The Department of Education examined this request and promised to supply a teacher once the number of Jewish schoolchildren in the gymnasium reached twenty, according to the law about minorities' confession from 1923. At the time of this application, there were 18 Jewish pupils in the gymnasium.[110] In this case, the law from 1923 was based on the March Constitution, where the same number needed to supply a teacher of religion for the confessional minority class was featured. Probably, if these Jewish children were pupils of the German-speaking minority school, their parents could legally have requested a teacher of religion, even if numbering less than 20, according to the Geneva Convention.[111] Here, in a paradoxical way, the language determined the religious education.

It is interesting also that in this case the Jewish community preferred to apply to the relatively secular Polish state authorities in the matter of religious instruction, instead of supplying one privately from the community. This shows that their respect and trust of the new authorities was relatively high, as well as the level of mutual cooperation between the non-Jewish school management and the Jewish community's members.

The second case deals with the German-speaking members of the Jewish community in Bielsko, whose children studied in the German-speaking minority gymnasium of the city. In April 1926, the school director wrote a letter to the Department of Education in Katowice in the matter of these children. The reason for the application was a Jewish

[109] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 93.

[110] UWSL, 27, OP 31, pp. 94, 94a.

[111] Kaeckenbeeck, 'Convention', Art. 107, 623.

holiday, *Zielone Świątki* (Shavuot), which was on the same days as the written part of the matriculation exams, May 19-20, 1926.

According to the Geneva Convention, the Upper Silesian authorities had to respect the Jewish Shabbat. Such a stress on Jewish matters fits the argument of David Rechter that '[i]n eastern and central Europe Jewish politics was above all minority politics [...]'.[112] The authorities also had to respect the 'legal holidays (of all the confessions), which had been allowed them before the transfer of sovereignty'.[113] The gymnasium management, therefore, requested a change in the dates of these exams (although it is not entirely clear whether only in this particular school or in all the German-speaking schools of the *Voivodeship*). The dates proposed by the management were May 10, 11, 12 and 14. The officers of the Department of Education easily and without any delay gave their consent to this change and to the proposed dates.[114]

The dates to which they agreed to shift the exams turned out to be the same days of the May *Coup* in Poland.[115] At the time Warsaw was closed, strikes occurred, military forces declared a state of alert, and the whole situation could have turned into a civil war.

The fate of the matriculation exams, which the pro-German and Jewish children had to pass on these days, is vague due to the lack of sources. One can only assume that the gymnasium pupils and their parents, as well as the gymnasium authorities in Bielsko (if not in all the minority schools in the Silesian *Voivodeship*) would have been glad to pass the exams on their original dates before the change and the *coup d'état*.

Although one can see that there were many differences in the matter of religion studies among the confessions in Silesia, it seems that linguistic

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[112] Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna*, 8. In addition concerning the perception of the Jews and the Jewish power in the interwar Poland see: David Engel, 'Perceptions of Power: Poland and World Jewry', in Christoph Böwing, ed., *Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts / Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook* 1 (Simon-Dubnow-Institut für jüdische Geschichte und Kultur: Leipzig, 2002), 17-28.

[113] Kaeckenbeeck, 'Convention', Art. 71, 606 and 89, 616.

[114] UWSL, 27, OP 31, pp. 96, 97, 98.

[115] The May *Coup d'Etat*, carried out by Józef Piłsudski and his companions, occurred between the night of 11 May and 15 May 1926. On May 10, a Chjeno-Piast right-wing government was created. As a reaction, Piłsudski promised to bring to life a 'sanation' of political bodies in Poland. Eva Plach, *The Clash of Moral Nations: Cultural Politics in Piłsudski's Poland, 1926–1935* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2006), 1-6. The May *Coup* of Piłsudski and his consequences will receive a more detailed description in the following chapters.

distinction did not make an essential difference in the religion classes of the school programs. For instance, in the state classical gymnasium in Katowice, which housed parallel Polish- and German-speaking classes, all groups shared the same program. This case is interesting since the program was dedicated mostly to the Catholic religion, while there were about 70 children of Evangelical confession, 26 Jewish children, and an Orthodox child.[116] There is no information about their participation in the religion lessons, but one can assume that these children also received lessons according to their confession. Another important point is that some of the children in the German-speaking classes were adherents to the Catholic confession. Bearing in mind the fact that most of the German population of Upper Silesia belonged to the Evangelical confession, one can assume that at least some of these 'German-speaking' children in fact belonged to pro-German Silesian families. Probably, from the authorities' point of view, some of them still had a chance to be 'Polonized' and to 'return' to their Polish roots. It is possible to assume, therefore, that in 1923-1924, school programs of both language-type schools were strongly Polish-oriented.

One can understand such a policy keeping in mind the fact that a large part of these children from the high school classes had had to study for several years under Prussian rule and according to the German school programs and books. Apparently 1923 was the first year that the children of Silesia started to study with the newly printed Polish handbooks, joined the all-Polish school program and, presumably, started to study according to the programs and directives which were developed especially for the schools of Silesian *Voivodeship* (as it happened, for instance, with regard to the study of history).

History

On December 7, 1922 the Department of Education presented a history curriculum for the German-speaking departments of the female high schools in the Silesian *Voivodeship*. This program most probably was to be implemented beginning in the following year, 1923.

This program is the only one available to us and is a valuable source that describes the school program for the German-speaking children from the very start of the Silesian *Voivodeship's* existence. Although it was

[116] UWSL, 27, OP 957, p. 12.

specific to the female high school, it seems that it was not gender-oriented at all. One can assume that the same program might have been used as well in the male and in the 'mixed' schools, and therefore this program remains a significant source of information about the creation of a Polish citizen without a gender differentiation.

Apparently, the subject of history was chosen as the most important one in order to start promoting among the German-speaking children the new ideology of the Polish State in the formerly German territory, now recently shifted to Poland.

Thus, in the lowest class, the seventh grade (which in the new system later became the first one), it was imperative that the teacher 'should treat the study of history in connection with the study of the German language'.[117] He had to introduce 'ancient' (in fact medieval) history, while he had to 'change the images, taken from the Brandenburg-Prussian history to the legends from Poland of yore'.[118] The German-speaking citizens of Poland, a part of whom would eventually turn into future Poles, from the beginning of their studies of the past had to learn about the mythological origins of the Polish rulers. Hero Lech and his brave brothers, peasant Piast, father of the first Polish ruler from Great Poland, King Krak and Queen Wanda from Lesser Poland, were the historical examples given to these children.

In the next year, the German-speaking schoolgirls had to study images from all the epochs. The teacher had to emphasize Polish history and the history of Upper Silesia, 'clarifying the historical facts objectively'.[119]

Two years later, after a break from studying ancient history, these girls were turned 'back' to medieval Polish history, due to the Christianization of Poland. Then, in detail, they studied the activity of the Polish kings, their wars, their braveness, cleverness, valour, and the richness and the power of the Polish Kingdom. It seems that at this time the pedagogy focused more on the relationship between Poland and Germany. Thus, a part of German history was shown through the Polish prism: the wars of King Bolesław III with the Germans, the activity of the Teutonic Knights and their expedition into Poland, the 'internal wars' in Germany when many Germans left their land and 'looked for peace in Poland', etc.[120]

[117] UWSL, 27, OP 888, p. 2.
[118] UWSL, 27, OP 888, p. 2.
[119] UWSL, 27, OP 888, p. 2.
[120] UWSL, 27, OP 888, pp. 2-3.

One can, therefore, suggest that the Department of Education attempted to show the German-speaking children both the greatness of Poland and the 'minor' or 'secondary' significance of German history in the former Polish territories, in comparison to the Polish influence. The Poles are presented as the first residents of the land. The medieval Germans indeed lived in the Polish kingdom, but they came there of their own free will and were dependent on their hosts. When Germany initiated wars against Poland, it was defeated, as was the case of the wars of the King Bolesław III (the Wry-mouthed, *Krzywousty*) and the case of the Teutonic Knights.

A particularly interesting point in this part of the document is the proposed theme of King Bolesław's division of the Polish Kingdom among his sons, ultimately empowering the oldest one.

A deeper look into Polish-Silesian medieval history makes clearer the importance of this theme. King Bolesław III was married twice: his first wife was princess Zbysława from the Rus' Kiev, who bore him his first-born son Władysław II (later called Władysław the Exile). His second wife, the German princess Salomea, bore him thirteen children. Before his death, the king divided his realm between his several sons, according to the 'Seniorate Principle'. This law gave the oldest son the supreme power over the younger ones, and in addition, provided him a 'major part' (a wide central territory from north to south in the kingdom with Kraków as a capital) which could not be divided. The area of Silesia was another important domain, which the elder son Władysław II received during this division. In 1146, after multiple clashes with the widow and the junior dukes, and after some armed attacks, Władysław was defeated and had to leave his inherited lands and flee to the German king, Conrad III. He never received his domains back. Moreover, the successor of Conrad III, Frederick Barbarossa, after his successful invasion of Greater Poland, was helpful in installing the son of Salomea, Bolesław IV (the Curly, *Kędzierzawy*) to the throne. Even though it was decided that the sons of Władysław inherit the Silesian lands after Bolesław, in fact during the following decades, the duchy was fragmented and divided among multiple rulers after several internal wars of succession.[121]

Bearing this historical context in mind, one could understand why the authors of the curriculum in 1922 made a remark for the teacher that:

[121] Mariusz Trąba, Lech Krzyżanowski, *Poczet Królów i Książąt Polskich* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo PWN, 2010), 184-279; Karol Maleczyński, *Bolesław III Krzywousty* (Kraków: Universitas, 2010), 366-408.

'children should not learn which province each one of the sons [of Bolesław] received'.[122] The undesirability of teaching this part of Polish history to new Polish German-speaking citizens is understandable. The firstborn son of the King Bolesław had to leave his Silesian domain to the sons born from the German mother. He had to live under the hospitality of the German king, whose successor later invaded Poland and gave Silesia by his own 'German' grace to Władysław's rival. And, as a final note, the Silesian Duchy no longer belonged to the strong Polish Kingdom, but was divided among multiple German-Polish pretenders, never united again under Polish rule.[123]

At the same time, the authors of the program tried to present to the new Polish citizens the history of Polish politics in the eastern parts of the kingdom in a positive light. One should remember that in 1922 the future of the eastern borders of the Polish Republic was still questionable. As was already mentioned in a previous section, after the Polish-Lithuanian War, diplomatic relations with Lithuania were severed and the status of Wilno (Vilnius) was not entirely clear. This curriculum for history was written before the official Polish-Lithuanian border, recognized by the League of Nations (however, not recognized by Lithuania), was marked out. About half a year earlier, the Soviet Union and Germany signed the Treaty of Rapallo, which was interpreted by the Polish government as a threat to the Polish Republic. The whole atmosphere of instability in the newly born state is even more understandable given that a bit more than a week after the program was issued, the president, Gabriel Narutowicz, was assassinated.

Given this background, the efforts made by the program's authors are understandable, writing sentences like: 'Sharing a common danger makes Lithuania closer to Poland' or 'the arrival of the Pomeranian messengers in Poland and the submission of Pomerania' with the demand 'to emphasize the justice and the mildness of the Polish government in its relation with the nations of the Polish Commonwealth'.[124]

In their next year, the girls had to study the history of Poland and Eastern-Central Europe from the Reformation up to the *Chocim Victory* of Poland in 1673. There the emphasis was placed on the 'splendour of Poland in the times of Sigismund the Old' and on the relationship between Poland and her eastern neighbours. In this, Sigismund August and

[122] UWSL, 27, OP 888, pp. 2-3.

[123] Trąba, Krzyżanowski, *Poczet Królów*, 98-115.

[124] UWSL, 27, OP 888, p. 3.

Ivan IV the Terrible were compared as persons. The teacher had to stress the 'difference between Moscow and Poland, despotism, and the blind obedience of the Boyars in Moscow'. Children had to learn about: 'the freedom of the nobility in Poland, the misery of peasants in Moscow. Serfdom of the peasants in Poland / Religious tolerance in Poland [...]'.[125]

Although, the program also presented the problematic sides of Polish history during this period, the studies ended with the heroic victory of the *Hetman* (and the future Polish king) Jan Sobieski over the Ottoman army in Chocim, and through his relief of Vienna in 1683.

After that, the girls had to study the period from the French Revolution up to the present day. There the emphasis was placed on the 'Alliance of three black eagles against Poland' (i. e. Russia, Prussia and Austria). The teacher had to present King August II as a 'bad king'. One could understand such a representation, remembering that August II the Strong was of Saxon origins and was also an elector of Saxony. His origins and his controversial image in the Polish collective memory and historiography (his political weakness, the weakening of the Polish army, his defeat and removal from the throne by Charles XII, and his subsequent return to the Polish throne, supported by Russian forces) made him an easy target to be 'responsible' for the weakening of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and for the first partition of Poland.[126]

Totally omitted by the authors of the curriculum was the Targowica Confederation, a union made between the Polish magnates (who were opposed to the Polish Constitution) and Russia, which agreed to support the entrance of the Russian Army into Poland.[127] The Second Partition of Poland, which followed the Targowica Confederation, was omitted as well. Instead, the major emphasis was placed on studying the Polish Constitution, together with studying the values of freedom during the wars of independence in America and France. The life of Polish national hero, Tadeusz Kościuszko, who was a leader of the Polish Uprising against Russian domination in 1794, was to be studied in detail. The authors emphasized Kościuszko's stay in America as a participant there in the War of Independence. Immediately after the description of his uprising and the Third Partition of Poland, the children had to study France as

[125] UWSL, 27, OP 888, p. 4.

[126] Władysław Konopczyński, *Pierwszy rozbiór Polski* (Kraków: Arcana, 2010), 25-39.

[127] Antoni Czubiński, Jerzy Topolski, *Historia Polski* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1989), 238.

the 'defender of freedom and equality'.[128] Napoleon was represented as the next hero, following Kościuszko. Stress was placed on his wars, especially the victory over Austria and Prussia: 'Austerlitz and Jena', on his link with Poles and, as a result of his campaign against Russia, the establishment of the Duchy of Warsaw in 1807. After a detailed description of the subsequent activity of Napoleon and the fate of the Polish lands, it was stressed that the Kingdom of Poland (created in 1815) was a separate kingdom.[129]

Here one notices attempts being made to represent Poland as being in line with other symbols of democracy and freedom: America and France, as opposed to imperial Russia, Prussia, and Austria. A cognitive link was made between the Polish-Lithuanian hero Kościuszko and the French-Corsican Napoleon, and such a comparison engendered a pride of belonging to Poland in the hearts of the German-speaking children.

This year of history lessons ended with the history of Prussian and Austrian Silesia (for the first time!), and with the 'awakening of nationality' in Silesia and ultimately with the resurrection of the Polish State.[130]

During the several years of studies in high school, young people once again had to pass through the historical periods they had studied earlier: from the ancient one through to the most recent history of Poland. It should be noted that in ancient history a special emphasis was placed on the political systems of Greece and Rome and their cultural relationship. By this act, the authors apparently tried to link the Polish traditions of democracy and civil society with their ancient origins. Probably an attempt was also made to create a basis for future civic awareness among those who were becoming young Polish citizens.

Another interesting point in the history curriculum in the higher classes would be a study of the historical methodology. There it says, 'When mentioning sources in the first line, one should refer to the Polish sources.'[131]

It seems that the authors of the program considered the last school year as the most important one. It was then that students started to learn about contemporary Poland and its diplomatic relationships, along with the economic geography, as well as social and cultural relationships. A part of the more complicated issues (especially for the children belonging

[128] UWSL, 27, OP 888, p. 5.
[129] UWSL, 27, OP 888, p. 5.
[130] UWSL, 27, OP 888, p. 6.
[131] UWSL, 27, OP 888, p. 6.

to a minority group) were the borders of Poland, its social and economic system, as well as its political life. The last thing the young ladies had to study in their history lessons was the 'duties of the Polish citizen'.[132]

Apparently, the teaching of history during these years aimed to bring the children gradually to this important point. Through the study of history, children were meant to understand the meaning of being a Pole, or at least a Polish citizen, and to understand the social and the cultural reality, as well as Polish traditions, which would prepare them for future civic duties. Some of these girls were pro-German Silesians, who eventually could be 'returned' to their Polish origins, which they learned to know through these history lessons. Others: the Germans or the Silesians, for whom the decision was made to stay pro-German, they could at least gain a measure of respect for their new homeland and become model citizens.

Education Outside of School: Scientific Films and Holidays

The new Polish citizen was to be shaped not only by his / her obligatory hours of studies within the school walls, but also during alternative educational activities: excursions, celebrations of state holidays, ceremonies, and watching didactic films. The value of these activities (probably less scientific and more ideological) was significant from the education authorities' point of view. In an informal way, the state ideology and values could be transmitted to less critical and more emotional youth. It was important, therefore, that the children from both types of schools, the German- and the Polish-speaking, participate in this sort of activity. They had to obtain the same basic pro-Polish values and become loyal citizens in a multinational state.

Scientific Films

In 1922, in his conversation with the first Soviet Commissar for Enlightenment Lunacharsky, Vladimir Lenin stated: 'the cinema is the most important of all the arts for us'.[133] This phrase referred of course not only

[132] UWSL, 27, OP 888, p. 7.

[133] As it was recalled later by Lunacharsky in his letter to Boltyansky, cf. Grigorij M. Boltyansky, *Lenin i kino* (Moskva / Leningrad: Gosizdat, 1925), 16-17.

to the esthetical or the artistic importance of cinema, but to its ideological importance in a proper education of the Soviet people.

From the beginning of the twentieth century, western and central European states (as well as the central European successor states after the World War I, with Poland among them) tried to promote cinema as an integral part of the education process (even though a large part of these attempts were successful only after the end of the World War I).[134] One could imagine that the relative easiness of visual communication together with the obvious interest and excitement from the schoolchildren's perspective of this new sort of entertainment, made the absorption of didactic and ideological messages much easier.

Even though cinematography was obviously already known by the end of the nineteenth century, one can assume that for at least some of the children in small industrial areas, at the beginning of the 1920's, it was still a novelty. 'Capitol', the first cinema of Katowice, was built about 1910 and in the interwar period its rooms were used not only for movies, but also for billiard and variety shows. In 1924 the sources point to the existence of two additional cinemas *Kammer* (later *Rialto*) and *Palast* (later *Pałacowe*), also inherited from the Prussian times, so in the interwar period the city housed altogether five or six cinema theatres.[135] However, the prices of tickets, together with the strict restrictions on youth attending the cinema and the traditional views of most of parents ultimately prevented the schoolchildren from attending, often turning the cinema into 'forbidden fruit'.

At the end of the nineteenth and toward the beginning of the twentieth century, 'moving pictures', mostly brought by a traveling cinema, were perceived (one can assume especially by the rural traditional communities), as something similar to a fair, and sometimes even as a suspicious form of entertainment. During the first years of the cinema's existence, the stress was often placed on the effects and not on the narrative; in large measure it was also made to satisfy the information needs of the often illiterate population.[136]

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[134] Irena Nowak-Zaorska, *Polski film oświatowy w okresie międzywojennym* (Warszawa: PAN, 1969), 24-26, 46-47, 58-59, 82-83, 101-103; Sheila Skaff, *The Law of the Looking Glass: Cinema in Poland, 1896–1939* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2008), 52.

[135] UWSL, 27, OP 461, p. 2, Skaff, *The Law*, 53-54.

[136] Skaff, *The Law*, 21-26; Władysław Jewsiewicki, *Polska kinematografia w okresie filmu niemego (1895–1929/30)* (Łódź: Łodzkie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 1966), 17-27; Małgorzata Hendrykowska, *Kronika kinematografii polskiej 1895–1997* (Poznań: Ars Nova, 1999), 13, 29, 31; Marek Haltof, *Kino polskie* (Gdańsk: Słowo-Obraz, 2004), 14.

In addition, as Sheila Skaff has noted, before the creation of the Polish Republic, the non-German working class population of the German section of the partition was suspicious or ambivalent towards the novelty. On the one hand, it was 'foreign', 'non-local' and was associated with the German language, in which it was introduced. Thus, 'cinema was (for many Polish speakers), from the outset, western, in-organic, and an obstacle to self-expression partially because of the language in which it was first introduced to the Polish minority and because of the rural population's reliance on itinerant exhibitors to bring it to them'.[137]

On the other hand, it seems that as a novelty, it generated curiosity and interest, especially when it depicted not the neighbouring areas, which could be a sensitive topic for the local population, but some remote and unknown places and societies.[138] Showing such distant places had an additional value. In addition to being 'removed' from places which raised tension and discomfort, the audience had a chance to see some other reality, some famous sites, or some unknown places and societies. Most viewers did not have an opportunity to travel to such far-away places and could only hear, or at best read about the wonders of the world. With the cinema they could feel themselves being 'transported' from place to place, see other customs, and 'participate' in other types of lifestyles.[139]

According to Skaff, before the Polish State was created, there was an ideological fight among Polish nationalists over Polish-language subtitles in movies, which up to that point did not exist. Before World War I, the titles that were shown to the population in the territory of the later Polish Republic were in the languages of empires to which those territories belonged, i. e. either Russian or German.[140] In the German part of these lands, both before World War I and afterwards, the ideological conflict was aggravated, since films were used for patriotic propaganda.[141]

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[137] Skaff, *The Law*, 31.

[138] Ibid., 30; Tadeusz Lubelski, Konrad Zarębski, *Historia kina polskiego* (Warszawa: Fundacja Kino, 2007), 10-11.

[139] Skaff, *The Law*, 21-23; Hendrykowska, *Kronika kinematografii*, 29; Lubelski, Zarębski, *Historia kina*, 10; Małgorzata Hendrykowska, 'Kinematograf na przełomie stuleci w poszukiwaniu formuły rozwoju. Kilka uwag o filmie na ziemiach polskich przed rokiem 1908', in Jolanta Lemann-Zajicek, ed., *Polska kultura filmowa do 1939 roku* (Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Filmowa: Łódź, 2003), 9-34.

[140] Skaff, *The Law*, 52.

[141] Ibid., 52; Małgorzata Hendrykowska, Marek Hendrykowski, *Film w Poznaniu 1896–1945* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1990), 64-74.

Already in 1908–1909, some Polish nationalists in Prussia, Russia, and Galicia understood the potency of the new medium in the process of nation-building, appealing to the 'Polish' feelings of people through both images and titles. Cinema had to strengthen Polish identity and to improve the knowledge of Polish for the masses.[142] Soon after the Second Polish Republic was created, these activists started to redouble their efforts to use the maximal potential of the cinema as an educational and ideological tool. As a result, in 1922, the Institute of Picture Shows (Instytut Pokazów Świetlnych, IPOS) was created.[143] It aimed 'to support educational, scholarly and artistic films and to fight demoralizing shows'.[144]

In February 1924, a short time after the creation of Silesian *Voivodeship* and when the education system there was still in the process of formation, directors of all the school types in Katowice received a directive from the head of the *Voivodeship's* Department of Education. It announced that on the coming Sunday in the cinemas *Kammer* and *Palast* (it seems that the German names of these cinemas were still in use in 1924) there 'will take place the first showing of solely scientific films from the subject areas of geography, zoology, chemistry, industry, etc.'[145] These films were to start about 10:30 in the morning (this time was chosen so as to be after the Sunday liturgy, but before the afternoon 'adult' entertainments). Ticket prices varied from 250 thousand to a million marks, depending on the seat (the cheapest-downstairs, the most expensive-in the loge).[146] The Department emphasized a continuing prohibition of young people attending the 'regular cinema shows' (which apparently was a continuation of the Prussian prohibition). Instead, it was recommended to the teaching staffs to interest their pupils in enjoying useful and innocent educational films, which took place every Sunday. In order to supervise the propriety of it all, both of the films and the young participants, a representative from the *Voivodeship* was chosen. He (or she) had to attend these shows and had to watch vigilantly all that occurred onscreen and in the cinema; this was in addition to several teachers who had to supervise the children as well.

[142] Skaff, *The Law*, 52; Nowak-Zaorska, *Polski film oświatowy*, 44-47.

[143] Ibid., 58-81.

[144] Ibid., 83.

[145] UWSL, 27, OP 461, p. 2.

[146] UWSL, 27, OP 461, p. 6.

The fact that teachers had to 'remind the youth how to behave' during the breaks as well as when leaving the cinema, exemplifies the novelty of sending groups of schoolchildren to the cinema.[147] In the educator's opinion, cinema, both as a setting and the show itself (even the educational ones), was linked to something suspicious, not entirely suitable for youth. This could explain why these educational films were shown in the *Kammer* and *Palast* theatres, and not in the more scandalous *Capitol*, which as mentioned earlier, was used not only for movies, but also for billiard and variety shows.

In spite of all these measures, the educators who accompanied the schoolchildren had to give a report about the shows. So, Wanda J., a female commandant of the Silesian 'Banner' – a department of the All-Polish Scouting and Guiding Association, sent a rather enthusiastic report about the first educational film shown in Katowice. She called it 'informative' and stated that she 'learned many unknown things for her from the areas of nature and geography as well as about foreign industry'. She emphasized the neutral character of the films, which were neither offensive in 'aesthetic feelings' or in 'religious-national' ones.[148] However, one should also keep in view that the opinion of a 'progressive' woman, who apparently had migrated from eastern Poland and become a Scouts instructor, would not reflect the opinion of the whole traditional-religious population of Silesia, which still remained rather sceptical concerning the new medium.

Hence, the Department of Education received several letters of protest from different organizations and private citizens, as well as from Church representatives. One of the controversial issues was the day the film would be shown. While in the beginning Sunday was chosen by the authorities as a weekend day, suitable for entertainment, from the Church's officials' point of view, this holy day should not be profaned by frivolous shows.

Examining the sources, one can see that the decision about the proper day for the educational film's screening was changed several times during one year. So, at the end of March 1924, it was announced by the head of the Department of Education that due to the 'efforts of a certain group of people', scientific films for children would be shown on Monday afternoon (15:30) and not on Sunday. The audience for these films had to be both from the primary and secondary schools, as well as from the high

[147] UWSL, 27, OP 461, p. 2.

[148] UWSL, 27, OP 461, p. 4.

school. The official emphasized again the importance of these films and their being attended by the schoolchildren. Eventually, at least some of the teachers were not excited about their additional obligations as the pupils' supervisors during their off-hours for shows for which they had to pay. Therefore, the *Voivodeship* authorities started to distribute free admission tickets to these obligated supervisors.[149] A year later, in June 1925 according to the sources, educational films once again started to be shown in Katowice on Sundays.[150]

Officials at the beginning of April 1924 received a sharp criticism of the scientific films' content from one of the supervisors (it is unclear whether he belonged to the clergy or was a teacher or a representative of the *Voivodeship* authorities). The writer referred to ten scientific films, and one entertainment film, which were all shown to the schoolchildren. Firstly, the entertainment film was described by the authority as a film to which he would not permit entrance of children under age fourteen. Then, the author worried that the content of some of the scientific films, 'caused a certain discomfort' among children. A 'certain discomfort' appeared when the process of an ovum being fertilized by sperm was shown. Another fragment, which caused a similar reaction from the young audience (quite understandably), showed the 'killing with an axe of huge sharks, which were suspended on metallic hooks and convulsively jerked with every beat'. Finally, the entertainment film was criticized again. It was not suited for youth, because of the 'funny role, which [...] a certain Protestant missionary played'.[151]

Therefore, great attention had to be given to everything that was shown in the cinema to the children of Silesian *Voivodeship*, even if it was only the screening of educational-scientific films. Any themes, which could somehow offend religious, confessional, national, or moral feelings, so sensitive in this German-Polish border area, had to be avoided.

Even though these educational films were strongly defended by the previously mentioned Scouts commander Wanda J., who emphasized the interest her Scouts had in these films and their several attendances, the authorities were concerned about the critique they had received.[152] As a result of the critical letter, in June 1924 the *Voivodeship* officials required the Department of Education to organize 'trial screenings' of films to be

[149] UWSL, 27, OP 461, p. 6.
[150] UWSL, 27, OP 461, p. 16.
[151] UWSL, 27, OP 461, p. 7.
[152] UWSL, 27, OP 461, p. 8.

shown to the youth before their actual screening. A 'qualified representative' of the Department had to watch these 'trial versions' and give them final approval.[153]

One of the most interesting and expressive actions, which clearly showed the attitude of the local Silesian population towards cinema and its being shown to their children, was a 'great assembly of protest' against the 'pornography and lack of morality in theatres and cinemas'.

This event took place in January 1925, and was organized by the 'Christian Mothers' organization. Among the speakers was a Catholic priest, and as it appears from the sources, the event was very well attended. Inter alia, the 'immoral shows, which take place in theatres and cinemas' were strongly criticized. The showing of films to the schoolchildren was viewed in an especially negative light. The 'Christian Mothers' were strongly against these shows and especially the participation of children under the age of sixteen (probably because of the above mentioned scandalous film about fertilization), demanding additional supervision 'from the authorities, police, and public opinion'.[154]

One can learn from this assembly that in 1925 the local community supported by clergy still had an extremely negative perception of the cinema. Similarly to the Polish authorities, these adherents to tradition understood the evident power and potential of these visual moving pictures. Apparently priests and teachers of religion opposed the influence of secular, eastern, immigrant teachers 'corrupting' the souls of their children in schools. Parents could prevent their children, in a certain measure, from purchasing 'pornographic' press (although it is still unclear what the traditionally minded Silesian community meant by the word 'pornography').

Yet, cinema became an especially dangerous medium because of its strong visual influence and the feeling of immediate and direct participation. A child, who previously was not allowed to attend the forbidden shows, could now attend them legally. Moreover, his attending these movies was approved by the education authorities, who could decide the content of films. This new approach was not welcomed by the traditionally minded parents, who did not entirely trust these new secular authorities. Finally, besides the question of whether these films were 'moral' or 'immoral', even the scientific films showed a totally new reality to the children, who had been educated in a regionalist-traditional way.

[153] UWSL, 27, OP 461, p. 14.

[154] UWSL, 27, OP 461, p. 16.

The lands, customs, traditions, religions, and industries shown in the educational films could clearly give rise to multiple questions, comparisons, and doubts with respect to the children's everyday reality (not always in its favour) and do so more strongly than through exposure to books. One could say, therefore, that this attempt to confront the cinema's novelty by the traditionally minded society was also an attempt to confront modernity. In a paradoxical way, the community, which already in the nineteenth century had experienced an intensive process of industrialization, a population fusion between newcomers and veterans, as well as a fusion of languages, still regarded itself as traditional, regional, and far from the 'alien' modern influences which could destroy its structure and character.[155]

Holidays and Ceremonies

The celebration of state holidays and festive occasions were apparently less 'dangerous' to the traditional way of life from the point of view of the community accustomed to Church ceremonies and festivals, as well as to the former Prussian state holidays. Thus, one could relatively easily keep the familiar holiday form and 'fill' it with new ideological symbols and values.

It seems that the first Polish state holiday celebrated in the Silesian *Voivodeship* was May 3rd in 1923. Three days earlier *Voivode* Tadeusz Koncki published a directive according to which 'this year the Silesian *Voivodeship* for the first time will celebrate the day of May 3rd together with all of Poland as a national holiday [...]'.[156]

The chiefs of several *Voivodeship* offices (police, city councils, and heads of management) perceived the clear expectation from Koncki that: 'the Silesian land will take part in this holiday with all its soul, in order to create on this day a huge demonstration by the people'.[157]

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[155] Wanatowicz, *Inteligencja na Śląsku*, 93; Tomasz Kamusella, *O Śląsku i nacjonalizmie* (Zabrze: Narodowa Oficyna Śląska, 2008), 45-48, 65; Kamusella, *Szlonska mowa*, 65-67, 84-88.

[156] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 3. The holiday of 3rd May is the day when the Constitution of 1791, the first one in Europe, was adopted by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. On April 29, 1919 this day was legislated by the Polish Sejm as a national holiday in the Second Republic. Norman Davies, *Europe: A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 699; Norman Davies, *God's Playground: A History of Poland*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 529-532.

[157] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 5.

During this day, the commemoration of which had a 'huge importance in the Silesian *Voivodeship*', all the religious confessions of the *Voivodeship* were to conduct festive liturgies as part of the holiday celebration.[158] A year later, due to Tadeusz Koncki again, a special Catholic Church liturgy was conducted in May: this time not only on May 3rd, but also several days later, on May 8th, when a funeral service was held for him in the Parish Church of Katowice.[159]

At the end of April – the beginning of May 1924, there was an exchange of correspondence between the Silesian *Voivodeship*, the Ministry of Education, and the authorities of the town of Miechów in Lesser Poland. This discussed the 130th anniversary of the famous Battle of Racławice, which took place near the village of Racławice in Miechów. The Battle of Racławice, one of the most significant battles during Kościuszko's uprising and an important event in Polish collective memory, was commemorated in paintings by different Polish artists, the best known of which is 'The Racławice Panorama'.[160] In this battle against Russia on April 4, 1794, Tadeusz Kościuszko defeated the army of General Tormasov. In Polish collective memory, at the core of this battle was not only Kościuszko, but also the heroic fight of a peasant army (*kosynierzy)* of approximately two thousand, armed with scythes.[161] Thus, people's ideological memory emphasized the unification of different social groups in service to one common national goal.

In the letter to all the school directors in *Voivodeship*, Silesian authorities informed the directors that the Ministry of Education decided to give the young people and teachers in the school an opportunity to organize excursions to attend the celebrations at the battle site. In this way, the Silesian children could share with other schoolchildren from the whole of Poland the common experience of visiting the state *lieux de mémoire* and to feel a part of the great common past. Finally, for reasons that were unclear, the decision was to celebrate the event on September 7th of that year.[162] One could guess that among these reasons was the practical reality

[158] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 3.

[159] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 9.

[160] The 'Racławice Panorama', a huge panoramic painting, depicting the Racławice Battle was placed in Lwów and it is located now in Wrocław.

[161] Czubiński, Topolski, *Historia Polski*, 255; Wiesław Śladkowski, 'Wokół legendy o broni insurekcyjnej', in Teresa Kulak, Mirosław Frančić, eds., *Powstanie Kościuszkowskie i jego Naczelnik: Historia i tradycja* (Kraków: Oficyna Cracovia, 1996), 185-194.

[162] UWSL, 27, OP 34, pp. 10-11.

of organizing the schoolchildren's participation after the school year had begun.

Apparently, among the motives for the importance of such an event were not only the Polish collective memory, but also some contemporary and very political interests, that is, in order to emphasize in the citizens' consciousness the Polish victory over Russia. Considering the diplomatic background of the Soviet Union with Central and Western Europe during the first half of 1924, one can see a gradual stabilization in its relationships, especially with Germany and Great Britain. The British Labour government, only recently having taken office in February 1924, recognized officially the existence and legitimacy of the Soviet Union and the two states started to conduct negotiations. France, Italy, and Japan followed the example of Great Britain.[163]

According to Gatzke, Germany continued its diplomatic and military-industrial relations with the Soviet Union during the two years after the Rapallo agreement due to the efforts of the most influential politician in the German-Russian arena, Brockdorff-Rantzau.[164] Eventually, because of this growing acceptance of the Soviet Union in the first half of 1924 (although in November of the same year, the new Conservative government in Britain ended the relationship with Russia), the Polish government wished to represent the historical victory over Russia to its citizens as some sort of counterbalance.

Two months later, the directors of Silesian state and private secondary schools and also the teachers' colleges received another directive from the *Voivode's* deputy. In it the Ministry of Education established that schools participate in the state 'aviation propaganda week' between October 2 and 9. During this period, teachers had to 'explain to the school youth the meaning and needs of Polish aviation'. The directors had to collect money in their schools (eventually both from the school teachers and the schoolchildren) and to pass it ultimately to the Regional Committee League of State Defence. On the last day, the afternoon of October 9, each school had to conduct a youth rally. At it, children had to carry banners with

[163] Edward H. Carr, *International Relations between the Two World Wars, 1919–1939* (London: Macmillan Press, 1985), 76; Ross McKibbin, 'Great Britain', in Robert Gerwarth, ed., *Twisted Paths: Europe 1914–1945* (Oxford University Press, 2008), 33-59, here 42-44.

[164] Hans W. Gatzke, *European Diplomacy between Two Wars, 1919–1939* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1972), 43-51.

propaganda slogans, for instance: 'we support aviation'. This rally had to last for one hour and was to end with 'youth games in the fresh air'.[165]

Here, the children had to get used to the notion of being defended by and then later of their supporting the Polish air force financially and ideologically. Through positive and pleasant experiences such as these demonstrations in favour of a fascinating and attractive military unit, or through 'games in the fresh air' instead of studies, the youth would gradually experience a connection with the army of their state and be ready to join it at a later point, if necessary.

A year later, at the beginning of September 1925, it was decided in the Silesian *Voivodeship's* city Mysłowice to conduct the above-mentioned week in support of the state air force in a grandiose style. The organizers brought together the local units of the air force, the local railroad sections, and several youth and sport organizations.

According to the authors of the letter, the celebration was to start on Sunday, September 6, 1925 at 6 AM and continue intensively until the next Sunday evening. The whole occasion included several flight demonstrations, football matches, and 'people's entertainments': music and dances, as well as the showing of various films both for children and adults in several cinemas. So, until 5 o'clock in the afternoon children could watch 'Baby Peggy' (probably there were several films which featured the famous child star of the silent movies). In addition they could watch the 'Entrance of the Polish Army into Silesia', together with the 'film dealing with aviation'.[166] After 5 o'clock in the afternoon until 11 in the evening there were 'adult' movies: aviation movies and the film 'Emigranci' (probably, 'The Immigrant' by Charlie Chaplin, made in 1917) were to be shown. Since the chosen films were either Polish or American, one could assume that the organizers tried to give to the event either a patriotic or a 'neutral' character, staying far from the European, especially German, films in this region that had recently been German.

Undoubtedly, one of the main highlights of the program was the arrival of an aviation squadron, which performed 'propaganda flights'.[167]

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[165] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 13.

[166] It is impossible to trace precisely the author of the film, but it seems that the 'Invasion of the Polish army to Silesia' was apparently filmed by Jan Skarbek-Malczewski from Warsaw, who made several films dedicated to fights, the fronts of World War I, the October Revolution, etc.

[167] UWSL, 27, OP 34, pp. 17, 17a.

It seems that for all these pro-nationalist and pro-Polish organizations it was their first opportunity during the *Voivodeship's* existence to demonstrate their patriotism, power and skills. Among these organizations were for instance the Polish Gymnastic Society *Sokół* (Falcon), and the sport club *Polonia* or *Związek Hallerczyków* (Haller's Union).[168] It is unclear from the sources whether this event ultimately took place or not.

Approximately at the same time, the directors of all the Silesian schools and teachers' colleges received another letter from the chiefs of the *Voivodeship*. The year 1925 was chosen for the whole Polish Republic as the 900th anniversary of the coronation and death of the King Bolesław Chrobry (Bolesław the Brave). So, all the schools of the state had to participate in this event 'being guided by rightly understood obligations of paying honour and tribute to the memory of the great king'.[169]

Yet, when the year came to a close, it was noticed by the state officials that not all the schools (apparently in Silesia) had celebrated the king's anniversary. One could assume that authorities of the Silesian *Voivodeship* were asked about such an omission of a state holiday. As a result, all the schools which had neglected the event were required to organize a commemoration in King Bolesław's honour. Thus, by December 15 the school authorities had to dedicate one of the autumn vacation days to this event. The celebration had to include a Church service and a lecture, which had to 'highlight the meaning of the memorable anniversary as well as make real for the youth the great personality of Bolesław the Brave'.[170] As sources for their lectures, teachers could use various books and booklets that had been published especially for this occasion during the year, while additional activities, such as singing or declamations were most welcomed and desired.[171]

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[168] These organizations, some of which were established before the creation of the Second Polish Republic, were known by their pro-Polish nationalism. Haller's Union was a combatant organization, named in honor of Józef Haller, which was created in 1920 in Upper Silesia, and shortly after that spread over other territories of Poland; it included many Silesian members. Józef Haller, who was a General of Polish Army, a hero of Polish Legions, and also a president of the Polish Scouts' organization, was known for his support of the right-wing parties and his opposition to Józef Piłsudski. Marek Orłowski, *General Józef Haller 1873–1960* (Kraków: Arcana, 2007), 367-467; Józef Haller, *Pamiętniki: Z wyborem dokumentów i zdjęć* (London: Veritas, 1964), 219-284; Stefan Aksamitek, *Generał Józef Haller: Zarys biografii politycznej* (Katowice: Śląsk, 1989), 101-191.

[169] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 18.

[170] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 18.

[171] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 18a.

The importance of this commemoration is evident in the directive's conclusion. There, the head of the Department of Education of the Silesian *Voivodeship* ordered school inspectors of the area to inform the Department about the proper implementation of prescribed celebrations in the schools. These inspectors had to provide a report about the commemorations conducted by the schools under their supervision, and to enclose a special paper with the names of the schools, describing where and when the celebrations took place.[172]

Such importance given this anniversary in the school system in Poland, especially the Silesian one, can be explained by examining the traditional Polish representation of King Bolesław's personality, even though the surname 'the Brave' (another version 'the Great') is already sufficiently descriptive. Bolesław, the son of the Polish Christian Duke Mieszko I, became the first king of Poland and similarly to the Holy Roman Emperors was crowned as a 'Rex'.

During his rule, and due to multiple wars, the former Duchy of Poland became one of the strongest monarchical states in Central Europe. Bolesław unified the Polish lands and annexed some lands of Germany (the territories of Meissen and Lusatia), as well as Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia and Ruthenia to Poland. He also defeated the Kievan Rus', conquered Kiev and put his son-in-law in as ruler (and later signed a peace treaty with the next strong Kievan ruler Yaroslav the Wise). Bolesław succeeded in overcoming German rulers in the lands he conquered. Finally, under his rule in the year 1000, during the visit of Emperor Otto III, a Gniezno council took place, proclaiming the Polish Church as sovereign and distinct from Germany, with its centre in Gniezno and established several episcopacies.[173]

These deeds made King Bolesław one of the most important heroes in Polish collective memory. In 1925 the Polish State was far from being as powerful as one could imagine it was 900 years earlier, under Bolesław's rule. The Polish government was neither unified nor strong enough to overcome the various problems it confronted in 1924–1925.

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[172] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 18a.

[173] Jerzy Strzelczyk, *Bolesław Chrobry* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo WBP, 2003), 26-88; Czubiński, Topolski, *Historia Polski*, 35-37; Trąba, Krzyżanowski, *Poczet Królów*, 27-33; Stanisław Zakrzewski, *Bolesław Chrobry Wielki* (Kraków: Universitas, 2006), 83-153; Kazimierz Jasiński *Rodowód pierwszych Piastów* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskiego Towarzystwa Przyjaciół Nauk, 2004), 80-94.

In April 1924, after a long period of inflation and due to several international loans, the Polish Prime Minister Władysław Grabski instituted a monetary reform, first stabilizing and then changing the Polish mark to złoty (equivalent to the Swiss franc). While successful initially, in 1925 this reform (or to be more precise, the loans which were taken in order to institute it), together with import problems, crop failures, and a bank crisis, caused governmental conflicts and an overall discontent.[174]

In June 1925 the Polish-German negotiations over a coal trade agreement failed and a trade war began. The strategist of this war, Gustav Stresemann, who was then the German foreign minister, had his own plan: to use an economic war in order to achieve his political aims. This brought inflation and a financial crisis to Poland. Since the Polish State had recently negotiated a large loan from American banks, its position both from the Western European and American point of view was not favourable. The uncooperative and weak Polish government could not improve the situation.

According to Wandycz, such matters brought about the Locarno Treaties in October 1925, which divided borders in Europe into two categories: the western, which were guaranteed by the Locarno Treaties, and the eastern borders, which were open to revision.[175] This division was humiliating for Poland and would place the Silesian *Voivodeship* in an unstable and even dangerous position. In November 1925 Grabski dissolved the government and resigned.

One can understand why under these circumstances the Polish Republic emphasized the anniversary of the king's coronation, an anniversary of power, of a unified kingdom, which could negotiate territorial matters

[174] Marian M. Drozdowski, *Władysław Grabski* (Rzeszów: Wyższa Szkoła Informatyki i Zarządzania, 2002), 157-170 and 209-223; Marek Kamiński, Michał Zacharias, *Polityka zagraniczna II Rzeczypospolitej: 1918–1939* (Warszawa: Młodzieżowa Agencja Wydawnicza, 1987), 90-94; Wojciech Morawski, 'Władysław Grabski, premier rządu polskiego 23 VI–24 VII 1920, 19 XII 1923–14 XI 1925', in Andrzej Chojnowski, Piotr Wróbel, eds., *Prezydenci i premierzy Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej* (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1992), 121-134.

[175] Piotr S. Wandycz, *France and Her Eastern Allies, 1919–1925: French-Czechoslovak-Polish Relations from the Paris Peace Conference in Locarno* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1962), 291, 352-372; Piotr S. Wandycz, *The Twilight of French Eastern Alliances, 1926–1936: French-Czechoslovak-Polish Relations from Locarno to the Remilitarization of the Rhineland* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 20-21; Piotr S. Wandycz, *Polish Diplomacy 1914–1945: Aims and Achievements* (London: The School of Slavonic and East European Studies, 1988), 20-22; Martin Kitchen, *Europe between the Wars* (London: Longmans, 1988), 62-63 and 108; Zara Steiner, *The Lights That Failed. European International History 1919–1933* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 410-411.

with its neighbours from a position of strength and could dictate to them its terms.

The autumn of 1925 was obviously tense and problematic for Poland from both an economic and political point of view. Questions about the unclear future of the western borders arose again. In the background of these dramatic events, such pressure from the state and the Silesian *Voivodeship's* authorities to emphasize suddenly, almost at the end of the school year, the importance of King Bolesław's anniversary celebration and to obligate every Silesian school to participate in it, seems rather odd. There is, however, a connection between these almost simultaneous political and educational developments. Presumably, at its weakest moment, the Polish State tried to emphasize its glorious and powerful past in the ideological education of the population. Since the territory of Silesia could at any moment become a disputed area again, both the state and the local authorities tried to instil among the local Silesian youth (still not entirely Polish) pro-Polish patriotic feelings as intensively as they could. The personality of Bolesław the Brave, who repeatedly defeated the Germans and forced the neighbouring European states to consider Polish demands, would be an excellent counterbalance to the humiliating Locarno Treaty.

Another event, which was proposed by the state Ministry of Education at the same time, can also be considered as an additional attempt to strengthen the patriotism of the local youth. On October 29, 1925, just several days after the Locarno Treaties were signed, the Polish government decided on the proper commemoration by the youth of an event dedicated to the Unknown Soldier. According to this resolution, on November 2, a symbolic burial of the Unknown Soldier's remains was to take place. These remains were:

> a symbol of the sacrificial blood of the people, shed during the defence of the Motherland. During this event, instead of the planned speech of the Minister of Defence, at 13 o'clock the whole state had to observe a minute of silence, stopping all traffic and all work activity. This had to be a shared expression of the union of the heart and soul of all the citizens in the Republic showing such a solemn and majestic honour.

Schoolchildren, as mentioned, also had to take part in this important commemoration.[176] In this case, after the humiliation of Locarno, the

[176] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 19.

patriotic morale of Poland's population would be better raised by a moment of silence, rather than by the minister's speech.

In the beginning of 1926 (January 8), the Department of Education of the Silesian *Voivodeship* received another directive from the leadership of the *Związek Obrony Kresów Zachodnich* (Western Borderlands Defence Union). This Polish nationalist organization required the Silesian *Voivodeship* to organize a committee to deal with the commemoration of the 100-year anniversary of Stanisław Staszic's death. This had to be conducted similarly to the one organized in Warsaw in order that: 'Silesia will not remain behind other Polish lands in commemorating the Great Pole.'[177] It seems that the 'Union' was extremely active in this matter, since less than a week later, on January 14, authorities from the Department of Education received another letter from the officially organized '*Voivodeship* Committee for the Commemoration of 100-year Anniversary of the Priest's Stanisław Staszic death' in Katowice.

In this letter, this newly formed committee asked to organize a mass celebration in the city at the end of January. Then lectures about the personality of Staszic for the 'wide segments of the population' had to be organized in high school and secondary school buildings. In addition, in the primary schools of the *Voivodeship*, teachers had to explain 'in plain lectures for children, as well as their parents' about Staszic and his service to Poland.[178] It is unclear whether this event indeed took place as was planned, but it seems that the pro-Polish nationalist organizations of the Silesian *Voivodeship* supported it wholeheartedly.

The importance of such an event is understandable given the personality of Stanisław Staszic and the position he had in Polish collective memory and in the Polish State's ideology. This priest, philosopher, and scholar was one of the most remarkable Polish Enlightenment figures. Among his multiple activities (education, social reforms, research, taking part in the development of sciences and universities in Poland, writing philosophical and social essays, etc.), Staszic was also among the authors and the organizers of the Constitution of May 3rd, 1791.[179]

Therefore, such a personality from the First Polish Republic became one of the key figures and symbols of the Second Republic. One could assume that for the pro-Polish organizations in Silesia, Staszic's anniver-

[177] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 24.

[178] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 25.

[179] Marta Męclewska, *Kawalerowie i statuty Orderu Orła Białego 1705–2008* (Warszawa: ARX Regia, 2008), 132-139.

sary was an opportunity to promote national ideology, as well as the values of Polish collective memory among the 'not entirely Polish' Silesian population, both children and adults.

The next significant date in the state Silesian-Polish calendar was March 20, 1926. Then, the Silesian *Voivodeship* had to celebrate the five-year anniversary of the plebiscite of 1921. In the beginning of March the *Voivodeship* officials, together with the Department of Education, started preparing a letter to all the school authorities in the region. This letter had an especial importance (and probably was to figure later in the report to the state educational authorities). It was re-written, censored, redacted and then sent twice, week after week. It emphasized the importance of the event, while the date of plebiscite 'became a symbol of the indivisible connection of Silesian land with the rest of Polish lands' and of the 'commonality and unity of the Silesian people with other districts of our State'. This fact had to be 'carried on like a sacred torch in the hearts of the generation now growing up'.

Therefore, all schools, of any type, had to prepare special celebrations dedicated to this significant date. While all the schoolchildren had to participate on March 21 in the general celebrations organized by the special *Voivodeship* committees, a day earlier their studies had been shortened. In that free time, children from the age of ten (presumably these who were five years old or more during the plebiscite) had to attend a special lecture about the fight for Upper Silesia. Directors and inspectors of all the schools in the region had to supervise the proper implementation of this directive.[180]

As it seems when comparing the first version of letter to the later one, the authorities tried to avoid certain terms and phrases. There, together with some common editorial remarks, all mention of 'Silesian people' was deleted, especially when they stated in connection with 'Polish people'. So, in the final version, instead of writing both 'Silesian people' and 'Polish people', what appeared were 'Silesian population' and the 'other areas of our state'. Additionally the whole fragment was deleted in which Silesian people during the plebiscite 'strewed the enemy with the cards on which appeared dear to the heart of Silesian people an inscription of the [word] "Poland"!'[181]

One can assume that although the content of the first version of the letter was highly patriotic, from the officials' point of view some parts of

[180] UWSL, 27, OP 34, pp. 27, 27a.

[181] UWSL, 27, OP 34, pp. 27-29, 31.

it were also highly problematic. Within the Polish State, five years after the plebiscite, where ideally regionalism had disappeared with time, these pro-Polish expressions of patriotism, coming from 'Silesian people' were meaningless. This apparently ethnic-traditional-territorial self-definition and self-description, 'together with the Polish people', but not entirely among these Polish people, had to disappear as seen from the state authorities' point of view. Apparently, making an editorial change and turning the ethnic-regional self-definition into a common national one when expressed in writing (as it was in the above-mentioned letter), was in fact among the easiest tasks which confronted Polish officials during the mid-twenties.

Another school matter, which created hot discussions in the international political arena concerning the 'Polishness' of Silesians, was the compulsory singing of *Rota* in schools of the Silesian *Voivodeship*, where minority schoolchildren had to take part in the singing as well. *Rota* (The Oath), a highly patriotic poem, was written by one of the most famous Polish poets, Maria Konopnicka in 1908 in Cieszyn and was directed against the *Germanization* of Polish people in Prussia. Soon this poem was adapted into a song and was enthusiastically performed by Polish soldiers in different battlefields of Europe in 1917, as well as by insurgents of the Poznań and the Silesian Uprisings. It was performed during the 500th anniversary of the Polish victory over the Teutonic Knights at the Battle of Grunwald, and became a well-known symbol in the fight for 'Polishness' and the State of Poland. After the State of Poland was created, this song was under consideration as a possible Polish anthem.[182] Some if its lines had a clear anti-German character such as: 'Germans will not spit in our face' or 'they (Germans) will not Germanize our children'.

One could imagine that singing such words would cause certain unrest among the pro-German minority schoolchildren. Indeed, since scandals occurred in several schools of the *Voivodeship*, the issue of minority children singing *Rota* was submitted by the *Deutscher Volksbund* for

[182] Janusz Gmitruk, Jerzy Mazurek, *Rota* (Warszawa: Muzeum Historii Polskiego Ruchu Ludowego, 2008), 29-65; Paweł Kordel, 'Maria Konopnicka i jej twórczość', in Janusz Gmitruk, ed., *Rota w panoramie dziejów Polski* (Warszawa: Muzeum Historii Polskiego Ruchu Ludowego, 2011) [hereafter: *Rota w panoramie dziejów*], 97-119; Jerzy Mazurek, 'Powstanie "Roty" i jej praktykowanie na obchodach grunwaldzkich', in *Rota w panoramie dziejów*, 121-138; Dioniza Wawrzykowska-Wierchiochowa, *Nie rzucim ziemi, skąd nasz ród…* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Ministerstwa Obrony Narodowej, 1988), 38-242.

investigation by the Mixed Commission.[183] The decision was published by Calonder in February 1928. It said: 'Concerning "Rota", the complaint is justified. It cannot be reconciled with the Geneva Convention [...] that this song would be performed in the schools of Polish Upper Silesia.'[184] This decision caused objections from the Polish authorities and a negative public reaction, with many protests taking place. The prohibition of such a symbolic and patriotic song as *Rota* in a Polish *Voivodeship* could be interpreted as a return to the former Prussian rules, against which so many people had fought for so many years.[185]

It seems apparent that in this case any pro-national decisions by the authorities, either pro-Polish or pro-German, would be painful and sensitive to other groups in the population (within the same society). While the pro-German part of population felt insulted by singing the words of *Rota*, the pro-Polish community felt insulted if it had to abandon its right to sing this patriotic song. Therefore, a national song and a pro-national investigation led to unrest and division among the members of the same community, who tried to adapt themselves according to national demands.

Polish Language and Literature

The program of the classical gymnasium of Katowice, with both Polish- and German-speaking sections, put significant weight on the humanities and languages.

Several crucial differences between the two types of sections become evident in the studies of Polish language. First of all, there was a significant difference between the hours dedicated to this subject in the Polish-speaking versus the German-speaking classes. Polish speakers were to have six weekly hours in the lower-level classes, and then between three to four times that in the highest ones. German speakers had to have two weekly hours of Polish language, regardless of the class or school age.[186]

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[183] In one of the Voivodeship schools in 1925 a minority school pupil, after showing disrespect to this song (according to his claim) was forced to sing 'Rota' on his knees with his hand raised for an oath. 'Pogląd Prezydenta Komisji Mieszanej dla Górnego Śląska o zakazanie śpiewania "Roty" Konopnickiej w szkołach polskich', *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, 1 (1929), 51-54; UWSL, 27, SP1 301, F 15986, p. 85; Wawrzykowska-Wierchiochowa, *Nie rzucim ziemi*, 229-242.

[184] 'Pogląd Prezydenta', 54.

[185] Łączewski, *Michał Grażyński*, 149-155.

[186] UWSL, 27, OP 957, p. 4.

It seems that during the first years of the Silesian *Voivodeship's* existence, there was no definite and common opinion among the authorities concerning the teaching of the Polish language in the schools, especially in the minority schools. This only emphasized the general shortage of clear ideas on what the process of *Polonization* in the Silesian *Voivodeship* should look like. Thus, after the above-mentioned school program with two weekly hours of Polish language in the minority schools, the next decision concerning the number of hours was finally fixed legally beginning on February 9, 1924. At that point it was decided that in the minority primary schools, studies of Polish would start in the third year with three hours weekly, while from the fourth year onward five weekly hours were required.[187]

However, already by the next year, on July 16, 1925, this decision was replaced by a new program of studies. The Department of Education decided to reduce the hours of Polish in the first classes of secondary schools from five hours weekly to four. In its place in the first year, children were to give more time to the study of history, i. e. twice a week (which as mentioned earlier, from the state education authorities' point of view was a matter of real significance).[188]

The texts *Czytanki* by Marian Reiter were among the most popular schoolbooks for the study of Polish literature in the first three classes for primary school children, both in the German- and Polish-speaking schools. They were made mandatory by the Ministry of Education and by regional authorities as part of the lessons in Polish language and literature in primary schools.

Czytanki were published in three volumes and reprinted in several editions in the 1920s and 1930s. These volumes were composed of different short stories and poems of famous Polish and world authors and are a rich source of essential information about the values the pupils were expected to absorb in their first years in school.[189] One volume of *Czytanki* had to be studied during each school year. Children from the Polish-speaking schools had to eventually read the whole volume, while their colleagues from minority schools were only required to read certain

[187] UWSL, 27, OP 1272, p. 15.

[188] UWSL, 27, OP 888, p. 36.

[189] For instance, in *Czytanki* together with such famous Polish authors as Maria Konopnicka, Juliusz Słowacki or Adam Mickiewicz, also stories of Rudyard Kipling, Aesop or Selma Lagerlöf were translated to Polish and adaptated for children.

sections from these books. This could be explained, theoretically, by their inferior knowledge of Polish and therefore a slower reading pace.

These volumes generally were compiled from various types of material. As a result, children had an opportunity to be acquainted with examples of works by famous Polish authors, famous world authors, as well as with some tales from different parts of the world. There were stories, fables, tales, poetry and parables, usually adapted to the level of primary school children.[190] Some of these works had moral or religious meaning, while others were more historical (mostly from Polish history) or heroic.

So, it seems that at the same time in the Silesian *Voivodeship*, Polish-speaking schoolchildren were reading the material in all these volumes, while in the German-speaking schools certain works were being specifically recommended by the Ministry of Education. One can assume that inserting the Polish State ideology was among the reasons for making the recommendations. One can also learn which stories the education authorities probably perceived as the most important from an ideological point of view. Because of the limits of this study, only several typical examples from these multiple works will be represented here.

While pupils from the Polish-speaking schools during their first year had to finish the whole first volume of *Czytanki*, children in the same year in the German-speaking schools only had to deal with certain content, divided according to months and not according to the volume's primary division. Starting in October, children began with two works dealing with basic values, such as the importance of keeping one's word and avoiding doing to anyone what one would not wish done to himself; through these lessons, minority children started to be acquainted with basic Polish traditions.[191]

The story *Założenie Gniezna* (Foundation of Gniezno) had a special importance, both for the Polish- and the German-speaking citizens of Poland.[192] There, in a simplistic way, the myth of the foundation of the first Polish rulers' settlement, Gniezno, was presented. From the Middle Ages, this city had a deep symbolic meaning in Polish ideology, perceived

[190] An interesting fact is that among the first tales appeared a popular Jewish (probably Midrash) tale about two brothers and their field, where later Jerusalem was built, edited and presented by Henryk Wernic. Marian Reiter, *Czytania Polskie*, vol. 1 (Lwów: Nakład Jakubowskiego, 1923), 17.

[191] Ibid., 17-18. One could however assume, that the authorities' choice of the poem 'Paweł i Gaweł' of Aleksander Fredro, dealing with the relationship between two neighbors, was meant to teach children to respect the 'other' and was not entirely random.

[192] Ibid., 18-20.

as the original place of the mythological founders of the first ruling dynasty, the Piasts. In addition, this city received an important political and religious role as the archdiocese of the medieval Polish State, and a cathedral was built there where several Polish kings were crowned. After the Second Polish Partition, and up to the creation of the Second Polish Republic, Gniezno was under Prussian rule (called Gnesen) and became a centre of Polish nationalist activity. It was important, therefore, that the new generation of schoolchildren in the Polish State should learn about this symbolic Polish city from its earliest days.

The next work the pro-German children had to learn was not chosen according to the internal chronology of the volume, but according to the education authorities' decision, which underscores its subjective importance. This was a highly patriotic poem of Maria Konopnicka, 'About the Polish Soldier and the French General' (*O polskim żołnierzu i jenerale francuskim*), which was dedicated to the heroism and to the devotion of Polish Legions fighting for their motherland in the army of Napoleon.[193] Together with this poem they also required reading a description of the attached reproduction of the Polish painter Artur Grottger. The picture 'Under the Walls of Prison' (*Pod murami więzienia*) describes symbolically the martyrdom of the Polish heroes in the January Insurrection (*Powstanie Styczniowe*) against Russia in 1863.[194]

These and similar stories with analogous ideological-patriotic content addressing Slavic-Polish history and traditions, and with the main Polish heroes and symbols, were taught to the German-speaking children during the rest of the school year. The stories included: 'About the Slavs' (*O Słowianach*), 'Polish People' (*Lud polski*), 'Legends of Arms' (*Podania herbowe*), 'Kraków', 'Tadeusz Kościuszko in the School of Knights' (*Tadeusz Kościuszko w szkole rycerskiej*), etc.[195]

During the next two grade levels, pupils from the Polish- and German-speaking schools continued to read the two further volumes from *Czytanki*. As their school age progressed, fewer tales and more heroic stories and historic descriptions appeared. One of the points most empha-

[193] Ibid., 178.

[194] Ibid., 192-194.

[195] Ibid., 14-16, 38-42, 100-104, 156-158, 169-172. While the 'Kościuszko in the School of Knights' had to be an example of im, portance of being a good student in the process of becoming hero, it seems that the 'Legends of Arms' was chosen not only because of its heroic and patriotic content, but also because of the description of the victory over the Teutonic Order.

sized was the faithfulness of Polish citizens during the history of the land, without regard to differences of ethnicity or faith.[196]

In order to emphasize this unity, several stories about the Jewish inhabitants of Poland were included. Jews were presented as exotic, but also as an integral part of Poland's population, and were shown in a positive light. Moreover, in the story by Franciszek Jaworski, a Jewish merchant Szmul Jakubowicz Zbitkawer compared the partition of Poland to the destruction of Holy Land and the Russian army to Babylonians and Philistines. According to the story, this merchant, described by the author with admiration and blessings, himself saved the lives of numerous Warsaw inhabitants without differentiating among them by faith or social status: '[...] Christian or Jew, noble or burgher [...]'.[197]

It seems that the lessons in Polish language and literature in the mid-higher school ages (classes VI to VIII) in both types of school, had much more historical-patriotic content that in the younger classes. Even exercises in the proper speaking of Polish during the lesson included various examples of state ideology. Providing a justification for this, Tadeusz Czapczyński in his book, 'Exercises in Speaking' (*Ćwiczenia w mówieniu*) published in 1922, pointed out that for the youth of this school age the '[...] feeling of unity with the nation, with humanity, has by now become something real'.[198] He also emphasized a strong desire for ideals among the higher school classes and, therefore, the appropriate ideological literature which would match this desire. According to Czapczyński, young people had to analyse not only the content of historical-literary works, but more importantly, their ethical and humanistic meanings, and their ties to current reality.[199] Examples from all literary works could turn into didactic opportunities, and bring maximal educational and ideological benefit to the youth. Among the examples of such issues proposed by Czapczyński on the basis of different literary works were lessons such as: 'the duties of an individual towards the society', 'the economic tasks of Poland at the present moment', 'the value of an ideal in life', 'how I

[196] Marian Reiter, *Czytania polskie*, vol. 2 (Lwów: Nakład Jakubowskiego, 1928) and *Czytania polskie*, vol. 3 (Lwów: Nakład Jakubowskiego, 1929). It seems that the years of publishing of *Czytanki* are not essential to the current research since these books were reprinted almost every year without changes to their content.

[197] Reiter, *Czytania*, vol. 2, 183-184.

[198] Tadeusz Czapczyński, *Ćwiczenia w mówieniu: Przyczynek do metodyki języka polskiego* (Warszawa: Książnica Polska, 1922), 95.

[199] Ibid., 95-97.

imagine the duties of a citizen: the features of a good citizen', 'what are the duties of the Polish woman', 'why do we study general history' and many others.[200]

Probably the educational materials mentioned above were completed in accordance with contemporary pedagogic ideals, with the aim of developing certain features in the souls of young Polish citizens. The state leaders, together with activists from the education authorities of the recently founded Second Polish Republic, were deeply convinced of the ideological and social power of a proper school education. It is easy to assume that the new state, which had just recently gained its independence, had to create new generations of loyal and faithful citizens. However, this ideology of the role of education for the new citizen, during this interwar period, was not apparently a prerogative of the Polish State, but was rather common among the newly born Central European successor states, as well as in the Soviet Union.

Indeed, learning the approaches and the development of pedagogy, the history of pedagogical thought, the didactic and methodology of teaching played an essential role in the duties of a teacher in the Second Polish Republic. Together with the appropriate knowledge of the subject materials, teachers were required to be familiar with a certain number of books on to the theory and methods of pedagogy together with books dealing with child psychology. There they had to read both the works of Polish and of foreign thinkers, for instance, Marian Borowski, Vasily V. Zen'kovsky, and of John Dewey.[201]

In addition, didactic textbooks for the teaching of history were published and requested in geography, literature, languages and other subjects. In the theoretical part of these manuals, the authors emphasized the history of pedagogical thought in the given subject, together with a psychological approach to its teaching. A special stress was made on the subject's importance in the process of the civil and patriotic education of new Polish citizens. It seems that such manuals became very popular and extensively used after 1926, when the political reality of Poland experienced a crucial change.

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[200] Ibid., 97-104. It seems that for the author it was important to create a proper and intelligent citizen, with the deep belief to the state ideology and values, but also with his own opinion and with a critical approach to reality.

[201] Komisja Egzaminów Państwowych na nauczycieli szkół średnich, *Wymagania Egzaminacyjne oraz podręczniki, polecane kandydatom na nauczycieli szkół średnich*, 2nd edn (Warszawa: Książnica Atlas, 1933), 8-10.

3. 1926–1928: A 'Good Pole' and the 'Maurer's Children': Debates about the Definition of a 'Minority' (Self-Definition versus Language Definition): German Language Exams for Silesian Children in German Minority Schools: Children Born out of Wedlock

During the second half of 1926 the policy of *Sanation* was increasingly directed towards strengthening a homogeneous state character. It became less tolerant towards autonomous movements, whether among the pro-Polish or the non-Polish populations.[202] Up to then, several *Voivodes* in the Silesian *Voivodeship* had changed repeatedly and had not had a significant effect on the character of this autonomous region except in the basic state demand for *Polonization* in various spheres of life. In September 1926 Michał Grażyński, a strong ally and companion of Piłsudski, was appointed to the post of *Voivode* of Silesia, staying in that position until September 1939. In a short time Grażyński, following the general state policy, started to restrict gradually the autonomous character of the *Voivodeship*, making it more Polish-oriented.[203]

Due to constraints of time and space, I will not be analysing all the debates and conflicts between the Silesian Sejm and Grażyński (and his pro-*Sanation* companions).[204] The results I will deal with influenced various spheres of life, both for the Silesian as well as the Jewish population in the general area. These influences were clearly manifested in the state's support of pro-Polish migration from the eastern parts of Poland, which it seems was aimed at 'diluting' the traditional 'regionalist' tone of the local Silesian population as well as the Germans of Polish Silesia. The process of such relocation began during the creation of the Silesian *Voivodeship*, but it seems that after 1926 the state's support for the migration became even stronger.

This affected the distribution of jobs, especially the higher administrative posts, where patriotic and educated newcomers from the former

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[202] Albert S. Kotowski, *Polens Politik gegenüber seiner deutschen Minderheit 1919–1939* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998); Henryk Rechowicz, *Wojewoda śląski dr Michał Grażyński* (Warszawa: PWN, 1988).

[203] Kotowski, *Polens Politik*, 136-140; Łączewski, *Michał Grażyński*, 56-79.

[204] Concerning *Sanation* see footnote 144.

Polish Kingdom or Galicia were welcomed.[205] At this point, even the pro-Polish part of the Silesian population of the area (especially in its capital Katowice) were quite disappointed. One can assume that the matter of support of the newcomers' highlighted a gap between the authorities' national demands and the true self-definition of the local, native population. As one can see from the previous chapters, to the pro-Polish Silesian patriots, being Poles meant learning the Polish language as best as possible, while also maintaining their own Silesian language. This mostly traditional society regarded as a matter of importance that one should stay within one's own community, in one's own region and not emigrate, either initially to other parts of Germany or then later to other parts of Poland. Being a Pole for them meant keeping all the Silesian traditions and being faithful to the Catholic Church and to the local priests.

These unfortunate Polish-Silesian patriots could not understand that from the authorities' point of view, most of the signs of their 'Polishness' were expressing exactly the opposite, namely regionalism and separatist tendencies which were suppose to disappear among the younger generation of the 'New Poles'.

The pro-*Sanation* policy of Michał Grażyński influenced the sphere of education, particularly in the minority schools. Between 1922 and 1927 the number of minority schools in Polish Upper Silesia increased from 69 to 100 (in other sources-from 59 to 115).[206] Taking into account a relatively constant number of Silesians who declared themselves as Germans during the plebiscite, one could assume that these growing numbers indicated a constant non-national and pro-German tendency within the Silesian population in the Silesian *Voivodeship*. Despite the process of *Polonization* (or probably sometimes as a reaction against it) a large number of Silesian parents preferred to identify their children as German speakers, and therefore to send them to the state minority schools. This brought about a clash in the second half of 1926.

In September of 1926 the Polish authorities rejected most of the almost nine thousand new applications to study in the minority schools. The reason was the children's insufficient knowledge of German; consequently they belonged not to the German, but to the Polish nation. As a

[205] Maria W. Wanatowicz, *Ludność napływowa na Górnym Śląsku w latach 1922–1939* (Katowice: Uniwersytet Śląski, 1982), 46, 70-90.

[206] Falęcki, *Niemieckie szkolnictwo*, 36; Mauersberg, *Szkolnictwo powszechne*, 128, 140; Zygmunt Stoliński, 'Szkolnictwo niemieckie w Polsce', *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, 3 (1927), 236-259, at 239.

result of these rejections, the *Deutscher Volksbund* sent a petition to the Mixed Commission.[207] The authors of the petition insisted on the fact that these children were bilingual, or spoke mostly Creole, and did not know German or Polish adequately. The authors also emphasized the fact that it was the right of an individual to decide to which nationality he / she belonged.[208]

The decisions and correspondence which followed this petition produced discussions as to who should decide about nationality: The person or the state, and whether the lack of knowledge of the mother tongue automatically denied nationality to that person, and whether a Silesian child could be bilingual, and how to define Creole: Polish or German? These discussions and clashes revealed the vagueness the term 'nationality' in this interwar period.

Thus, on December 15, 1926, the Mixed Commission published its decisions regarding the *Volksbund's* appeal. In it, president Calonder expressed his opinion concerning both the appeal, in particular, and the individual's right to national self-definition in general. Calonder mentioned a theory, called the 'subjective principle', according to which, the categorization of a person could not be constant or objective, but rather was a flexible matter, which depends only on the temporary will of the individual.[209] This point created an opposing response from the Polish government, which treated the matter of nationality and linguistic belonging as both constant and objective. From the Polish authorities' point of view, the national identification of an individual, in large measure, depended on his linguistic affiliation. According to this view, it was against the state principles, as well as non-pedagogic, to send the Polish-speaking children to German-speaking minority schools where, without appropriate knowledge of German, they would not benefit from their studies.[210] Since the Polish government and the Mixed Commission did not arrive at a common decision in the matter of the Polish speakers' registration in minority schools, between the years 1926–1928 the issue passed through three levels: the Mixed Committee, the Council of the League of Nations, and the Permanent Court of International Justice in The Hague.

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[207] Mirolub, 'Wyrok Stałego Trybunału Sprawiedliwości Międzynarodowej w sprawie szkół mniejszościowych na Górnym Śląsku', *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, 5 (1928), 512-533, at 513.

[208] Ibid., 513-514; UWSL, 27, OP 1567, pp. 57-63.

[209] Mirolub, 'Wyrok', 514; UWSL, 27, OP 1567, pp. 7-8.

[210] Mirolub, 'Wyrok', 514; UWSL, 27, OP 1567, pp. 5-9.

In the beginning of 1927, after the Polish government refused to accept the proposal of the Mixed Commission, the *Volksbund* insisted on passing the issue of registration to the League of Nations. The authorities of the League found themselves in a complicated situation where any decision would be problematic. On the one hand, the League members did not share the opinion of Calonder concerning the 'subjective principle' and did not support the registration of Polish-speaking children in the minority schools. On the other hand, according to the Geneva Convention, authorities were not permitted to interfere with and examine the credibility of the national declarations of so-called 'German speakers'.[211] In March 1927 it decided to send an expert to the *Voivodeship* to examine the German-language proficiency of the minority schoolchildren whose registrations had been rejected, and then to decide on their ability to study in the German-speaking schools.[212] By this act, the League attempted to show a neutral position towards both Germany and Poland, and to give a voice to the Silesians themselves.

It was decided to send a Swiss school inspector, Walter Maurer, to the Silesian *Voivodeship* to examine personally the German-language proficiency of each child whose registration in a minority school had been rejected. Altogether about 1735 pupils were examined.[213] These 'Maurer's Children' (as they were called) were subjected to the pressure of their parents, the school authorities, and the foreign school inspector, and took an exam which decided their whole life: would they grow up as Germans and speak German as their mother tongue, or would they grow up as Polish-speakers and be Poles?

According to the results of the exams about 48 percent of the children did not know German sufficiently to make progress in their school studies.[214] They had to move to the Polish-speaking schools against their parents' wishes. This decision brought satisfaction on the Polish side. The authorities emphasized an extensive lack of knowledge of German among so-called 'minority children'. The official tried, thereby, to show the Silesian children he examined as being similar to Polish children.

According to the position both of the Council of the League of Nations and of the Polish authorities, failure in the exams resulted in such

[211] Mirolub, 'Wyrok', 514.

[212] Ibid.; UWSL, 27, OP 1567, pp. 6-9; Mauersberg, *Szkolnictwo powszechne*, 31-35.

[213] 'Sprawy mniejszościowe na terenie międzynarodowym', *Sprawy Narodowościowe*, 3-4 (1928) [hereafter: 'Sprawy mniejszościowe'], 453-468, at 455.

[214] Łączewski, *Michał Grażyński*, 146.

children being moved to the Polish-speaking schools. It is possible to say, therefore, that from the very beginning of their lives, these 'Maurer's Children' got the impression that their Polish identity and language were the results of a failure on their part, and they were less worthy, by comparison, than their German-speaking peers.

Among the other linguistic matters mentioned in the protocol, was the phenomenon of bilingual children and the Silesian Creole. These issues caused active discussions not only in the region itself, but also internationally. While the *Volksbund* tried to categorize some of the Silesian children as bilingual, speaking both Polish and German (or further, the Silesian dialect and the German language), according to the position of the Polish authorities, such a dissection was incorrect. In their opinion, a phenomenon such as bilingual children did not exist, and the real mother tongue of a child was the language he spoke at home. The option of Silesian Creole, which could be regarded as a mother tongue for many children and which eventually could be considered as a dialect of German, was criticized by the Polish officials as well. For them, Silesian Creole was the same Polish language that had been somewhat 'corrupted' during the years of Germanization and isolation from the direct linguistic source. According to this view, each Silesian child was in fact a Pole, whose dialect could be easily improved to proper Polish.[215] This opinion was in confrontation with the view of the pro-German side, the *Volksbund,* and Calonder himself.

As a reaction to the repeated petitions of the *Volksbund*, supported by Gustav Stresemann, the issue of 'Maurer's Children' passed to the Permanent Court of International Justice in The Hague. In April 1928, The Hague Tribunal decided that self-identification was not enough to register a child in a minority school.[216] Thus, one can consider the case of 'Maurer's Children' as a clash between two ideologies in the mid-twenties, when the postwar treaties and agreements started to be analysed critically. The policy of the German side, supported by Stresemann, the pro-nationalist *Volksbund* and Calonder, could be classified as an attempt to revise and even to change the framework of the minority treaties. Against this attempt at invoking the subjective decision of belonging to a minority, the position of the 'objective reality' was adopted. This 'objective' approach decided whether the person belonged to a minority or not by relying on national, cultural, and linguistic differences. This approach came to the

[215] UWSL, 27, OP 1567, pp. 5-9, 11, 12, 20-24, 30, 31, 37-40.

[216] Mirolub, 'Wyrok', 512-533; 'Sprawy mniejszościowe', 453-454.

fore during the postwar minority treaties and afterwards, and was supported by these treaties.[217] Poland, the Council of the League of Nations, and the Tribunal of The Hague all adopted this position. However, such a definition of a minority, relying on vague national and linguistic terms, brought about a call for revision less than ten years after the minority treaties were signed.

Taking into account these considerations, the desire to keep the postwar *status quo* was not the only reason guiding the decision of such significant international peace organizations as the League of Nations or the Court of Justice in The Hague. Keeping the postwar definition of minorities could harm some of the members of these minorities. However, from the point of view of these organizations, much more harm would be done by creating the precedent of individual interpretations which went against the accepted norms. Such interpretations rejected the authority of the postwar laws and could damage the relative balance established by the peace treaties. As a result, the decision in favour of the 'objective' definition of minorities was in force until 1931 when, after repeated petitions by the *Volksbund*, The Hague Tribunal issued a decision stating that children could be registered in the German-speaking minority schools even without an adequate knowledge of the German language. This decision also applied retroactively to those children whose applications for minority school had been rejected in 1927; they could now join at the level of the fifth or the sixth grade, after several years of studies in the Polish-speaking schools.[218] These pro-German Silesian children, up to then studying in the Polish-speaking schools as Poles, could then start their studies in the German-speaking schools. They could continue to study there without knowing the language of instruction, and after five years of being treated as Poles as a result of their 'failure', they could start to be treated as Germans once again. Presumably, the international political and social reality of 1931 in Western and Central Europe significantly differed from that of 1927, and certain postwar laws and principles started to be revisited.

At the same time as the issue of 'Maurer's Children' was being discussed, there were petitions from those referred to as 'unmarried mothers' from the Silesian *Voivodeship*, wishing to register their out-of-wedlock children in the local minority schools. The matter started in the beginning of December 1924 when the *Volksbund* sent a petition to the Mixed Com-

[217] Mirolub, 'Wyrok', 514-533.

[218] Falęcki, Niemieckie szkolnictwo, 84; Łączewski, *Michał Grażyński*, 147.

mission. In this letter three unmarried mothers, who presented themselves as belonging to the German-speaking minority, complained about the compulsory registration of their children to the Polish-speaking schools against their will. The complaint was investigated and continued on for several years, while in the meantime similar complaints from other unmarried mothers from the same area were added to the petition.

Most of the above mentioned complainants tried to register their children in minority schools, but the local authorities rejected their applications.[219] The reason for the rejection was based on the statement that the mother was not legally responsible for her child's education and could not therefore decide on his national affiliation or register him in any school. Since in most of the cases, the fathers of these children were unknown or not even present, the legal responsibility passed to the local tutor. It seems that these tutors were chosen by regional authorities without consultation with their pupils' mothers, and in most of the cases were pro-Polish patriots. One could imagine that such loyal tutors took all necessary measures in order to avoid the registration of their pupils in minority schools, and these children were consequently redirected to the Polish-speaking schools.[220] The opinion of the mothers in these cases was not considered, not only because of a lack of legal responsibility, but also because of their lower social status. In such a traditional and religious society as Silesia, an unmarried woman with a child could easily be reputed as 'immoral', her behaviour deemed 'suspicious'.

At this point both the authorities and the local population arrived at a common view; thus, in March 1928, one of the regional police offices was asked by the school authorities to gather information about the women who signed the petition. Among the points which had to be investigated (others being the mother tongue of the children, or the nationality of the mothers), was one titled 'the moral behaviour of the mothers'. Dealing with this point, officials did comment either that 'despite the fact of having children out of wedlock, the behaviour of the mother could be considered as moral' or that 'she (the mother) behaves in an immoral way'.[221]

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[219] UWSL, 27, OP 1568, pp. 8, 9, 12-14.

[220] UWSL, 27, OP 1568, p. 23.

[221] An interesting point is that most of the mentioned petitions of out of wedlock children were born during the years of World War I or shortly thereafter. One therefore cannot exclude a certain probability of violence from the soldiers' side towards the local women.

After the petition was investigated by the Mixed Commission in 1927, the decision was made to give to these unmarried mothers the right to register their children in schools according to their own will. Even though this decision was based on the Geneva Convention's paragraph concerning the right of minority children to be registered by a person responsible for their education (*la personne responsible de l'education*), it encountered obstacles from the Polish authorities.[222]

According to the former Prussian laws in the area, as well as the contemporary German laws, mothers were responsible for their children's education; however, Polish laws, as mentioned earlier, did not allow for such a possibility. This fact created disagreements between *Volksbund*, which supported the German legislative system, and the Polish authorities.

Another discussion that emerged among the Polish officials was the question of the definition of a mother's rights regarding her child. According to the Polish legislative system, a mother was not permitted to be responsible for her child in 'public' matters. Yet, a mother had the right to be responsible in the 'private' sphere of raising her child, particularly for the immediate necessities of bringing him / her up.[223] Thus, the decision of the Mixed Commission caused the Polish side to re-discuss this rather philosophic question: whether the education of a child was in the private sphere of his mother or in the public sphere of the state's tutor?

On May 29, 1928, the Silesian *Voivode*, Michał Grażyński himself, brought this discussion to an end, by coming down in favour of the Mixed Commission's decision and the German side of the discussion. After reviewing the matter, in a rather one-sided way, he decided that in case of a disagreement between the unmarried mother and the tutor concerning the school registration of her child, the decision of the mother would be the determining one.

De facto, this verdict of Grażyński implied the right of unmarried mothers to register their children as they saw fit, without depending on the state tutor. One could assume that this decision meant also a certain concession of the Polish authorities regarding the treatment of education and in language matters as being part of the individual and subjective sphere, and less of a public or objective one.

Such a sudden revision in favour of the German minority by the pro-Polish and pro-*Sanation* officer was not accidental. This decision of

[222] UWSL, 27, OP 1568, pp. 8, 9, 13, 46.

[223] UWSL, 27, OP 1568, p. 23.

Grażyński was published and sent to all the authorities nine days after the elections in the German State took place on May 20, 1928. In these elections the left wing parties (namely the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands and the Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands) had made significant gains. A short time after the elections, the new German government presented its new foreign policy plans. Among others, there was a proposition to return the Saarland to Germany.[224]

Apparently, the results of these elections, together with the considerations of the balance of power in eastern German and / or the western Polish borders, were among the reasons which brought the Polish government (which had also just gone through elections in March) towards certain concessions in favour of the German minority in Poland.

Due to these two cases: 'Maurer's Children' and children born 'out of wedlock', the fact that the region of Eastern Upper Silesia was simultaneously a post-Prussian autonomous region, a Polish *Voivodeship*, and an area protected by international law under the supervision of the League of Nations, reflects clearly the close link which existed between the 'micro' history of the local population and the 'macro' level of the state and the international politics during the interwar period. These cases enable examination of both the 'micro' social level of *Polonization* within the local population, and the fascinating discussions within the international diplomatic milieu as to the national and linguistic identity of a person. Finally, these cases also enable us to trace the political tensions and questions which were hidden behind the discussions about the rights of an individual.

[224] Steiner, *The Lights*, 458-459; Klaus Hildebrand, *Das vergangene Reich: Deutsche Außenpolitik von Bismarck bis Hitler 1871-1945* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1995), 496-497.

4. 1928–1933: Educational Materials in Both Types of Schools; Teachers, Educational Films, Religion in the Schools: Dynamics of *Polonization* in Both Types of Schools: *Polonization* or *Germanization* in the German Minority Schools

Religion 1928–1934

It seems that in the second half of 1926, after the Piłsudski *Coup* and during 1927, the number of discussions concerning religious education in Upper Silesia decreased significantly. A certain measure of apprehension or even fear of the new regime and of the new anti-regionalist, strongly centralizing authorities were probably among the reasons for such silence. In comparison to this year and a half, the following year, 1928, shows a surge of activity in discussions and correspondence in the matters of school education in general, and of religious education in particular.

Thus, 1928 started with the sincere care of '39 souls of enlightened future Polish citizens'. The souls of these future citizens 'should not be given for a moment to the influence of the German educators'.[225] A letter with such content was sent from the 'Association of Polish Evangelicals' in Królewska Huta to the Department of Education in Katowice. In the letter, the association complained about the lack of Polish-speaking teachers of religion for the children of Evangelical confessions in the four Polish-speaking secondary schools of the city.

Up to that point the authorities of each school had tried to solve the problem with creative solutions. For example, in one of the schools, the German pastor, who was active in pro-minority matters, was described as one who: 'gathers all the 10 pupils from classes I to VIII in one lecture, most of the lecture explaining something in German; he says the prayer in German before and after the lesson, and teaches in Polish only a modest part of the lesson'.[226] In another school, in order to register for participation in the religion classes, the children were asked to bring a confirmation of their knowledge of religion from their home parish pastor.[227]

The association tried to benefit from the pro-state and pro-Polish policy of Grażyński by emphasizing the fact that in spite of their confes-

[225] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 111.
[226] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 110.
[227] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 110.

sion, these children belonged to the Polish nation, and there was a need to avoid their *Germanization* by the German-speaking pastors. Therefore, it was necessary for the Polish-speaking Evangelical pastor to not throw the 'Polishness of the youth (barely just gained) back under the returned influence of the German pastor and the influences of *Germanization* [...]'.[228]

It also seems that after the beginning of *Sanation* and of its anti-regionalist and anti-autonomy policies, together with the appointment of Grażyński, the Silesian episcopacy made attempts to show its loyalty to the new state authorities. Thus, in May 1928, a short time after the Polish elections, the Bishop of the Silesian *Voivodeship* made a canonical visitation around the area. Soon after, he sent his impressions to the Department of Education in Katowice, since during his tour he examined the studies of religion in the regional schools and met with the religion teachers.

In comparison to the former critical letters which were sent from the Silesian Curia several years previously, the letter sent by the current bishop in 1928 was positive and flattering. There he expressed his deep satisfaction with the Polish teachers who, working in difficult conditions, were having significant success in their subjects, including the studies of religion. In the letter, the bishop hinted at his own loyalty to the current authorities, stressing that the population of the *Voivodeship* 'should and must relate with all confidence to our schools and teachers, who together with the Church and its priesthood educate the young generation for God and the Fatherland', and also so that 'the confidence of the people in the Polish school and in our brave teachers increases'.[229] Keeping in mind the former complaints and critique of the secular eastern Polish teachers, one could say that after 1926, the Silesian Church preferred a much more careful position towards the newcomers who had been sent by the state to the area and having become far less autonomous than earlier. For of these reasons, the bishop emphasized that the teachers of religion (most of them belonging to the local clergy) concentrate not only on teaching, but also on educating children to be 'brave Polish citizens'.[230]

Another religious community which applied to the Ministry of Education at the beginning of the school year in 1929, was the Jewish community of Katowice. There, one of the community rabbis, together with the

[228] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 111.

[229] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 114, 116a.

[230] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 116.

parents of the children from both types of public schools (primary and secondary), wrote about an urgent matter. According to the Geneva Convention, the Jews of Silesia had a right to keep Shabbat and all the religious holidays and could refrain from working on those days.[231]

It seems, however, that in the new school year 1929–1930 some of the education authorities decided to show more loyalty to the new government than to the old convention by applying the same school rules towards all the children, without differentiating by confession. Therefore, Jewish children had to participate together with their non-Jewish schoolmates in those lessons which required writing, drawing, and handicraft. In mid-September the Jews of Katowice urgently requested from the authorities that their children be released from these lessons on Saturdays in order to be able to keep religious law.[232]

The reaction of the *Voivodeship* authorities was relatively rapid. During the next three weeks it found out whether the matter dealt only with children from the secondary schools or with all Jewish schoolchildren in the city. Shortly thereafter, directors of all the state schools, both from the city as well as from the suburbs, were directed to release the Jewish schoolchildren from the Saturday lessons which interfered with their observing the religious laws of Judaism.[233]

Apparently, from the state authorities' point of view, being a religious Jew and obeying the traditions and following his Rabbi in being loyal to the state, were preferable to being a secular pro-German. This, together with the articles of the Convention, may explain the swiftness and effectiveness of the regional authorities' activity in the case of the Jewish request. Additional evidence for the state's approach could be the support given by the Ministry of Education to teachers of the Bible and Talmud in the private Jewish schools of the Silesian *Voivodeship* in 1930. It was decided that these subjects could be temporarily taught even by these teachers who did not have the necessary formal qualification.[234]

Another important matter dealing with religion in the sphere of education arose on March 6, 1934, two months after the nonaggression pact between Poland and Germany was signed. The bishop of the Silesian *Voivodeship* sent a directive to all the clergy of the region 'in order to avoid misunderstanding and suspicions as well as to maintain consistency

[231] Kaeckenbeeck, 'Convention', Art. 71, 606.
[232] UWSL, 27, OP 31, p. 152.
[233] UWSL, 27, OP 31, pp. 154, 155, 155a.
[234] UWSL, 27, OP 30, p. 8.

in dealings with issues'.[235] It seems that after the anti-German policy of Poland in the second half of 1933, and after the Polish-German pact was signed, most of the State and Church authorities did not entirely know how to behave regarding the German matters.

Therefore, because of the pact, the bishop's directive was mild and cautious. Thus, in Church matters, each nation (Polish and German) had a right to communicate and to be answered in its own language. At the same time the common Polish-German parish gatherings, had to be conducted in Polish, yet all spoken matters had to be translated into German, if need be.[236]

National Holidays

The Piłsudski *Coup* strongly influenced the matter of how the schools celebrated the Polish national holidays. On May 31, 1926, shortly after the *Coup*, Józef Piłsudski resigned from the post of president, which was proposed to him, and instead suggested the appointment of Ignacy Mościcki, who was politically indifferent.[237] Mieczysław Bilski, the *Voivode* of Silesia, reacted to these changes rapidly and actively and, it seems, under pressure from the Ministry of Education. On June 8, he sent a detailed instruction to the directors of all the types of schools in the Silesian *Voivodeship*. In it, Bilski anxiously proclaimed that 'the election of the new president of the Polish Republic is such a significant state action that it has to echo loudly also within the school walls and be exploited for engendering patriotic feeling among the schoolchildren'.[238]

Then, it was prescribed by the *Voivode* to choose a time in all the schools which would be dedicated to 'covering the appointment of Prof. Ignacy Mościcki to the highest office in the Republic'.[239] During this time, school authorities had to organize a Church service and a speech by one of the teachers, who had to teach the schoolchildren about the scholarship and the social activities of the new president as well as 'to analyse and to emphasize the laudable thoughts expressed by him [...] to the Polish people'.[240]

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[235] UWSL, 27, OP 30, p. 15.
[236] UWSL, 27, OP 30, p. 15.
[237] UWSL, 27, OP 30, p. 15.
[238] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 53.
[239] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 53.
[240] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 53.

One can assume that most of the teachers had no deep knowledge about the personality of the recently chosen president and were not able to gather much information about it in so a short period of time. Therefore, Bilski recommended finding the relevant material in the daily press.[241] Additionally, he emphasized that 'of course any enunciation of political content should be excluded from the content of the speech, according to the generally accepted principle that politics cannot and should not gain entrance beyond the threshold of the school building'.[242] Finally, children and teachers were to sing the state anthem together along with 'other patriotic songs'.[243] It seems that the *Voivode* explicitly tried to avoid any harmful and negative interpretations of the recent political changes by moderating any excessive mentioning of the role that Józef Piłsudski had played in all these changes.

Thus, despite all this loyal and patriotic content, one can detect a hint of uncertainty and a certain lack of self-confidence. Apparently, after all the glorifying of the new president, the real praise was dedicated to the figure of Piłsudski who stood invisibly behind Mościcki. This unseen personality was the real reason for the anxiety which enveloped Bilski.

Nevertheless, this letter, as well as other activities, did not help the *Voivode* of Silesia keep his position, since during the *May Coup d'État* he had opposed Piłsudski and supported the government of Wincenty Witos. In September of the same year, he was discharged from his post of *Voivode* and replaced by Michał Grażyński.[244] One could say that the patriotic and national feelings among both the pro-Polish and the pro-German youth of the Silesian *Voivodeship* were created under pressure from certain officials concerned about the new government and their careers.

On October 2, 1926, Piłsudski was chosen as Prime Minister of the Polish Republic. On November 8, he sent a directive to the Ministry of Education, which the following day was quickly redirected to the curators of all the state school districts. In it, the Prime Minister ordered a turning of November 11th (which later became the Independence Day of Poland) into a holiday and to release all the state officials and all the schoolchildren from their work and studies. The Ministry stressed that this instruc-

[241] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 53.

[242] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 53.

[243] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 53.

[244] Edward Długajczyk, *Sanacja Śląska 1926–1939: Zarys dziejów politycznych* (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Śląsk, 1983), 44-55; Łączewski, *Michał Grażyński*, 54-57.

tion had to be precisely carried out. Thus, the schoolchildren benefited from the importance to Piłsudski of November 11th and from the fact that this date had 'to hold sway in minds of the young generation, which in the dawn of its life has to feel the significance and the festivity of this memorable day'.[245]

The differences between the actions of previous Silesian *Voivodes* and the tenure of Michał Grażyński are captured by the way the 3rd of May was celebrated.[246] Directives concerning the first celebration of this day within the Silesian *Voivodeship* in 1923, which were sent by the first *Voivode*, were already examined above. In them, the instructions for conducting the festivities were vague and dealt mostly with the religious activity: services in the places of worship of all the confessions. In addition, the *Voivode* mildly asked the officials to take an active part in these services as well as in other festivities.[247]

The instructions sent by Grażyński five years later differed dramatically from those of 1923. There was no place for vagueness or uncertainty, and the nature of the festivities seems more militaristic than celebratory. The program of the celebrations was clear and precise, without any of the excessive patriotic rhetoric which appeared in the instructions of 1923. Patriotism had to be manifested in the actions during the festivity, but not in the words of the directive. Grażyński precisely specified the names of the streets where the demonstration had to pass and their sequence. Then, the order was set for the organizations, schools, and professional unions which had to participate in the demonstration, together with their exact place in the parade. Times of each action were planned down to the minute. Religious services also had a significant place in the celebration, but not exclusively. It seems that greater importance was given not to the content of the service, but to the appearance and symbolism of the service, including where the army should be placed.

Thus: the 'army stands in front of the Church [...] to the right of the army stands the police. The military training unions are on both sides of the Church cemetery [...] Church banners are to be placed in the middle. In front of the presbytery should be chairs for the authorities.'[248] One can say that unlike the festive program of 1923, the religious ceremony did not play a central role in the celebrations, which were more civil in char-

[245] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 58.

[246] Concerning the reasons of celebration of the 3rd of May cf. pp. 103-104.

[247] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 3.

[248] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 69.

acter. The event lost the possibility for any individual interpretation from the side of the local officials and its meaning was strictly prescribed by the *Voivode's* office, which represented the interests of Piłsudski himself.

The school year 1927–1928 in the secondary schools of Silesian *Voivodeship* started with a special Church service, combined with the sermons of priests and of school directors. In what were called 'mixed' schools, where there were both German-speaking and Polish-speaking classes, these sermons were conducted only in Polish. According to the teachers' reports, most of the pro-German children hardly understood the proceedings or only partially understood them.

Authorities from these schools tried to show their loyalty to the pro-Polish and pro-state policy of the new *Voivode*, but their efforts caused the opposite reaction to what he had expressed in his directive. In his opinion, these sermons had a significant educative role, which was totally lost in the case of the German-speaking children being required to listen to them in Polish. Therefore, he prescribed that these sermons be conducted separately, one to German-speaking and one to the Polish-speaking children, each group in its mother tongue. In the same letter it was recommended that the German-speaking teachers not try to send their reports in imperfect Polish, but instead in German, as had been done earlier.[249]

It seems that in this case, after the new government took a power, the fear of using the German language among the lower-level officials clashed with the politics of the higher-level authorities, which had preferred rather to make use of this language to the benefit of the state. In this case, the state could benefit more from the loyal pro-Polish German speakers, than from the Polish sermons. On August 31, 1927 the *Sea and River League* decided to organize the 'Week of Ensign', which was to take place September 25-October 2, shortly after the school year started. The action had a strong propaganda character and was planned as an introductory event, dedicated to the Polish navy, during which the schoolchildren were to be familiarized with the Polish fleet. As written in the plan, 'The aim of the "Week of Ensign" is propaganda for their own sea [...]'.[250]

The program was varied and contained several parts: parties, morning school performances, booklets sales, a raffle and the collection of donations, a sea exhibition in Katowice, film screenings, theatre shows, press propaganda, etc.[251] Each one of these parts had its own special meaning.

[249] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 70.
[250] UWSL, 27, OP 34, pp. 77.
[251] UWSL, 27, OP 34, pp. 77-79.

So, during the evening parties, special delegates of the *Sea and River League* had to publically present 'papers, which make popular the matters of their own sea and its importance to the imperial position of Poland'. These speeches had to be finished with the 'resolution, stating the readiness of all the people to repulse all the alien attempts at gaining ownership over the Baltic as granted to Poland by the Treaty of Versailles'.[252]

During the morning performances and booklet sales, the schoolchildren had to obtain several booklets, named 'Sea' and 'What Every Pole Should Know about His Sea'.[253] In addition, two planes were rented in order to scatter propaganda leaflets over the whole *Voivodeship*. Finally, the local theatre of Katowice prepared a show, called the 'Baltic Legend', which was to be shown in several cities of the Silesian *Voivodeship*.[254]

What caused the Silesian authorities to organize such a huge event right at the beginning of the school year and particularly in 1927? One could suppose that the festivity was not accidental; it seems that it was strongly connected to the international political context at the time. Apparently, during the summer months of that year, the Polish government had to emphasize the importance of its national navy, especially among the population on the western borders of the state.

Firstly, in the beginning of that year, Gustav Stresemann started to raise anew the question of the revision of the German-Polish boundary, as he did immediately after the Locarno Treaties. Apparently, at this time all the pressure was placed on the Polish Corridor, which divided Germany and its Eastern Prussian parts. This area was of great importance to Poland, since it was the only Polish exit to the Baltic Sea. The ownership over the area was emphasized in February 1920 by a symbolic rite of a 'marriage' between Poland and the sea, which was in imitation of a similar act done by the Venetian doges.[255] In 1925 the first Polish harbours started to be built in order to gain naval independence from Germany, which until then had allowed for harbour space for Polish vessels.[256]

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[252] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 77.

[253] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 78.

[254] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 79.

[255] Grzegorz Piwnicki, Bogdan Zalewski, *Marynarka Wojenna w Dziejach Polski: Studium Historyczno-Polityczne* (Gdynia: Zespół Redakcyjno-Wydawniczy, 2006), 323.

[256] Andrzej Makowski, 'Problemy Polityki Morskiej Państwa Polskiego 1918–2006', in Jan K. Sawicki, ed., *Marynarka Polska (1918–2008)*, vol. 1 (Gdynia: Akademia Morska, 2009), 107-129, at 113.

According to Zara Steiner, immediately after the Locarno Treaty was signed, there was a French-German proposal according to which Poland could claim some of the Lithuanian lands together with Memel (or Klaipėda) as a sea exit, in exchange for the Polish Corridor. Even though this plan never reached the level of diplomatic negotiations, the tension it created between Germany, Poland, and Lithuania was palpable.[257]

During the same year, probably influenced by the plans of Stresemann, Poland built its first harbour Gdynia, whose role went far beyond dealing with just merchant ships. Its creation in 1927 was a proclamation, at the international level, of Poland's rights to these sea areas. By this act, the Polish government could additionally show that it did not plan to renounce its areas on the sea, but on the contrary, it intended to develop and strengthen these sea rights as much as possible. Probably in order to convince Piłsudski (who was rather sceptical about the success of a strong navy in Poland), in January 1927 a detailed plan of its necessary strengthening was prepared and presented to him by the navy commanders.

This plan contained two parts: in the event of war with Germany and in the event of war with the Soviet Union. The case of war with Germany was shown as the most complicated one, demanding probable support from France.[258] It seems that beginning at that point, the Polish naval forces did start to prepare appropriate defensive measures, including various vessels, warships, and submarines.[259]

During 1927 Germany had certain conversations with the Lithuanian government concerning the representation of the German minority in the Memel area.[260] After the *Coup* in December 1926, the new government of Lithuania adopted a rather pro-German and, to a certain degree, anti-Polish policy.[261] Even though this discussion did not bring any significant results, Poland took notice of the German-Lithuanian negotiations, which could potentially turn into a future collaboration and threaten the existence of the Polish Corridor.[262]

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[257] Ibid., 113.

[258] Piwnicki, Zalewski, *Marynarka*, 115-118, 136.

[259] Ibid., 119, 136-137, 325.

[260] Piotr Łossowski, *Kłajpeda kontra Memel: Problem Kłajpedy w latach 1918–1939–1945* (Warszawa: PAN, 2007), 85-86.

[261] Richard J. Crampton, *Eastern Europe in the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge, 1997), 102; Piotr Łossowski, *Litwa* (Warszawa: Trio, 1991), 138-139.

[262] Hildebrand, *Das vergangene Reich*, 491.

Since the beginning of that same year, Stresemann had been conducting active negotiations with France concerning an ending of its occupation of the Rhineland.[263] Such strengthening of the relationship between the former Polish ally and a rather menacing Germany, which became evident in August 1927, could not leave the Polish government indifferent.

During the summer of that same year, Poland finished its organization of the military part of Gdynia harbour and purchased from France its first ironclad, called *Bałtyk*. This was to strengthen the Polish military navy and be a probable answer to German attempts to take away the Polish Corridor, the only sea access of Poland. In addition, *Bałtyk* and other military vessels which had been bought from France earlier must have heightened the patriotism of Poles, among them the younger generation who visited the coastal area of Gdynia in excursions organized by the *Sea and River League*.[264]

All these political-diplomatic developments help clarify the reasons for such a sudden and solemn celebration of the Polish navy in the land area of Silesia in the beginning of the school year. While the whole future of the Polish Corridor was still under a certain threat from the German side, it was important to conduct pro-Polish propaganda among the mixed and partially pro-German population of Silesia. Such an event could show to both the Silesians and Germans the strength of the Polish navy, and draw the attention of the young generation, attracting it in favour of Poland. As stated in the program: 'Awareness by the school youth of their own sea idea has a central meaning and has to be one of the most important aims of the "Week of Ensign".'[265]

One of the last directives was issued in the beginning of March 1934. In the letter, the Bishop of Katowice (mentioned earlier) reminded the local clergy in the *Voivodeship* that during the national holidays (both religious and secular occasions) special Church services should be conducted. The letter specified May 3rd, August 15th, November 11th, and the name day of Józef Piłsudski (March 19th). Some of these holidays, May 3rd or November 11th, have already been mentioned and examined here.

The other one, August 15th, was celebrated during the existence of Second Republic as both a religious and secular event, since it mingled together the Assumption of the Virgin Mary and the Day of the Polish

[263] Ibid., 489-492; Steiner, *The Lights*, 430.

[264] Jerzy Przybylski, '90 lat Polskiej Marynarki: Plany i Rzeczywistość', in Sawicki, *Marynarka Polska*, 48-73, at 53-54; Piwnicki, Zalewski, *Marynarka*, 325.

[265] UWSL, 27, OP 34, p. 77.

Soldier. While the religious meaning of the holiday had been well known in Poland for centuries, the secular one had only been celebrated since 1923 and was dedicated to the so-called *Wisła Miracle*, or to the victory of Poland in the Battle of Warsaw on August 15, 1920 during the Polish-Bolshevik War.[266] Generally, this holiday was devoted to the bravery of Polish soldiers during the battles of 1920.

The last holiday mentioned in the directive was the newest one and the most confusing as well. On the one hand, the Church could not avoid such an important event. On the other hand, its extreme and political meaning probably caused Piłsudski to be displeased. It was therefore decided to celebrate the event in a modest way, similarly to the second secular holiday (November 11th) which had to be celebrated in the *Voivodeship* (even though November 11th started to be officially celebrated in Poland as an Independence Day in 1937). It was to be organized according to the decision of the local authorities, followed by a service without a sermon.[267] With such a vague explanation, the bishop relieved himself of the responsibility for possible political incidents connected to these feasts and shifted this burden to the local secular and religious officials of the Silesian *Voivodeship's* regions.

Educational Films 1928–1933

After several years of the Second Polish Republic's existence, the idea of cinema as a medium to assist patriotism in school education developed deep roots in public opinion. During the late 1920s till the beginning of the 1930s, the authorities of the Polish Ministry of Education were overwhelmed with ideas and proposals for various films for young people submitted from different parts of the population.

For instance, a pro-Polish patriot and publicist, supported by the Silesian *Voivodeship's* administration in 1927, moved through the eastern parts of the Polish State with lectures and films dedicated to Upper Silesia and to the importance of the Silesian *Voivodeship* for all of Poland, with the intention of reaching a wide spectrum of the local population. During the eleven months of his journey, he visited about 39 cities and towns and

[266] Grzegorz Łukomski, *Walka Rzeczypospolitej o kresy północno-wschodnie 1918–1920: Polityka i działania militarne* (Poznań: UAM, 1994), 105-111.

[267] UWSL, 27, OP 30, p. 15.

held a total 131 of lectures, 64 of these to schoolchildren.[268] Emphasizing the educational and patriotic role of his lectures, the author stressed that about 70 percent of the population which listened to him was: 'Slavic minorities and Jews'.[269]

In 1928, the direction of *Dep-Film*, one of the film studios and rentals in Warsaw, informed the education authorities in Katowice of more than 120 films of various titles which could be shown to the youth. Their content varied from patriotic celebrations of May 3rd in Warsaw and the Polish civilian airlines, to the production of chocolate, excursions in different regions of Poland and all over the world, and finally to a drama entitled 'Dangerous Kiss' which was dedicated to the prevention of tuberculosis.[270]

Additionally, there were scientific films dealing with technological and industrial novelties, within the spheres of geography, physics and chemistry, biology, zoology, and agriculture. Some of the films, however, were also dedicated to different sport competitions, both in Poland and abroad.[271]

A final example was a French film 'Rain of Roses' (*Deszcz Róż*, in the Polish version), which was a success among the Catholic Church officials. The film's content was dedicated to the romantic love of two young people, which, due to Saint Teresa, ended with a happy wedding and a common pilgrimage of the couple to the saint's grave. 'Rain of Roses' was strongly supported by several priests as a good example of educational films, which had 'huge moral and educational value, which could be scarcely encountered within the flood of foreign films [...]. This film deserves the support of all those who are working on the education of youth and who demand from films an educational and not a demoralizing role.'[272]

The medium which had been viewed suspiciously in previous years and towards which the school authorities and the local population in Silesia had ambivalent feelings at the beginning of the 1920s, with time started to achieve a large measure of respect and even fascination.

[268] UWSL, 27, OP 461, pp. 27, 30-32.
[269] UWSL, 27, OP 461, p. 30.
[270] UWSL, 27, OP 461, pp. 59-60.
[271] UWSL, 27, OP 461, pp. 49-58.
[272] UWSL, 27, OP 461, pp. 41, 42, 45.

This analysis is supported by a highly inspired letter sent by the chief school inspector of the Silesian *Voivodeship* to the Department of Education in Katowice. There the official wrote:

> With the progress of the current pedagogic methods in teaching, the intellectualization of science has a huge role. To achieve this end, among other ways, is cinema, which given the scientific films could be a valuable assistance to the teachers' work [...]. Similar action introducing scientific films to schools should be initiated as well in Upper Silesia.'[273]

Then, the school inspector described the obvious advantages of such a medium, emphasizing the successful combination of the conventional scientific character of a lecture with the visual scientific value of film.

Finally, it also mentions the entertainment part of the film as having an important pedagogical role in the process of education. It seems that it was not only the film's merits which brought the school inspector to write such a letter. Probably, there was also an attempt to bring the traditional population of the Silesian *Voivodeship* closer to that of the rest of Poland, and to open it to new technological and educational influences. Such an attempt can be detected in the inspector's words: 'These films could be valuable not only to the schoolwork itself, but simultaneously could serve cultural-educative aims for the wider masses of the population.'[274] Presumably after the second half of 1926, the policy of films being screened in the Silesian *Voivodeship* started to resemble the other Polish *Voivodeships* more and became less unique. This was probably one among many other results of the general policy of state unification promoted by Piłsudski and his comrades, among them Michał Grażyński.

Therefore, it appears from these examples that the opinion of at least part of the local population towards cinema had changed. Thus, in 1930 the Parents' Committee of one of the female secondary schools of Katowice wrote a petition to the Department of Education in the city. In it, the parents surprisingly asked to cancel the edict forbidding the school youth from attending cinematographs. Although this request was made mostly in order to organize special screenings for children and to avoid the illegal presence of youth in the forbidden shows, all the parents stressed the educational importance of cinema, which when used properly could provide many advantages.[275]

[273] UWSL, 27, OP 461, p. 273.
[274] UWSL, 27, OP 461, p. 273.
[275] UWSL, 27, OP 461, p. 80.

Apparently, the perception of cinema during the late 1920s through the beginning of the 1930s, both among the authorities of both the school and Church, and of the parents as well, contrasted dramatically to the previous opinion about this medium as it had existed just a few years earlier. Approval and acceptance, if not inspiration, replaced the complaints of the 'Christian mothers' and the accusations of 'immoral shows' and of 'pornography', as previously mentioned.

Presumably, in the matters of cinematography, as well as in some other educational subjects, the local population of Silesian *Voivodeship* started to feel certain confidence in the new Polish education system (without distinguishing between the Polish-speaking and the minority schools). An additionally significant factor was a gradual secularization, or at least a less traditional way of life in large parts of the area due to multiple Polish newcomers from other parts of the Republic.

Finally, in the second half of 1926, local Church activists and some radical Christian organizations had probably no choice except to accept the heightened policy of *Sanation* and state unification. Due to the new anti-regionalist strategy of Piłsudski and Grażyński, these activists had to restrain themselves from the obvious critique of the state authorities' actions, including those concerning school education, and to adapt themselves to the new reality.

History and the Education of the Citizen

Studies of history in the Polish-speaking and the German minority schools will be examined in this work by looking at three manuals and one school program. The first two manuals in Polish were written for the fifth class of primary schools (published in 1934) and for the initial classes of the secondary schools (published in 1929).[276] The German manual and the teaching program were dedicated to the studies of Polish history (published in 1929), and were prepared for the secondary school classes and contained brief instructions to teachers.

It seems that there was no significant difference between the history curriculum (mentioned earlier) and these textbooks. The manual for

[276] Hanna Pohoska, Maria Wysznacka, *Z naszej przeszłości: Podręcznik do nauki historji dla V-ej klasy szkół powszechnych (Warszawa: Nasza Drukarnia,* 1934); Bronisław Gebert, Gizela Gebertowa, *Opowiadania z dziejów ojczystych: Dla niższych klas szkół średnich*, vol. 3 (Lwów: Książnica-Atlas, 1929).

primary schools, probably because of the young age of the schoolchildren, was mostly dedicated to the greatness of Poland starting with its early beginning as a Slavic duchy. Its defeats in war were modestly concealed, while its victories were emphasized. Similarly to what was presented in the school program of 1922, Germans were depicted as guests in Polish lands, who were welcomed and had to respect their hosts.

Interesting is that the borders of the Polish lands in the early Middle Ages matched almost completely the imaginary borders of the Second Polish Republic (including the whole of Silesia): 'Between the Carpathian mountains on the south and the Baltic sea on the north, between the river Odra on the west and Bug on the east lay a land called long ago Poland.' [277]

Thus, in the historical imagination of children studying, a circle was to be closed: the earliest origin of their homeland and the recent Polish State merged as one. The past seemed to be very similar to the present and, therefore, in children's perception became something familiar and proximate.

Very often at the end of lesson, the most important conclusions or statements were stressed in bold fonts, aiming to be especially remembered by children. So, for instance, children had to remember that from its beginnings as a duchy: 'Poland became a Christian state', then 'Poland became a kingdom', then 'Pomorze was united with Poland', 'With the coronation (of Władysław Łokietek) Poland became a unified and independent kingdom', 'Lwów [...] became a light of Polishness in the eastern border of the state', 'The nobility started to take part in the government of the state' and finally that the 'Polish state holds in just regard all its citizens because it does not make a difference between the nations and the confessions' and 'Because love of the motherland does not end with the death, as long as the citizen breathes, he ought to help to his motherland.' [278]

According to these emphases, one can see that the authors not only aimed to inform the schoolchildren about the most important historical events, but also provided them some state values: the importance of certain places (which territories were still disputed or uncertain, because of a relatively low percentage of a Polish population), some of the basic values of the Second Republic, and some of the basic duties of citizens.

In the manual for the secondary school students, which dealt with recent Polish history, one sees the importance of the Polish border areas

[277] Pohoska, Wysznacka, *Z naszej przeszłości*, 4.

[278] Ibid., 8, 22, 29, 47, 54, 82, 120, 139.

and especially the Polish Corridor. First of all, in it the children had to deal not only with victories but also with the defeats of Poland and its people, which were described in the same precise way as its victories. There, history was represented mostly through the deeds of national heroes such as Kościuszko, Poniatowski, Dąbrowski, or Haller, whose examples probably inspired the schoolchildren and gave them a model of civic behaviour.

After these examples, the second part of the manual dealing with recent history turned to the actual questions of Polish borders. There the question of natural state borders versus 'political' borders was discussed. The textbook's authors stated that because of a lack of natural borders, except for the mountains on the south and the sea on the north, the Polish State had to accept political borders.

Therefore, the sea area of Poland, which was so hotly disputed, became a 'natural' and an unquestionable border of the state in the minds of the young Polish citizens. Germany and the Soviet Union were described as the largest and the strongest neighbours of Poland along its longest eastern and western borders. Then the importance of the Polish sea area, Pomorze, was discussed. In a detailed way the economic and military importance of the Polish sea and its own merchant marine and navy were described.[279] Emphasizing these sea and border matters may well be closer to economics or geography than to history. One could explain such a mixing by observing the years during which the manual was written and published. As examined earlier, 1927–1928 were the years when the question of the Polish Corridor was being revisited and disputed within the whole Central and West European diplomatic space. Thus, the probable future defenders of these areas had to have a strong belief in the Corridor's importance and significance.

The content of the textbook and of the curriculum for the German-speaking schools is generally similar to that from about 1922, examined here already. Although the authors tried to emphasize the tensions and wars between Poland and Russia, no attempt was made to colour the Polish-German wars or the fate of the Polish population under the rule of Prussia.

One could say that the while the subject matter of this history curriculum and its organization in the German-speaking schools during the late 1920s did not differ dramatically from those of previous years, the way it was represented became less 'ideological' and more didactic.

[279] Gebert, Gebertowa, *Opowiadania*, 161-164.

It started to show various historical facts from different angles, more than just to 'attract' minority children to the advantages of staying in Poland. Probably, after their living in Poland became a more or less permanent reality, the authors of school programs aimed to provide these children more information about the Polish past than in previous years, and to give them a deeper understanding of its whole complexity. It seems that with the new demands of the state, the ideology which was presented in the manuals changed its form as well. This created (between the first years of the Polish Republic's existence and the late 1920s–early 1930s) a certain disparity in the teaching of such 'ideological' subjects as history, geography, and Polish literature.

As one can see from the previous parts of this work, during the first years of the Republic's existence, great significance was given to the development of these humanities in the school educational system. Sometimes the importance of their ideological values was stressed to such a degree that it exceeded the didactic meaning of these subjects, as was shown earlier in the cases of the history program or in the reading materials for Polish literature studies.

Although during the next years the school curricula of history, geography, and literature did not undergo significant changes, many voices started to criticize the 'old' teaching methods and content material of the early 1920s. One of the most active and well known among these philosophers, historians, and pedagogues was Hanna Pohoska, a scholar of education and a pedagogue who wrote several history textbooks for schoolchildren and for their teachers, as well as manuals dedicated to the proper education of future Polish citizens.[280] Being an inspired pro-Piłsudski ally, in her perspective she combined different methods and schools of teaching, proposing that the subjects of history, geography and literature be taught in a 'synthesis', and she criticized the highly patriotic 'old' methods that had been in use during the early 1920s.

According to her statements, during the first years of the Polish State's existence, the method of teaching history was still being influenced by old and out-dated methods that included a 'heroic' self-image of the Polish people. At that time it had been important to educate the young generation into a romantic desire for freedom and state, which were needed to strengthen Polish nationalism. This was done by emphasizing the images of heroes, concentrating on the greatness of the lost state and of the Polish

[280] Hanna Pohoska, *Dydaktyka historii* (Warszawa: M. Arcta, 1928); Pohoska, Wysznacka, *Z naszej przeszłości*; Gebert, Gebertowa, *Opowiadania*.

people, and developing an emotional type of patriotism. Naturally, this way of teaching history, which was known to the old generation of teachers and historians before the end of the World War I, continued to be used in schools during the first years of Republic's existence.

Pohoska was convinced that a decade later, new methods of teaching history had to be developed, together with a new ideological approach as to the proper civic education of the youth. In this approach, studies of Polish history, which until then did not match the studies of world history, had to be taught in a way where both would complement one another. Then the new generation of children would get a correct understanding not only of history, but also of civil society and of their obligations as citizens.

Pohoska emphasized the importance of examining Polish history within the background of other world societies and with respect to other states and nations. The new Polish citizen had to grow not from shallow romantic and emotional patriotism, which stressed the exclusivity of its own nation, but from the deep understanding of his role in his/her society as well as within the whole world. Thus, he/she had to be devoted not only to his/her own state and nation, but to all people in general.[281] Pohoska believed that: 'One should convince the youth that only love builds, while hatred destroys.'[282]

She discovered the roots of such state-citizen education in the model of ancient Greece and, therefore, emphasized the importance of studying more than only history. History in her vision had to be fit into the studies of literature, which could supplement historical sources with literary ones, as well as into the studies of languages, especially of Greek and Latin, and into geography. Ideally, teachers of all these subjects would coordinate their lectures in order to synchronize the material chronologically and thematically and through this bring up a new generation of conscious citizens who would function for the greater good of Polish society.[283]

[281] Pohoska, *Dydaktyka*, 15-58, 81-86; Hanna Pohoska, *Wychowanie obywatelsko-państwowe* (Warszawa: Nasza Księgarnia, 1931), 216-281.

[282] Ibid., 236.

[283] Pohoska, *Dydaktyka*, 96-126; Pohoska, *Wychowanie*, 11-31.

Polish Language Studies

The last issue to be examined in this chapter is an important discussion concerning the number of hours of Polish language instruction in the German-speaking minority schools of the Silesian *Voivodeship*. This fascinating issue became one of the political and ideological tools used during the process of *Polonization* in the *Voivodeship*.

In February 1924 a new directive from state authorities prescribed three weekly hours of studies of the Polish language in the minority primary schools starting from the third class. With time, more and more teachers of Polish origins emigrated to Silesian *Voivodeship* from the eastern areas of the state. Therefore, a year later in January 1925, *Voivode* Bilski decided to increase the amount of Polish lessons and sent the regional Department of Education an additional instruction: from the fourth class, children had to have Polish lessons for five hours a week.[284] The matter might be rather simple: a relative abundance of language teachers would promote and intensify the study of Polish, which in turn would afford minority schoolchildren a better knowledge of the state language and could ultimately make them better citizens.

It seems however, that this logical policy did not last for long. After the new *Voivode*, Grażyński, came to power in the second half of the 1920s replacing Bilski, the matter of Polish language studies was brought up once again for discussion. Even before any official step was taken, the *Volksbund* sent a complaint in July 1927 to the *Voivodeship* authorities, seeking a reduction of the Polish language classes from five to three, and beginning these studies with the fifth class (and not with the third as was prescribed by the previous *Voivode*). The *Volksbund* requested, therefore, a return to the amount of Polish instruction in the new school year to what had been prescribed by the *Voivodeship* authorities earlier.[285]

This letter, which can be considered as a first sign of the coming changes, soon was followed by an official step. In January 1929, the Ministry of Education issued a new law, important for this study, which took effect in all the schools of the Silesian *Voivodeship* immediately from the second half of the school year on. This brought some changes in both types of schools, but this present work intends to focus on the changes as applied to the minority schools.

[284] UWSL, 27, OP 1272, p. 16.
[285] UWSL, 27, OP 1272, p. 22.

According to the new regulation, all the hours which had previously been allotted to studying Polish had to be given to studying German. Polish from then on had to be taught in place of a modern foreign language and within the hours which earlier had been assigned to studying a foreign language and was to begin in the fifth class.[286] *De facto* this meant a significant reduction in Polish language learning, since instead of beginning in the third class, children only started to study Polish from the fifth class, a reduction of two years. In addition, the number of hours for foreign language study in the sixth and in the seventh classes was lowered to less than the five hours that Bilski had previously prescribed.[287]

Such action produced strong discontent amongst the pro-German Silesian population of the area.[288] The protests were so intense that the matter of the new school legislation reached the press. So, in the *Schlesische Zeitung* an article appeared entitled 'Against the Reduction of the Polish Language Classes in our Primary Schools'.[289]

As an answer to the population and a clarification of the actions of the government, the officials of the *Voivodeship* vaguely explained that the studies of Polish beginning earlier in the fourth class could either overload minority schoolchildren in comparison to their Polish-speaking peers, or cause a reduction of the German language hours, which would be contrary to the basic regulations.[290]

Here a question arises: What was the reason for such a sudden decision by the government and why did the reduction of hours studying Polish cause such opposition amongst the pro-German Silesian population? Such an action by the Polish authorities was not accidental and it is fascinating in the context of this case study. From the point of view of the regulations regarding minorities, this step did not damage the pro-German population; on the contrary, the government was showing its concern for keeping the amount of German language hours constant.

However, *de facto*, such a step in reducing the state language hours meant a deterioration in the ability of the pro-German population down the line to find a proper place in the Polish job market, especially in official posts which demanded a high-level knowledge of Polish. Thus, on

[286] UWSL, 27, OP 1272, p. 33.

[287] UWSL, 27, OP 1272, p. 29.

[288] UWSL, 27, OP 1272, pp. 31, 34.

[289] UWSL, 27, OP 1272; 'Gegen die Verkürzung des Polnisch-Unterrichts in unseren Volksschulen', *Schlesische Zeitung*, 5 June 1929, 30.

[290] UWSL, 27, OP 1272, p. 33.

the one hand, the authorities could be hindering the career development of the undesirable pro-German population in gaining state posts. On the other hand, this act could force the Silesian population, desiring better knowledge of Polish for its children, to transfer to the Polish-speaking schools, where they could 'become' *Poles* and thereby increase the number of Poles within the population of the Silesian *Voivodeship*.

This last consideration was very sensitive in the case of Silesians, as can be seen from the letters of the local population and in the above-mentioned article in the *Schlesische Zeitung*. Apparently, because of the unstable position of the Silesian *Voivodeship*, the local population tried to gain a maximal advantage for the future of its children and to prepare them for life on either side of border: both Polish and German.

While the pro-Polish Silesians made their choice in favour of the Polish State and sent their children to the Polish-speaking schools, the pro-German Silesians apparently found themselves in a complicated situation. A large part of them sent their children to the German-speaking schools between 1925 and 1927 during which the political fate of the Silesian *Voivodeship* was unclear. In addition, there were those parents who in 1928–1929 still continued to register their children for minority schools, because of a belief that they offered a higher level of education, and their conviction as to the advantages of being German. In 1929 it seems, however, that many of these parents began recognizing the relative stability of the Polish State and its future job opportunities. Additionally, they began to notice that in 1929 knowledge of German was practical for working in Germany, while in Poland, especially due to the process of *Polonization* within the Silesian *Voivodeship*, there was a need for a high-level of Polish language skills in order to be competitive with the immigrant Polish speaking population.

Therefore, if it were the case that the Silesian *Voivodeship* would continue to stay within Poland, there was a need for a good knowledge of the spoken and literary language of the state. As it seems, most of the pro-German Silesian population used Creole at home, which was not considered Polish.

Thus, paradoxically, after the case of 'Maurer's Children' revealed a weak knowledge of German in some of the local population, the case of reducing Polish language hours revealed their weak knowledge of Polish as well. The population, which was regarded by the authorities and political leaders as 'German-speaking', 'Polish-speaking' or 'bilingual' was not, in fact, at an adequate level in any 'official' language.

This explains the protests of these pro-German Silesians against a reduction in Polish language studies. In a relatively poor society, in an industrial area, language had not only ideological meaning, but also utilitarian value, often turning into a tool which could aid or hinder economic survival. A good knowledge of the state language was the only means through which to obtain appropriate work and thereby support and maintain a family. As for Silesians, the proper knowledge of a language could save them from hunger and poverty, probably much more than the knowledge of mathematics or history. The school was almost the only avenue that could provide their children with this important knowledge of language and, therefore, any attempt to weaken a learning of this tool was perceived in an extremely negative light.

Apparently, the pro-Polish organizations clearly understood this troubling situation for the pro-German Silesians and tried to use it to fit their agenda. Thus, one such organization (at the time of the Polish language reductions) tried to convince the Silesian population of Bielsko to send their children to the Polish-speaking schools. In this proclamation of 1929, the arguments they mentioned were not ideological but only pragmatic. It said: 'Some people look at school as politics, others again through the school want to put in their children's hands a better piece of bread.' The authors called on parents to send their children to the Polish-speaking schools because: 'Today in Poland, without Polish schools it is more and more difficult to find a job, to be accepted in a high school, and is more and more difficult to get this better piece of bread.'[291]

These declarations touched on the most sensitive aspirations in the hearts of Silesian parents, whose goals were in large part far from any ideology, but rather dedicated to sending their children to the German minority schools in the hopes for a better future.

Finally, the authors of the declaration, in a rather ironic way, mention the Jewish community of Bielsko and the ethnic Germans as the best examples of pragmatism and of quick-wittedness. The authors stated: 'Although most of the Jews of Bielsko speak only German, they changed their German schools to Polish. After all, Jews have a good sense [...] which school their children have to attend.' At the same time many Germans 'send their children to the Polish schools in order to provide for these children a better future either in trade, or in offices, trains, post offices, factories, or in the army'.[292]

[291] UWSL, 27, OP 1272, p. 34.

[292] UWSL, 27, OP 1272, p. 34.

Therefore, Silesian parents, tempted by this list of prestigious jobs, could also send their children to the Polish-speaking schools and by this act provide these new Polish speakers with a better future, all the while not knowing that the world was on the eve of a global economic crisis. During the whole period of the 1920s through the beginning of the 1930s, the ideological, linguistic or national interests of a large part of the Silesian population were gradually left behind, in favour of more practical interests. *Polonization* succeeded due to the perception of its material advantage, while the true, deeper, self-definition of the local Silesian population, it seems, remained significantly unchanged.

II. German Jews in Katowice: The Policy of the Lodges *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* towards the Polish State, the *Ostjuden*, and International Politics

1. June 1922–May 1926: The Pro-German and Anti-Polish Ideology of *Concordia*: The Policy of the B'nai B'rith Order versus Political Changes

The shift of Katowice to the Polish State in June 1922, despite the plebiscite's results, was a painful event for the members of *Concordia*. After the region of Eastern Upper Silesia was transformed into the Silesian *Voivodeship* with Katowice (no longer Kattowitz) as its capital, a large part of the city's German-Jewish population together with their German neighbours left the area. Indeed as Moshe Zimmermann has demonstrated, German Jews considered themselves Germans even when they inhabited areas which were outside the borders of the State of Germany.[1] They moved either to the German territory of Upper Silesia, now called the Upper Silesian Province, or to the western territories of the German State.

Presumably, the choice for the German-Jewish inhabitants of Eastern Upper Silesia was either to emigrate or to stay in their place of residence. Either decision was complicated physically and emotionally and probably accompanied by doubts and misgivings. On the one hand, those who decided to emigrate had to leave behind everything they had gained: jobs, property, (sometimes) family members and move into an unknown future. However, according to Marcin Wodziński, the majority of the German Jews from Eastern Upper Silesia indeed decided to emigrate after

[1] More about the self-definition and the perception of the German Jews see: Moshe Zimmermann, *Deutsche gegen Deutsche: Das Schicksal der Juden 1938–1945* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 2008), 12-21.

the area was divided: 'Between 1922 and 1924 alone 7,700 out of 10,500 Jews inhabiting the ex-German sector of the *Voivodeship* of Silesia decided to emigrate.'[2] On the other hand, the decision to remain in their native place was not always the easiest one. After the German-Polish borders were shifted, long-time inhabitants of the area found themselves in a totally new reality. Their German mother tongue was changed to unfamiliar Polish, which became the official language of the region. The former German names of city streets were changed to the new Polish. Familiar systems of bureaucracy, services, and local authorities gradually disappeared and instead were replaced with a new and unknown system with new clerks and officials. In the place of their friends and relatives who had departed, crowds of immigrants from the eastern parts of the Polish State rushed in, striving to settle in the relatively prosperous area of the Silesian *Voivodeship*.[3] These Polish and Jewish immigrants, usually close to the poverty line, were supported by the state authorities in order to 'Polonize' the former German area, as already mentioned in the previous chapter. So, according to Dan Diner, the Second Polish Republic '[...] had no interest in a federal structure. Rather, the new Polish state was bent on Polonizing its non-Polish ethnic groups.'[4]

As it seems, at this point, the feelings of the different groups of the population such as the German Jews and the Silesians were rather the same towards the newcomers. Despite the significant linguistic difference and the different social status of these two communities, their religious confessions and even different social affiliations (a former rural traditional community versus an urban progressive one), their reactions to the new immigrants were similar.

Apparently, both the German-Jewish and the Silesian groups of the area symbolized to Polish authorities an older, Prussian rule and so the authorities were not entirely eager to employ them in ideologically important positions, for instance, as state officials or in the sphere of education. This is also one of the assumptions which Maria Wanatowicz has stated when examining the immigrant population in the interwar Silesian *Voivodeship*. According to her study, from the authorities' point of view,

[2] Marcin Wodziński, 'Languages of the Jewish Communities, 131-160, at 138.

[3] Alexandra Namysło, 'The Religious Life of Katowice Jews in the Inter-War Period', in Wodziński, Spyra, *Jews in Silesia*, 125-138, at 126; Wanatowicz, *Inteligencja na Śląsku*, 84-100; Wanatowicz, *Ludność*, 46, 70-90.

[4] Dan Diner, *Cataclysms: A History of the Twentieth Century from Europe's Edge* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), 85.

educated Polish-speaking immigrants from the areas of Galicia (who were loyal to the Polish State and who readily saw themselves as Poles) very often were more suitable for positions than the traditional and regionalist Silesians, or the clearly disloyal Germans or pro-German Jews (who hardly knew any Polish at all).[5]

However, Wanatowicz only briefly focuses on the Jewish newcomers and is convinced that they (both the educated and uneducated) were hardly welcomed by the Polish authorities of the Silesian *Voivodeship*.

Nevertheless, considering the large number of Jewish immigrants who arrived in the *Voivodeship's* area during the first years after its creation, one can assume that from authorities' point of view, the less-educated portion of the immigrants (not only Polish, but Jewish as well) could play a certain role in the process of *Polonization*. Their presence and activity could in some way 'dilute' the pre-existing society of the area, and be of use in the factories, mines or in the areas of petty commerce.

In the Jewish case, according to Jerzy Tomaszewski, although the percentage of Jewish merchants in western parts of Poland was lower in comparison to the other state areas, it was still high (especially with respect to the total percentage of Jews in the area). Jewish commerce was conditional on the higher commerce standards of the region and, therefore, at the beginning of twenties only a relatively small number of immigrants with relatively stronger economic positions (that is, in comparison to the level of Jewish merchants in the eastern parts of Poland) could survive the competition.[6]

Such a state of affairs gradually brought about during the decade of 1921-1931 a situation where the number of newcomers in the whole Silesian *Voivodeship*, and especially in Katowice as its capital, became a significant part of the society.[7] Thus, the former non-Polish majority of the population found itself in a rather disadvantageous position, turning into a minority in comparison to their successful Polish and pro-Polish immigrant neighbours.

This demonstrates a new postwar situation in the twentieth century border areas not only in Europe, but also in other regions in the world where the former and prosperous local majority suddenly became a perse-

[5] Wanatowicz, *Ludność*, 28-109; Wanatowicz, *Inteligencja na Śląsku*, 20-36.

[6] Jerzy Tomaszewski, 'The Role of Jews in Polish Commerce, 1918–1939', in Israel Gutman et al., eds., *The Jews of Poland between Two World Wars* (Waltham: Brandeis University, 1989), 141-157, here at 143-150.

[7] Wanatowicz, *Ludność*, 36, 51-70.

cuted minority and the immigrants, who in most of the cases belonged to the lowest strata of society, rapidly became a majority supported by the government with jobs, government posts, etc.[8]

Apparently, the German-Jewish and Silesian populations in most of the Silesian *Voivodeship's* areas and especially in Katowice found itself after 1922 in a process of migration without migrating. Without physically moving, they faced many of the experiences and challenges of immigrants finding themselves living in a new reality: a new language, a new dominant religion, a new set of values and ideology, new governmental and social structures, a new surrounding population, while they themselves became a minority among the newcomers.[9]

Moreover, the situation of these indigenous migrants, who were shifted against their will, in some sense was even worse than that of those who decided to move away and become immigrants in the traditional sense. There, leaving the familiar space and environment, naturally carried with it the expectation of unfamiliarity, new semantic contexts and meanings, which any newcomer would have to learn over again. Those who decided to stay, however, became witnesses to some extent of their familiar reality 'splitting'.

On the one hand, all the surrounding *lieux de memoire*, the buildings, streets, stores, landscape, kept the same shape, creating a visual illusion of stability and constancy. On the other hand, all these *lieux de memoire*, which transmitted certain well-known messages, suddenly were filled with unfamiliar linguistic and ideological meanings. In some sense, they ceased

[8] For instance, as in the cases of bilateral agreement of division, the plebiscite and the post-plebiscite area of Schleswig: Wambaugh, *Plebiscites*, 52-98. Another example could probably be the case of partition of India and the creation of new boundaries of India and Pakistan (even though the division there was made according to confessional patterns): Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven: Yale University, 2007), 81-205. To some extent similar border division took place also in the case of the Treaty of Angora which established the Turkish-Iranian border and shifted to Iran the area of Mosul with its large Kurdish population (even though it is not entirely clear what the role of and the part of migrants there was): ibid., 538-544.

[9] It seems that another German Jewish society living in the Central European border area found itself in a similar situation, being shifted from the former Prussian territories to the successor state. Ruth Leiserowitz examined the case of the German Jewish community of Memel, which in 1924 was shifted to Lithuania. It seems however, that the situation of this community differed from the situation of the German community in Katowice. According to Leiserowitz, Memel continued to keep its German character, culture and language, differently from Katowice, which was actively Polonized. Cf. Leiserowitz, *Sabbatleuchter*, 289-294.

to fulfil their proper functions for the indigenous population, which caused a certain cognitive dissonance and frustration.

In other words, interpreting the statement of Jean Baudrillard, during the process of simulation, for what had been the local native population, symbols turned into meaningless *Simulacras* or Signs, which did not bear any proper semantic or emotional connotations anymore.[10] Regardless of the other disadvantages of being shifted into a new state (as a probable consequence of a lower income or linguistic difficulties, for instance), the fact of the presence of an alien content within familiar shapes would undoubtedly be one of the strongest causes of frustration. Such frustration or discontent evidently brought about a rejection of this alien element from daily life, even if such a rejection was actually an escape from the surrounding reality. For the German-Jewish members of the *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* lodges within B'nai B'rith such an escape was manifested in their desperate desire to remain under the supervision of their native German District VIII, even after the borders were shifted. According to the statutes of B'nai B'rith, these lodges could no longer belong to the German District. In the issue published in November 1921, Ephraim Finkel, a leading member of the Order, proposed that 'the lodges separated from the German District should, as quickly as possible [...] move to unite with the already existing lodges in Poland in Cracow and Lemberg' and to form a Polish District.[11]

This proposal was discussed within high administrative circles of the Order, but did not change either the position or decisions of the two Upper Silesian lodges in Katowice and in Königshütte (or Królewska Huta and later on Chorzów). It led to their protest, especially in 1922, after preparations began for the creation of a Polish District of B'nai B'rith.

It seems, therefore, that above-mentioned attempt to escape the reality was among the reasons which underlay the persistence of the two former Prussian Silesian lodges to belong to the German District, although for them it was now across the border. This attempt was probably also among the reasons for rejecting any connections with their Jewish colleagues from other lodges which during the recent years had also found themselves within the Second Polish Republic.

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[10] Jean Baudrillard, *Simulakra and Simulation* (Michigan: The University of Michigan Press, 1981), 1, 6-7.

[11] Andreas Reinke, 'Between Ethnic Solidarity and National Allegiance: The German Order of the B'nai B'rith', in Böwing, *Yearbook* 1, 321-342, at 341.

One could assume that the relationship of the members of *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* with other Jewish organizations in Poland at this time would be less sensitive than their connections with the Polish-speaking B'nai B'rith brothers. Apparently, the German-Jewish brothers' felt a strong sense of humiliation. An additional reason for such an assumption could be the one which was mentioned previously: an alien content, i. e. the stranger and 'inferior' Yiddish and Polish spoken by the *Ostjuden*, who suddenly were present within the familiar frames of B'nai B'rith lodges.[12]

In this case, each activity of the Order, which earlier had brought satisfaction and pleasure (for instance: gatherings, lectures, donations, and rites), took on a rather negative shading when all these activities were carried out by Eastern European Jews (who according to these German-Jews did not entirely suit the Western European image of the B'nai B'rith Order).[13]

It is not entirely clear from the sources what the activity of the three Silesian lodges was during the post-plebiscite period and immediately after the shifting of the border. It is also difficult to determine whether this chronological part of the Silesian lodges' archive was damaged during World War II and during its later removal from Kraków to Warsaw and then back to Kraków, as was mentioned in the introduction.

Another assumption could be that the activity of the lodges' members in this period of a year and a half was weakened due to political developments in the area: the Third Silesian Uprising, the shifting of the border, the official separation of the lodges from the German District, and the massive emigration of the indigenous population to the German territory.

Some information about the Silesian lodges from this period is found in scarce correspondence, although not all of it sheds light on their activities. This correspondence was exchanged between the heads of the B'nai

[12] About the German Jewish reception of the *Ostjude* see: Moshe Zimmermann, *Die deutschen Juden 1914–1945* (München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag, 1997), 23-24; Steven E. Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The East European Jew in German and German Jewish Consciousness, 1800–1923* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), 22-29, 219-220; Steven E. Aschheim, 'The East European Jew and German Jewish Identity', in Jonathan Frankel, ed., *Studies in Contemporary Jewry*, vol. 1 (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 7-14; Trude Maurer, *Ostjuden in Deutschland 1918–1933* (Hamburg: Hans Christians Verlag, 1986), 766-767.

[13] More about the history of German reception of the *Ostjude* and the policy of the *Ostjude* treatment cf. Moshe Zimmermann, *Deutsch-jüdische Vergangenheit: Der Judenhass als Herausforderung* (Paderborn: Fernand Schöningh, 2005), 189-199.

B'rith Executive Committee (which until 1925 was in Chicago), between the German District, and between Leon Ader in Kraków and the heads of *Concordia*.[14] In addition to other things discussed in it, at the end of January 1922 Leon Ader wrote to Alexander Seelenfreund, the Committee's secretary in Chicago, concerning the matter of the lodge *Austria* in Bielsko. By 1922 the creation of the Polish B'nai B'rith District with the Grand Lodge being in Kraków was finally planned out.[15] Ader, as a veteran member of the Order and also well experienced in relationships with the heads of the Order in the United States, a year later became the official representative of the Executive Committee in Poland. Such a post obliged him to supervise all the lodges that were expected to merge with Polish District XIII in the very near future.[16]

It seems, however, that several months before his official appointment, Ader was already active in negotiating the expected entrance of certain loges into the planned District. Presumably, not all the negotiations went smoothly as is evident from the letter of Ader to the president of the Cieszyn (or Austrian) Silesian lodge *Austria.* Dr Robinsohn did not welcome the idea of joining the Polish District, as did two other lodges from the former Habsburg territories of Poland (namely, *Solidarność* in Kraków and *Leopolis* in Lwów). Therefore, Ader applied to the Order's central authorities in America asking them to assist in the matter of his relationship with *Austria*.[17]

As it seems, the German lodges had a very close connection with the American lodges. Probably these close links existed not only because of the authorial character of the Grand Lodge of the United States in relation to all subordinated European Districts, but also because it reflected the character of the German-American relations in the interwar period. According to Dan Diner: 'Of all countries in Europe, Germany is seen as virtually the most American [...]. The Weimar Republic was very Americanized industrially and culturally, and many of its political and intellec-

[14] Archiwum Państwowe w Krakowie [State Archives in Kraków], B'nai B'rith [hereafter: APKr, BB], 68, pp. 1, 7, 8, 9.

[15] APKr, BB 68, p. 1; Ludwik Hass, *Ambicje, rachuby, rzeczywistość: Wolnomularstwo w Europie Środkowo-Wschodniej 1905–1928* (Warszawa: PWN, 1984), 240.

[16] Czajecka, *Archiwum Związku*, 23; Anna M. Kargol, *Działalność i charakter żydowskiego Stowarzyszenia Humanitarnego B'nei B'rith w latach 1892–1938* (Kraków: Wydział Nauk Politycznych i Stosunków Międzynarodowych Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2004), 101-103.

[17] APKr, BB 68, p. 1.

tual leaders supported this with deep conviction.'[18] Therefore, relations between the representatives of the Jewish Order in the United States and in Germany could also be interpreted as relations between the German Weimar and their American colleagues, while these relations reflected the patriotic-territorial, non-Jewish aspect of their self-definition.

One of the reasons for the refusal to join the Polish District was probably a hidden rivalry and the issue of priority. *Austria* was founded in 1889 as one of the first and largest lodges in the area. It was *Austria* who initiated the creation of the new lodge *Solidarność* in Kraków in 1892.[19] One could assume that the choice of *Solidarność* as a future Grand Lodge of the Polish District and the place of *Austria* as just a subject lodge caused certain displeasure among the lodge members.

It seems that either due to the diplomatic negotiations of Ader or due to the efficient intervention of the Order's authorities, during 1922 the president of *Austria* consented to joining the Polish District. Thus, on October 1922, representatives of several lodges from different parts of Poland gathered together in Kraków in order to confirm their wish to create a separate Polish District with the Grand Lodge in Kraków.[20] The installation of the Grand Lodge, i. e. the actual creation of the Polish District, took place on January 9, 1924. While Leon Ader became president of the new District, the representative of lodge *Austria* – Professor Edward Feuerstein from Bielsko – was appointed to the vice-presidential post.[21] Apparently, this honorary assignment was given to *Austria* not entirely by chance, but as a tribute payment to the former high position of this lodge and for its agreement to join the new Polish District.

Although the matter of *Austria's* incorporation into the Polish District took some time (as it is evident from the letter of Leon Ader to the heads of the B'nai B'rith German District), in April 1923 most of its members were ready to be incorporated to the new District XIII.[22] A short time after the various organizational and personal matters were settled, *Austria*

[18] Dan Diner, *America in the Eyes of the Germans: An Essay on Anti-Americanism* (Princeton: Marcus Wiener Publishers, 1996), 26-27.

[19] Czajecka, *Archiwum Związku*, 38.

[20] Kargol, *Działalność i charakter*, 103-104; Czajecka, *Archiwum Związku*, 12; See also: Anna M. Kargol, *Zakon Synów Przymierza: Krakowska Loża 'Solidarność' 1892–1938* (Warszawa: Oficyna Wydawnicza RYTM, 2013).

[21] Czajecka, *Archiwum Związku*, 12.

[22] APKr, BB 107, p. 29.

officially joined the lodges that were ready to create the Polish District.[23] Another source that could shed some light on Ader's activity is his letter addressing the further incorporation of all Silesian lodges into the upcoming Polish District and their unification with other lodges in the territory of the Second Polish Republic. He sent it to the German District of B'nai B'rith in March 1923. There the future president of the Polish District described in detail the importance of such incorporation. It seems that Ader was at least partly convinced of the stability of the western Polish borders, which had only recently been fixed, and of the future existence of Eastern Upper Silesia within Poland. In his opinion:

> Much heavier is the weight of the following consideration, namely, that the affiliation of Brothers who are stabile residents of the Polish Upper Silesia with the lodges active within the German Reich could be considered by Polish government as an unfriendly act... and could cause measures which are not desirable from B'nai B'rith position and interests.[24]

Then he tried to persuade the German brothers that 'among other things, it is certainly in the interests of the lodges active in Polish Upper Silesia to strengthen themselves by affiliation to members of the Order [...]', who have their Order residence in the same area.[25] Further developments showed that neither the German District nor the two Silesian lodges were convinced by Ader's arguments.

The report from *Concordia* about its activity in 1923 (which was sent to the Executive Committee in 1924) was apparently among the first signs of its organized schedule, which was made in a political atmosphere that was still unclear. As it appeared in the report, in 1923 the lodge already had a well-managed schedule, including meetings, the installation of new members, festivities, children and youth activities, lectures, etc.[26] In addition, members of *Concordia* stated optimistically that 'the relationships [of Concordia] to both Districts VIII and the XIII are the best ones [...]. The lodge's activity forms the ground on which all the Israelites [*Israeliten* in the original] from all different directions can find themselves together

[23] Czajecka, *Archiwum Związku*, 12. The Executive Committee in Chicago on June 27, 1923 officially decreed about the creation of the Polish District Nr. XIII; 13. APKr, BB 107, p. 41.

[24] APKr, BB 107, p. 21.

[25] APKr, BB 107, p. 21.

[26] APKr, BB 360, pp. 7-9.

and act for the interests of Jewry [...].'[27] However, between the lines of this solid list of the lodge's achievements and behind the idealistic and optimistic statements about the close friendship between the German and the Polish B'nai B'rith Districts in particular, and with the whole Jewish nation in general, one notices a tone of uncertainty within the whole text.

First of all, at the beginning of the report, the authors mentioned 20 members (among 143 in total) who had left the lodge during the past year (3 passed away and 17 left the region). Replacing them, 29 new brothers were accepted. This change, which took place among the relatively small number of members, eventually influenced the overall morale of the group. Such an influence could indeed be traced to the low number of the brothers who took part in the lodge's meetings during 1923. According to the report, their number varied between 91 and 38, being on average about 49 members per meeting out of 152 members.[28]

The silence of *Concordia* concerning the discussion about joining the Polish District is also worth noting. This avoidance of the issues dealing with the results of shifted borders could eventually point to an attempt to escape the new, painful reality and to 'normalize' an undesirable situation, at least within the framework of the report. Thus, according to the report the two most important events they experienced during 1923 were the lodge's formal exit from the German District VIII, with its transfer to the direct authority of the Executive Committee in the United States on October 23, 1923, and its 40th anniversary of being founded.[29]

It seems that the date of the first event was not random and became crucial for the Eastern Upper Silesian lodge's future. As mentioned in the previous chapter (II.1), during the whole autumn in 1923 and especially at the end of September, October and the beginning of November, the position of the German State was fairly unbalanced and uncertain due to the number of separatist movements and their *coups* and uprisings.

As mentioned, on September 26, 1923 Germany declared a state of emergency due to the economic disaster and violence in the Ruhr area, and Gustav Stresemann called an end to the passive protest against the French and the Belgian occupation of the Ruhr. In the Rhineland, the *Rhenish Republic* was created. Finally, on the very same day that *Con-*

[27] APKr, BB 360, p. 9.

[28] APKr, BB 360, p. 7.

[29] APKr, BB 360, p. 7.

cordia was officially separated from the German District, namely October 23, the Hamburg Uprising of the German Communist Party occurred.[30]

Obviously, there was no direct link between the last of these events with the exit of *Concordia* on the same day, since the exit procedure had apparently been planned some time earlier. However, the political and social reality of Germany could have influenced the decision of the lodge to speed up the process of joining the American Executive Committee. In the worst case scenario, the Polish State could very soon demand the annexation of the whole area of Upper Silesia and could eventually force the local lodges to be incorporated within the Polish B'nai B'rith District, which was ready to start its activities. It also seems that the Order' s chiefs supported such a decision, preferring probably a wait-and-see position in order to track political changes in the whole Central European area.

At about this time, Leon Ader received from the Order's president, Adolf Kraus, a letter with an official authorization to create the Polish District. In this letter Kraus described Ader's duties towards the former German lodges in a rather evasive way:

> If any of the Lodges which were previously under the jurisdiction of District VIII object to be under the jurisdiction of the new Grand Lodge being established, we advise that no attempt should be made to force them to submit to the jurisdiction of the new District Grand Lodge – in such a case they will be under the jurisdiction of the Executive Committee, but we are of the opinion that the refusal on their part to submit to the jurisdiction of the new District Grand Lodge would be ill-advised. They are now under the jurisdiction of the government of Poland [...] Our people should not take any action which might be construed by anti-Semites as unpatriotic to the country in which they live.[31]

The content of such a letter could be interpreted in several ways, which Ader rapidly used to his own advantage. So, in the end of July 1923, Leon Ader as a representative of the Executive Committee updated the President of the German B'nai B'rith District as to the last decision which had been made in Chicago, namely, the official permission to create Polish District XIII. After such an introduction, which eventually represented his District as the one fully recognized by the B'nai B'rith authorities, Ader approached the main matter of his letter: the future of the two Silesian lodges. There in the name of Order's president in the United

[30] Chapter I.1.

[31] APKr, BB 68, p. 240.

States he requested an encouraging of 'the relevant organizations to consider once more the matter of the incorporation to the Grand Lodge of the new District' and to discuss this matter again 'directly' or 'indirectly' with the Silesian lodges' members that 'it would be required in the interest of the whole to propose to the above mentioned brothers a further objective consideration of this matter.'[32]

In fact, Ader turned to the President of the German District as the person who had the real authority over the Silesian lodges, and who could influence their decision and convince them to join the Polish District. Several weeks later, in August 1923, the answer of the heads of the German District clearly stated that the District did not wish 'to have any influence on the resolution of the issue for both lodges and [they] believe that this matter must remain at the free discretion of the lodges'.[33]

The same day, Leon Ader was informed by the head of *Concordia*, Fritz Reichmann, that after a vote in which 59 members participated, by a total of 57 they unanimously decided to place the two Silesian lodges *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* under the authority of the Executive Committee in the United States instead of joining the Polish District.[34]

Trying, it seems, to moderate this news which was unpleasant for the future head of Polish District, Reichmann softened such a decision by referring to the 'line of development, which was mapped out by the special structure of Polish Upper Silesia'.[35] Another of Reichmann's attempts to avoid possible grievances by the Polish lodges and of Ader himself was to invite him personally to the forthcoming celebration of the *Concordia's* 40th anniversary. It seems, however, that instead of being improved, the situation just became more impaired, since Ader was invited to this anniversary not as a B'nai B'rith brother or at least as a future president of the neighbouring District, but only because of the fact of his appointment as a member of the Executive Committee, which is how it appears from Reichmann's letter.[36] Thus, from this letter's attitude and content, between assurances of friendship and invitations, one can note a slight defiance towards the Polish B'nai B'rith brothers by the German Prussian lodge *Concordia*.

[32] APKr, BB 107, p. 41.

[33] APKr, BB 107, p. 43.

[34] APKr, BB 68, p. 19; Hass, *Ambicje*, 210.

[35] APKr, BB 68, p. 19.

[36] APKr, BB 68, p. 19.

It is difficult to presume what Ader's personal impression of this letter was, as well as the measure of his probable offence at the behaviour of the two Silesian lodges. However, as it seems from his long silence and the lack of any answer concerning the invitation from Reichmann, Ader was not entirely satisfied by the way *Concordia* had behaved, both in relation to him and to the Polish District. As is evident from the sources, while the above mentioned letter of Reichmann was sent on October 26, the first answer of Ader to *Concordia* was sent by him only on January 12, just eight days before the event and only after repeated invitations from Reichmann.[37]

This anniversary celebration was the second event which the heads of *Concordia* mentioned as among the most important in their annual report. It seems that in this case the persistence in keeping the lodge's traditions and to celebrate its founding, regardless of the political situation, involved a certain attempt to keep the illusory feeling of normality within the surrounding political and social disorder. Thus, the 'historical meaning' of the festivity was presented in the report as one where '[...] the representative of the honoured District VIII and the representative of the newly founded District XIII could shake hands for the first time in a brotherly and friendly relation'.[38]

In addition to this representation of the friendship and German-Polish-Jewish unification, no word was said about *Concordia's* constant refusal to join their Eastern European Jewish brothers in the Polish District. Such avoidance took place either for political reasons or because of a reluctance to be associated with the *Ostjuden* community and to keep their own German character along with their loyalty to Germany.

Another hint at the Silesian lodges' unwillingness to be associated with Polish or Eastern European Jews (despite the formal assurances of friendship) was their self-representation as a part of 'Eastern Upper Silesian' Jewry, which had to be united in the whole region.[39] In addition, one of the members of *Concordia* wrote a song especially in honour of the anniversary. There, among the repeated praising of friendship and of the lodge's merits were some poetic hints at the political reality and at the difficult period the lodge and its members were passing through.

For instance, it mentioned that *Concordia* had often had hours of severe storms or that many of its brothers dwelt in a distant, alien land

[37] APKr, BB 68, pp. 23-31.

[38] APKr, BB 360, p. 7.

[39] APKr, BB 360, p. 9.

where other stars were glowing.[40] Apparently the author of the song was referring to the difficult reality of the lodge's transfer to the Polish territory and to those members, who being German Silesian Jews, had left their homeland and had moved to other parts of Germany.

It would seem that the anniversary event of *Concordia* became a pretext, since from that point forward in 1924 the correspondence increased between the Executive Committee and the members of the Polish, American and German Districts as to the matter of the Silesian lodges. Thus, the American members of the Executive Committee expressed interest in *Concordia's* anniversary and requested from Ader (as their representative in Poland) detailed information about the celebration.[41]

In his report, after informing American colleagues briefly about the character of the two Silesian lodges and after a description of the event, Ader finished it by expressing a rather positive hope that 'not in a distant time both Upper Silesian lodges will definitely feel a need to apply to join the Grand Lodge of District XIII'.[42] One can assume that despite all the evasive decisions of the American and German Districts as well as the decision of the Silesian lodges themselves, Leon Ader did not give up on the matter of these lodges' incorporation into the Polish District. Like Cato the Elder, Ader applied the strategy of *Carthago delenda est*.

The correspondence between German, Polish, Silesian, and American lodges clearly demonstrates that Leon Ader applied this strategy consistently throughout the whole year. In March 1924, *Concordia* sent him an invitation to take part in the new officers' installation. Though he was unable to participate in the event, Ader however, took care to send another representative, asking from him a detailed report in order to be thoroughly informed about the process of the installation.[43] Moreover, after the event, this representative was kindly asked by Ader to send this report also to the Executive Committee in Chicago. In addition, the new president of the Polish District sent his own brief report dealing with the activity of *Concordia* to the same addressee in the United States.[44]

It is rather unclear whether the act of apprising the American brothers as to the lodges' activities in Silesia was an obligatory one, or rather a wish to keep up their interest in the unusual situation of these lodges. Still,

[40] APKr, BB 68, p. 27.

[41] APKr, BB 68, p. 33.

[42] APKr, BB 68, pp. 37-38.

[43] APKr, BB 68, pp. 41, 45, 47-53.

[44] APKr, BB 68, pp. 53-57.

following the installation event three weeks later, Ader continued to correspond with the members of *Concordia*. In his letter to the lodge's head, Fritz Reichmann, Ader mentioned the matter which seems to have been the real reason for writing to Reichmann. There he wrote:

> I permit myself again to ask for and receive for the general interest of the Order responses to the suggestions that came from District XIII, and as soon as possible during the first meetings of the admirable Concordia after the vacation period. I lay a great importance in being able to submit to the General Committee of District XIII the views of the admirable Concordia and of the brothers in Königshütte about the exciting matters.[45]

One can assume that not only the opinion of the Silesian brothers about various matters in the Polish District was significant to Ader, but also the discussion about it among the brothers themselves. Apparently in this case his technique for persuading them to join the Polish District was based on a Jewish proverb, which described the psychological influence of acts to thoughts: 'after the acts is the heart drawn'.

Therefore, the mere fact of talking about actual matters of District XIII could probably itself create among the members of Silesian lodges feelings of interest and of a closer link to their Polish-Jewish B'nai B'rith brothers, which could finally lead to their incorporation.

As it seems, the heads of *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* understood these hidden motives as well and tried to avoid manifestations of any obvious interest in the Polish District's activity without giving to Leon Ader any clear answer in these matters. Finally, in July 1924 Ader wrote to the Executive Committee in Chicago: 'It is a pity that this lodge [*Concordia*] in the matter of joining the District XIII always takes a negative point of view, but I hope that this will change with the time.'[46]

Such a concern from the side of Ader was not random, since from the beginning of 1924 he had officially become president of the new Polish B'nai B'rith District. On the one hand, his interest in the two Silesian lodges might be explained by fact of their wealth, which would be helpful to the whole Order in the future in its humanitarian activity. On the other hand, probably even more importantly, was that in such a position, as a representative of this Jewish organization which was new for the Polish State, Ader had to demonstrate a high level of loyalty to the state authorities.

[45] APKr, BB 68, p. 61.

[46] APKr, BB 68, p. 59.

One should take into consideration the fact that these authorities might eventually not be all that interested in all the sensibilities of the Silesian lodges' position. Then the state officials most likely might have accused the Polish District of keeping within its lodges, in a complex border area, members belonging to a foreign organization.

An important factor of Ader's concern was the so-called *Viennese Convention*, which took place on August 30. That gathering accepted important articles dealing with Polish citizenship for the German minority and German citizenship for the Polish minority. This convention took part in order to complete some decisions which were initially accepted during the *Little Versailles Treaty* in 1919. According to some paragraphs of the treaty, all the former citizens of Russia, Austria, Hungary, and Prussia who 'opted' in favour of a country other than Poland and did not wish to accept Polish citizenship had to leave Poland within the following two years.[47] Probably, as a result of the Upper Silesian Plebiscite and of the Geneva Convention agreements, in the case of the German *Optants*, no precise date for their leaving the country was set.

Therefore, the *Viennese Convention* became an event where questions of German-Polish citizenship were clearly raised. Among other decisions, the date was also determined when all these German citizens who could not receive or did not want to receive Polish citizenship had to leave the area of Poland (and vice versa with the Polish citizens in Germany). According to the *Convention's* agreements, these *Optants* had no more rights to their fixed real estate property which had to be left in favour of the Polish State.[48]

According to the *Convention's* statements, there was no direct threat to the members of the Silesian lodges being expelled from the Polish State, since legally most of them had full rights to obtain Polish citizenship (and probably had already obtained it) and to stay and work in Poland. However, growing anti-German and anti-foreign tensions within the Polish State, and especially within the Silesian *Voivodeship* (which would be evident from the above mentioned measures and agreements), according to Ader, could probably bring much more radical actions towards the two

[47] *German-Polish Convention Concerning Questions of Option and Nationality, Signed at Vienna, August 30, 1924*, League of Nations Treaty Series 32 (1925), Art. 3, 334.

[48] *Ibid.*, 333-353; Helmut Lippelt, '"Politische Sanierung" zur deutschen Politik gegenüber Polen 1925/26', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 19, 4 (1971), 323-373, at 325-329; Konrad Zieliński, 'Population Displacement and Citizenship in Poland, 1918–1924', in Nick Baron, Peter Gatrell, eds., *Homelands: War, Population and Statehood in Eastern Europe and Russia 1918–1924* (London: Anthem Press, 2004), 98-118, at 101-105.

former Prussian lodges, which institutionally no longer belonged to the Polish State. In addition, in light of the recent *Viennese Convention*, the possessions of the lodges, which officially were non-Polish bodies, could become a question.

It is possible to assume, therefore, that the new District's president tried to call upon the influence of the other European, and especially American, Districts in the fate of Silesian lodges, since these strong authorities could actually sway the final word concerning the lodges' affiliations. Their decision to incorporate Silesian lodges within the Polish District would significantly relieve the uneasy position in which Ader, as president, found himself: between the hammer of Polish state officials and the anvil of international decisions by the Order.

One can say that the international interest in the two Silesian lodges in 1924 also played a role in the official creation of Polish District XIII, since Leon Ader was most interested in gaining international support and enlivening the correspondence, not only as a representative of the American Executive Committee, but also from the much higher position of a District president. The fact of Leo Baeck's nomination to be president of the German B'nai B'rith District also had a certain significance from Ader's point of view. The reason was a good epistolary relationship which had existed between two these leaders, at least since 1923, despite the fact that they only met each other personally in 1925.[49] In addition to the obvious pleasure of such a beautiful friendship, good relations apparently would be helpful in keeping up constant international concern about the future of the Silesian lodges, and probably influence it in favour of the Polish District's interests.

However, it seems that in 1925 the state of things in the matter of incorporation and in the relationships between the Silesian lodges and the Polish District worsened. During this year the appeals of Leon Ader in the matter of the Silesian lodges' incorporation received a very limited and cautious reaction from the Order's members abroad. Apparently, this worsening of the situation was partially a result of international diplomacy.

[49] As Leo Baeck mentioned in his letter to Leon Ader from December 1924: 'The relationship between the Polish and the German Districts of our Order have become so lively and intimate, that cordially and personal relationship between you and me will be the expression of this mutual sympathy. I would be sincerely glad, if you could soon offer me a convenient hour in order that I would be able to get to know you personally.' APKr, BB 68, p. 83; APKr, BB 107, p. 31.

The Address Book, which caused lively correspondence between the Silesian lodges and the Polish District at the end of 1924 and into the first half of 1925, is an example of this deterioration. On December 29, 1924, Leon Ader sent a letter of concern to *Concordia*. In it the president of the Polish District complained that the lodge ignored his letters which contained a concrete question and which had already been sent twice. Thus, *Concordia* was asked for the third time whether its members would like to be listed together with the other brothers of the Polish District in its Address Book which was to be published shortly. Although this question of Ader sounded like a request for a 'yes' or 'no' answer, he mentioned additionally an agreement which had already been made with the brothers from the second Silesian lodge.[50]

One can understand that *Concordia* found itself in a delicate situation. On the one hand, a direct 'no' answer after an attempt to avoid the request could be considered a clear affront to the Polish District. On the other hand, a positive answer concerning the Polish District members' list might be understood as the first sign of an agreement towards their further incorporation. Obviously, the more the tension on the German-Polish border grew at the end of 1924, the stronger Ader's wish became to publically present in the Polish District's list the names of the members in the pro-German Silesian lodges (who were already suspect).

Apparently, the heads of *Concordia* also took into account the sensitive border situation, because three days later they sent to Ader their agreement to have their names appear in the Address Book.[51] However, in order not to be wrongly perceived as members of the Polish District, together with sending their data to the Address Book, the members of the lodge emphasized their official affiliation with the Executive Committee in Chicago. This action could not be accepted by the District's president, since an appearance of lodges with such obvious 'American' attitudes within a loyal Polish-Jewish organization would presumably not please the Polish authorities and could raise an undesirable interest in the issue. Thus, as a compromise, in February 1925, Ader proposed to register *Concordia* in the: 'Address Book which is naturally accessible to everyone' as one that stayed 'outside District XIII'.[52]

It took some time to convince the members of *Concordia* to moderate their demands regarding the appearance of the data. In his next letter,

[50] APKr, BB 68, p. 63.

[51] APKr, BB 68, p. 67.

[52] APKr, BB 68, p. 69.

Ader had to explain as directly as possible the reasons for his request that they not emphasize the official affiliation of the lodge. There he stated:

> The reasons are [...] very clear. From the state legislation's point of view, it is intolerable that an association would be subordinated to an agency which is abroad and not subject to state laws. When we ourselves accept something that is contrary to the law in an address book which is accessible to the general public, we place ourselves in the hands of the authorities, giving them the means to disband us when they wish. I therefore consider it opportune not to do it.[53]

At this point the correspondence in this matter comes to an end. One can assume that apparently, after such a clear statement, *Concordia* gave its agreement to hide its evident ties with the Executive Committee in the United States.

In the beginning of 1925, at the same time that the members of *Concordia* were corresponding with the Polish B'nai B'rith District and defending their own interests, the lodge also had to deal with another unpleasant incident which took place within the Jewish community of Katowice itself.

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, soon after the borders shifted, a large part of the German-Jewish population of the city left and moved to other cities within the borders of Germany. A large wave of new Jewish immigrants gradually filled Katowice, outnumbering the local Jewish population in 1927.[54]

It seems that from the *Vovoideship's* point of view, many of these newcomers would be more loyal to the Polish State than the older pro-German members of the community in the city, and therefore there was a need to support them in gaining posts as representatives of the Jewish community. In addition, because some of the immigrants were not only Yiddish but also Polish speakers, it was very likely that they would try to use this linguistic advantage in order to build their careers as either state officials, or within the Jewish community.[55]

Although Wojciech Jaworski states that the *Voivodeship's* authorities tried to prevent the arrival of the Jewish immigrants from the eastern parts of the country, such a rapid growth of the Jewish population within

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[53] APKr, BB 68, p. 71.

[54] Wojciech Jaworski, *Ludność żydowska w województwie śląskim w latach 1922–1939* (Katowice: 'Śląsk', 1997), 34-35, 46.

[55] Ibid., 149-150.

the Silesian *Voivodeship* could not have taken place without minimal support on the part of the authorities, or at least their non-intervention. It seems that for the state officials, the political views of the Jewish newcomers did not play a significant role as long as they did not oppose the interests of the state. In a short time, due to the immigrants' influence in the city, various Zionist, anti-Zionist, and religious movements and parties appeared.[56] According to Ezra Mendelsohn: 'One cannot speak of a single "Polish Jewry" in the interwar period [...]'.[57] The Jewish society of the interwar Katowice was an example of such a communal heterogeneity.

One could say, therefore, that from the government's point of view, these Jewish immigrants were to some extent agents of *Polonization* within the German-Jewish community of the city. Thus, in their view, the German-Jewish community of Katowice would become more similar

[56] Ibid., 77-87, 149; Namysło, 'The Religious Life', 127. To some extent during the interwar period the content of the Jewish community of Katowice, except its German Jewish part, could resemble one which existed in other large cities of the Second Polish Republic. For more about the heterogeneous character of Polish Jewry and its diversity in the beginning of the twentieth century and in the interwar period see: Gershon Bacon, 'The Rabbinical Conference in Kraków (1903) and the Beginnings of Organized Orthodox Jewry', in David Assaf, Ada Rapoport-Albert, eds., *Let the Old Make Way for the New: Studies in the Social and Cultural History of Eastern European Jewry*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Zalman Shazar, 2009), 199-225; Zvi Gitelman, 'A Century of Jewish Politics in Eastern Europe: The Legacy of the Bund and the Zionist Movement', in Zvi Gitelman, ed., *The Emergence of Modern Jewish Politics: Bundism and Zionism in Eastern Europe* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2003), 3-19, at 12-19; Antony Polonsky, 'The New Jewish Politics and Its Discontents', in Gitelman, *The Emergence*, 35-53; Daniel Blatman, 'National-Minority Policy, Bundist Social Organizations, and Jewish Women in Interwar Poland', in Gitelman, *The Emergence*, 54-70; Daniel Blatman, 'Women in the Jewish Labor Bund in Interwar Poland', in Dalia Ofer, Lenore J. Weitzman, eds., *Women in the Holocaust* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 68-84; Gershon D. Hundert, Gershon C. Bacon, *The Jews in Poland and Russia: Bibliographical Essays* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984), 189-194; Gershon C. Bacon, *The Politics of Tradition: Agudat Yisrael in Poland, 1916-1939* (Jerusalem: The Magnes Press, 1996), 22-99; Scott Ury, '"Pod Szubienicami...": "Polityka Asymilacji" w Warszawie przełomu wieków', in Michał Galas, ed., *Duchowość żydowska w Polsce: Materiały z międzynarodowej konferencji dedykowanej pamięci Profesora Chone Shmeruka* (Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 2000), 327-342; Michael M. Miller, Scott Ury, 'Cosmopolitanism: the End of Jewishness?', *European Review of History* 17, 3 (2010), 337-359, at 348-350; Szymon Rudnicki, 'From "Numerus Clausus" to "Numerus Nullus"', in Antony Polonsky, ed., *From Shtetl to Socialism: Studies from Polin* (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1993), 359-381.

[57] Ezra Mendelsohn, *The Jews of East Central Europe Between the World Wars* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), 17-18.

to the other Jewish communities in the eastern parts of Poland: more religious, or Zionist, and less socialist and pro-German.[58]

Obviously, such a community could be easily guided by its religious or ideological authorities, who were relatively loyal to the Polish State. It seems that the members of *Concordia* symbolized to the state officials exactly such an unwanted pro-German, Jewish type, which had to be replaced with 'eastern' Jewish immigrants. One can say that the dynamic of such a change and of such a support of the newcomers was similar to what occurred among the Silesian population in its 'diluting'. The difference was the desired ultimate character of the community in the same region: a less religious and traditionalist tone in the Silesian general population and a less secular and independent population in the case of the Jews.

The permanent head of the Jewish community of Katowice since 1921 had been Bruno Altmann, a city veteran and a prominent Jewish activist. Despite his belonging to the German-Jewish side during his long 15 years in leadership, he tried to establish links between the German and the Eastern European Jewish population of the city.[59] In the beginning of 1925, the city's Jewish community organized a meeting dedicated to the election of official representatives for the community. At the meeting, six representatives were elected for terms of three years – until 1928 – and another for eight – until 1931. Most of those elected belonged to the German-speaking elite of Katowice and almost all of them were also members of *Concordia*.[60] So, in spite of their turning into a linguistic minority, it seems that at the beginning of 1925, German-Jews of the city continued to prevail in the administrative posts of the Jewish community. Such domination can probably be explained by their higher positions socially and financially, and their education levels in comparison to the lower status of the newcomers.[61]

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[58] About the Socialist views of German Jews cf. Zimmermann, *Deutsch-Jüdische Vergangenheit*, 222-224.

[59] Josef Chrust, 'Bruno Altmann', in Josef Chrust, Josef Frenkel, eds., *Kattowitz: Prihata Yshkiata Shel Hakehila Hayehudit: Sefer Zikaron* (Kattowitz / Tel Aviv: Haamuta Lehanzahat Yahudut, 1996), 159.

[60] UWSL, 27, Wydział Administracyjny [Administration Department, hereafter: ADM] 1992, pp. 197-198; APKr, BB 39, pp. 13-21.

[61] For more about the level of Jewish male and female, religious and secular education in Eastern Europe cf. Shaul Stampfer, *Families, Rabbis and Education: Traditional Jewish Society in Nineteenth-Century Eastern Europe* (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2010), 145-210.

This situation, however, changed sharply during that same year, as is evident from the correspondence of some community members with officials of the *Voivodeship* in March 1926. One can say that the process of *Polonization* within the Jewish community, as desired by the states' authorities, rapidly encountered obstacles. As it appears from the letter, during 1925, the whole community of the city was divided into two antagonistic parts, the reason for such a division being the elections mentioned above.

The letter makes clear that a certain group of community members represented the newcomers. They were appealing to the *Voivodeship's* high officials with a request to clear up the reasons for their previous correspondence (which as it seems had been on-going for a long time) and to bring it to an end. One of the main complaints of these new settlers was the unjust distribution of elected positions, as well as the whole process of the elections. As a result of these elections, no place in the representative body of the community was offered to the immigrant group of the Jewish population of Katowice.[62]

Explaining the background of such an injustice, the complainants emphasized the linguistic matters which they thought would be of special interest to the pro-Polish *Voivodeship* authorities. Hence, the proposed candidate of the newcomers knew the 'Polish language orally and in writing and [the candidate] was able to communicate in this language with the state authorities. This wish was put up by the undersigned *in principle* and because of the easily understandable public interest.'[63]

The opposite side was represented as the ones who 'in principle refused this wish [of using Polish], proposing as the last concession to hire a paid secretary who knew the Polish language'.[64] Here the authors were trying to use in their own interests what was a regional sensitivity concerning the usage of Polish instead of German, since this linguistic matter had become one of the symbols of *Polonization* in the area (as already discussed in the previous chapters).

These linguistic arguments were emphasized in order to prevail over the counterarguments of the German-speaking part of the city's Jewish population. The latter, in order to keep their posts and to continue to be in official correspondence with the *Voivodeship's* authorities, used not an ideological, but a legislative tactic of persuasion. These German speakers

[62] UWSL, 27, ADM 1992, p. 208.
[63] UWSL, 27, ADM 1992, p. 208.
[64] UWSL, 27, ADM 1992, p. 208.

focused on the weakest point of the candidate who was being proposed by the immigrant Jewish group, calling him an *Optant*. During 1925 in the midst of the German-Polish political tension, being named *Optant* (the meaning of this title was discussed earlier) was almost synonymous with high treason.

The political background of Poland and especially its western borders during 1925 also played an essential role in these discussions and eventually aroused anti-German spirits, both at the official level of the *Voivodeship* generally and at the Jewish community level in Katowice in particular. As was mentioned in the previous chapter, in June 1925 the Polish-German trade war started. In addition to Gustav Stresemann's plans for using this economic war, which were already listed earlier, it seems that an additional one was of a great significance for the German government at that time. This was the question of the German *Optants* and their possessions. According to the *Viennese Convention*, just recently signed, these *Optants* had to leave the territory while all their fixed (real) property passed to the Polish State. One of Stresemann's demands in the economic war was, therefore, the demand for the rights of the *Optants* to settle in Poland and to continue to keep their possessions.[65] One can say, therefore, that Germany's requirement made the matter of *Optants* a highly sensitive issue during the summer months. The following Locarno Treaties in October 1925, which left the eastern borders of Germany open for revision in a way that was highly humiliating for Poland, did not help in calming the apprehensions directed towards German nationals within the Polish territory.

Indeed, the candidate mentioned above, despite being a Polish speaker, at least until the beginning of 1926 had not obtained Polish citizenship and only had Austrian citizenship, as is evident from the correspondence. At this point the authorities of the Silesian *Voivodeship* apparently had to decide either in favour of a Polish speaker who was a foreign national, or in favour of German-speaking citizens of Poland. The subsequent fate of the candidate, who was proposed by the Jewish newcomers' group, is unclear. However, from the lists of the Jewish community's representatives during the following several years (which contained the same names chosen mostly by the German-speaking Jews), it is clear that the attempts of the Jewish immigrants' group to bring this specific candidate to a high post were defeated. It seems, therefore, that the *Voivodeship's* officials

[65] Lippelt, 'Politische Sanierung', 329-334.

obviously preferred the argument of the pro-Polish, legal side of the dispute and not its ideological-linguistic side.

For the Jewish society of Katowice, the real meaning of this whole matter was not only who would represent the community at an official level, but a principal question as to whom the power within the community belongs: to the long-standing, constant, German-Jewish society of the city, which still had a higher social and financial position, or to the so-called *Ostjüdisch* immigrants, who were supported by the authorities and pretended that the future of the community belonged to them.

Therefore, a clash between two such different groups within the same community reflected essential questions, such as the linguistic future of the Jewish community of Katowice, its position towards politics and religion, as well as what new Jewish citizens should look like in the new Polish Republic. It seems that the whole character of the community of Katowice was in flux as it sought to adapt to the demographic, linguistic, and social changes which the city experienced during the same years.

2. May 1926: Piłsudski's *Coup d'État*: A Different Vision of the Near Future: Leon Ader versus the Lodges *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs*

A short time after the disagreements within the Jewish community at Katowice took place, the community's concerns were set aside during several tense days between May 12 and May 15, 1926. During these days of Piłsudski's *Coup*, the Silesian *Voivodeship,* as well as all of Poland, found itself waiting, keeping vigilant watch as to the political developments. It seems that the international tension of the past year: the economic collapse and inflation, the customs war with Germany, the humiliating Locarno Treaties, and finally the domestic tumult (when during a short time two governments failed and the third one was out of favour as well), all prepared the citizens of Poland, especially in its border areas, to expect a coming crisis. The days when the *coup* occurred were regarded by the inhabitants of Silesian *Voivodeship* as the anticipated disaster, disrupting the order which had just started to be formed during the last few years.

It would seem that the members of Silesian B'nai B'rith lodges observed the days of the *coup* in an ambiguous way. On the one hand, one of consequences of such a crisis might lead to a return back to Germany of the disputed Eastern Upper Silesian area where they lived. On the

other hand, their legal situation as a pro-German, Jewish minority, which organizationally did not belong to Poland, could deteriorate.

From the correspondence between *Concordia*, Leon Ader, and the German lodges, the impression is that from the beginning of the *coup* until May 18, almost no letters were sent or received. Presumably, all the members of the Order waited for news and paused their correspondence until the whole situation in the state became clearer.

Nevertheless, by May 16 *Concordia* was ready again to organize one of its annual events. This festive event was the *installation* of the newly chosen lodge officials which had been planned earlier; many guests of honour were invited. Despite 'the generally agitated situation', as noted by the vice-president of the Polish B'nai B'rith District, Prof. Eduard Feuerstein from Bielsko (who took part in the event and reported on it to Leon Ader on May 18), the event took place in a solemn way in the presence of a large part of the lodge's members and its guests.[66] It seems that professor Feuerstein took part in the event in an active way, since in the same letter he reported to Ader about his talk with several brothers as to the matter of incorporation.[67]

Thus, although only a day after the end of Piłsudski's *Coup*, with the whole political situation in the Polish State not clear at all, the vice-president of the Polish District nevertheless was already trying to make use of this change. Such political instability would eventually frighten the members of Silesian lodges and persuade them to join the Polish District in order to be on the 'safe' side. Eventually, the political crisis in the land of their residence to some extent served to 'Polonize' the pro-German B'nai B'rith brothers. Sources, however, show that the situation was more complicated and that there were additional factors, which influenced the process of increasing the Silesian lodges members' degree of *Polonization*.

It seems that between June 1925 and before May 1926 the members of the two Silesian lodges believed they could probably benefit from the German-Polish crisis. Eventually, issues of the western Polish borders' revision, which rose as the results of the Locarno Treaties, gave the brothers from *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* an illusory hope of a possible incorporation of Polish Silesia within German borders.

Such hope and desire were evident in the actions of the Silesian lodge's members, conducted in strict confidence and kept absolutely secret from the Polish District president. In order to be on the safe side and to belong

[66] APKr, BB 68, pp. 109, 111.

[67] APKr, BB 68, p. 112.

officially to Upper Silesian organizations in the case of their return to Germany, *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* lodge members decided to renew their membership in the Upper Silesian lodges' Union (which actually was located on the German side and which had excluded them from the list), stressing that they belonged to this region.

According to their statements (which were given much later, not until June to Leon Ader), after the borders were shifted, the two lodges were mistakenly removed from the *Union's* list, while never having left the *Union* officially. The lodges' members emphasized that their actions had only to do with the return of their former status, which officially rightfully belonged to them according to the Geneva Convention. As an additional explanation for their actions, the brothers from Katowice and Królewska Huta also stressed their wish: 'To maintain necessarily all the associations and bonds in cultural and charitable relationship between the East- and West Upper Silesia after the border's shift'.[68] One can see that here, on the one hand, the members of the two lodges clearly emphasized their Silesian identification, yet on the other hand, almost deliberately did not take notice of the whole border area and the political tension in their region during the last months.

In March 1926, the representatives of the lodges sent this request to the German District. The idea of such incorporation was discussed on March 24 in the Grand Lodge's meeting in Berlin.[69] Such an unconcealed support of an idea was quite in opposition to the interests of the Polish District and in support of the pro-German position of the two Silesian lodges. It indicated a weakness of the Polish State and a soon-to-be border shift in favour of Germany in the eyes of the European (and apparently American) B'nai B'rith Orders.

It is unclear whether belonging to the Silesian *Union* would replace their subordination to the Executive Committee in the United States, but undoubtedly by this act *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* wished to emphasize their regional self-perception. Apparently, if there was a sudden decision to return the whole of Upper Silesia to German jurisdiction, it would be much easier to restore the previous relationship to the German District as a part of the German Silesian lodges' group, than to become members of the Polish District. In this case, both the regional and the pro-German self-definition of the members of these two lodges obviously prevailed over Jewish solidarity or Order collegiality. It also prevailed over the

[68] APKr, BB 68, pp. 133-134.

[69] APKr, BB 68, pp. 115, 118, 129.

basic caution not to emphasize their belonging to one of the most sensitive and tentative border areas of Poland at the beginning of 1926.

It is also unclear why the members of *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* preferred to proceed with their request for incorporation into the Silesian lodges *Union* in total secrecy, sharing it only with the brothers of the *Union* and of the German District. In spite of the later denials of these lodge members, it seems that these proceedings were specifically hidden from the members of the Polish District, the Executive Committee in Cincinnati, and its representative in Poland, notably Leon Ader himself.

There was an understandable concern as to an undesirable negative intervention by these bodies, which could interrupt and even hamper the whole process. A *post factum* announcement to the Polish B'nai B'rith District and to the Executive Committee would be an easier way for the members of the two Silesian lodges. Moreover, in the possible case of their return to Germany, they would presumably encounter no obstacles or opposition.

Nevertheless, information about these developments reached Leon Ader within a relatively short period of time and, coming simultaneously with the news about the political disaster of the *coup d'état* by Piłsudski, it created an additional crisis in the relations between the Silesian lodges and the German and Polish Districts. It is unclear when the president of the Polish District received the information about the planned organizational changes within the Silesian lodges. According to his version, written in a lengthy letter to Leo Baeck and to the heads of the two Silesian lodges, Ader stated that the meeting of the General Committee of the Order in Breslau was his source of information.

There, Leon Ader quite accidentally heard in a talk with the head of the *Silesian Lodges Union* about the planned developments.[70] One should take into account that the above-mentioned meeting of the General Committee took place on March 14.[71] Ader sent letters of complaint about the matter to Baeck and the two lodges only on May 17, more than two months after the event. In addition, the meeting of the German District, where the matter of the lodges' incorporation into the *Union* was discussed, took place as mentioned on March 24, ten days after the whole manoeuvre was revealed by Ader. Knowing the truth about the planned action between the Silesian lodges and the German District, Ader could

[70] APKr, BB 68, pp. 115, 118.

[71] APKr, BB 68, p. 147 and BB 107, p 151.

easily have prevented this issue from being discussed at the meeting on March 24.

Moreover, as is evident from his correspondence immediately prior, both with the German District and with the two Silesian lodges, up until May 10 there is no evidence that the president of the Polish District knew about the matter.[72] One should take into account that the date May 17 was only two days after the end of *coup* and one day after the *installation* of officers at *Concordia*, when the new president of the lodge started to perform his duties. It was on this date that Ader wrote letters to both Leo Baeck and the Silesian lodges. Apparently, the Polish District's president indeed knew about the matter, but being deeply offended preferred to keep his knowledge secret until the eventual appointment of the new heads of the Silesian lodges. However, the relationship between Leon Ader and Leo Baeck was not only official, but also included a large measure of a deep personal friendship. In addition, the heads of the Silesian lodges as well (at least officially) tried to convince the Polish District's president of their sincere respect for him.

Ader's letters were not restricted to official matters, but also contained a large measure of his personal grievances about having had hidden from him such an important development and his feelings of having been deceived. Apparently, after such personal offense it would be difficult to pretend to be friendly and know nothing. It can, therefore, be assumed that Ader had recently received the information about the Silesian lodges' plans, probably even during the period of the *coup*, which undoubtedly did not simplify the whole matter.

Additionally, the experience of an internal political crisis and a total uncertainty as to the near future just strengthened the negative reaction of Ader to the action of the Silesian lodges, which can be observed in his letters from May 17. First of all, in his letter to Leo Baeck, Ader describes the behaviour of these lodges' members towards the Polish District as arrogant and offensive, while their wish 'to stay away from the union of the District XIII' is described by him as a 'passive resistance' showing that the members 'ignore the historical facts'. Thus, there was a need to 'fight against such a position also from the brotherhood's point of view' and also a need to '[...] reduce the arrogance on the side of the brothers from Kattowitz and Königshütte' and that 'these brothers in this way want to emphasize their significance to the other brothers'.[73]

[72] APKr, BB 68, pp. 105-107 and BB 107, p. 205.

[73] APKr, BB 68, pp. 119-120.

It is unclear yet to which 'historical facts' Ader was referring to in his letter to Baeck. One can only guess that he was either alluding to the fact that the region belonged in the remote past to Poland or eventually was intending to refer to the history of the Jewish people as one community, which would unite all the Jews without any geographical or linguistic difference. In this case, it is possible to regard Ader's definition of the B'nai B'rith Order as an apparent Jewish body, where the only possible difference could be the geographic one. However, such a strong 'all-Jews-united' position of Ader was directed towards the German District and the former German lodges in Silesia.

So far, regardless of these proclaimed views, Leon Ader was not only the president of the Jewish organization, but also a lawyer in the new Polish State; he was its citizen and he was bilingual, speaking both Polish and German languages fluently. He had close contacts with the other prominent Jewish-Polish B'nai B'rith members, who were active not only in Jewish but also in Polish political and social life, such as Meir Bałaban or Moses Schorr. Thus, although Ader's political and ideological views would not be regarded as clearly pro-Polish patriotic, one can assume that he was a loyal citizen and the Polish State would benefit from his professional and organizational activity. Apparently, from the state's point of view, such a 'Jewish unity' position of Ader who aimed to incorporate pro-German Silesian lodges into the Polish District, would formally 'Polonize' them, bringing them under Polish authority. Later on, being together with the Polish *Ostjuden* would make German Jews feel closer to them, and interest them in Polish Jewry and ultimately foster greater loyalty to the Polish State.

In his letters to Leo Baeck and to the heads of Silesian Lodges, Ader also clearly alluded to the political reality of recent days as being potentially extremely dangerous to the Polish District because of the irresponsible behaviour of the lodges of Katowice and Królewska Huta:

> The brothers in Kattowitz and Königshütte are playing a dangerous game, which can be fatal to the existence of our Order and they seem to overlook that all of us must avoid whatever can bring us into disrepute, to engage in politics, because otherwise we run the risk of just being dissolved.[74]

Here clear differences can be observed in the perception of political reality by the pro-German and by the pro-Polish (or at least familiar with the Polish State) sides. On the one hand, the members of the two Silesian

[74] APKr, BB 68, p. 120.

lodges tried to use the Polish-German political tension to their own interests and hoped that the situation would change in favour of Germany. On the other hand, the president of the Polish B'nai B'rith (being probably more familiar with Polish politics and understanding the meaning of the *coup d'état*) had an opposite opinion. In addition to a personal grievance, the position and the activity of the brothers from *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* seemed to Ader as dangerous, which in the new political reality of Poland could destroy the Polish B'nai B'rith entirely.

On May 23, five days after Ader wrote his letter, Leo Baeck sent him a response (despite the several days of holidays).[75] It was his first letter of several containing a reaction to the existent political events in Poland. Baeck found himself in an unpleasant position being both responsible for the recent offensive actions of the two Silesian lodges, and also for the maintenance of good relations with the Polish District, including his friendship with its president. It seems also that Baeck as the head of the German B'nai B'rith, being an official and politician at some level, tried not to side for or against Poland. Thus, his reaction had to be especially diplomatic and careful, without an obvious critique of the political situation or of the Order's actions, on the one hand, and without any certain promises, on the other.

So, from Baeck's answer it is evident (even before the letter by Ader) that the Grand Lodge of Germany during its meetings on March 24 and May 12 (the last one probably had some connection with the *coup* in Poland) decided not to incorporate *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* into the Upper Silesian *Union*. According to Baeck, this decision was made in order to support the interests of the Polish Districts, which eventually could be damaged because of such incorporation.[76]

Baeck as well as Ader discreetly alluded to the political reality within the Polish State and its changes during the recent days, trying to justify the behaviour of the Silesian lodges. Probably, as the head of the German B'nai B'rith, Baeck felt responsible for the fate of the former German lodges and could understood the complicated feelings of their members, especially when their future as well as the future of Upper Silesia and the whole Polish Republic was not entirely clear for the German District. Thus, he wrote that the position of *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* was unusual and due to the Geneva Convention the region had special legislation for minorities and its own autonomy.

[75] APKr, BB 68, pp. 129, 131, 132.

[76] APKr, BB 68, p. 129.

Concerning the lodges' incorporation into the Polish District, according to the decision which apparently was accepted during the meeting on May 12 and supported by the Executive Committee, it was decided (at least temporarily) not to proceed with this step. In order to soften this decision, Baeck compared the position of the Silesian lodges with the other B'nai B'rith lodges of Switzerland and Denmark which also belonged to the Executive Committee and not to their own countries. The only consolation which Baeck could offer Ader was a hope that 'Once years will pass and a new generation will grow up in Upper Silesia, a further development will arise by itself.'[77]

Finally, Baeck stated that it would be better both for the Polish and the German B'nai B'rith to take a position of *quieta non movere* (not to move quiet things) towards the Upper Silesian lodges and to wait for news.[78]

3. May 1926–November 1927: Polish-American Negotiations and the Internal Politics of Poland as Turning Points in the Policy of *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs*

With these events in the background, and with both the political ones and those internal to B'nai B'rith spanning less than a week, one can better understand the above-mentioned letter of professor Edward Feuerstein about the *Installation* celebration in *Concordia* on May 18, 1926. It is clear that despite being a representative of the Executive Committee, Leon Ader refused to attend the event and, therefore the vice president, Feuerstein, had to attend. In his letter to Ader he reported some essential changes which had been made as the result of the recent political events and of Ader's letter to the lodge.[79]

Thus, the *Installation* was conducted according to the rite of the Polish District and not of the German one. In addition (as mentioned in the previous chapter), some of the lodge's members agreed to talk with Feuerstein concerning his diplomatic proposal of 'a cooperation of the 3

[77] APKr, BB 68, p. 131.
[78] APKr, BB 68, p. 131.
[79] APKr, BB 68, pp. 111, 112.

Silesian lodges under the Grand Lodge of Poland'.[80] Such a proposal might be a kind of a 'substitution' for the unsuccessful attempt of the two Silesian lodges to join the Upper Silesian B'nai B'rith *Union*.

Although during the first months after the *coup* the internal Polish politics did not quiet down and the *Sanation* movement started to become stronger, during the first two summer months the correspondence between the German and the Polish B'nai B'rith Districts and the two Silesian lodges waned. Apparently, after the intensive correspondence which had taken place during May, this reduced exchange could be explained not only by the lodges' discretion, but also by a period of summer vacations for the members of the Order.[81] Only a few letters still demonstrate that the relationship between Baeck and Ader had not been damaged after the crisis in May and that the intentions of Ader concerning the incorporation of *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* to the Polish District remained constant.[82]

Nevertheless, a significant change took place in the relationship between the new president of *Concordia*, Berthold Kochmann, and Leon Ader. Apparently, Kochmann regarded the cooperation between *Concordia* and the Polish District as much more possible than his extremely pro-German predecessor, Fritz Reichmann. Moreover, during the summer of 1926 (for the first time since the two Silesian lodges left the German District), Kochmann during his personal meeting with Ader alluded to the possibility of the future incorporation of his lodge, a thing which would fulfil Ader's long standing wish.[83] Besides, for the first time since he had to deal with the two Silesian lodges' members, in August of the same year, Ader wrote to Baeck with a measure of satisfaction, that 'It seems that finally we have reached a brotherly agreement.'[84]

Apparently these slight pro-Polish steps occurred not only due to the policy of Berthold Kochmann, but also due to the consideration of the brothers to at least protect themselves against the suspicions of the Polish authorities, which were gathering momentum. Fear of the new political reality and a feeling of a totally unclear future are well expressed in the letter from the members of *Concordia* lodge to Leon Ader on June 24 of the same year. There, on the one hand, the brothers officially retracted

[80] APKr, BB 68, p. 112.

[81] APKr, BB 68, pp. 125, 127 and BB 107, pp. 217, 219.

[82] APKr, BB 68, pp. 125, 127, 137.

[83] APKr, BB 68, p. 137 and BB 107, p. 129.

[84] APKr, BB 107, p. 219.

their wish to return to Germany and emphasized their loyalty to the state they are living in; on the other hand, however, they asked to wait with regards to the matter of joining the Polish District until the issue would become clearer and, in the end, they called their current reality the 'days when the highest ideals of the mankind are in danger'.[85]

During August-September 1926, despite the period of the Jewish autumn holidays, correspondence between the B'nai B'rith Districts and the Silesian lodges increased again. In addition to the end of the summer vacation another factor appearing at this time was important. On August 2, 1926, the *August Novelization* was provided by Piłsudski. This new legislation was an additional step in *Sanation*. It limited the power of the Polish Sejm, making some changes and amendments to the March Constitution of 1921, and in fact it increased the authoritative power of Piłsudski himself.[86]

As the president of the Polish B'nai B'rith District, Ader felt that the organization with its intensive contacts with its pro-German members, who additionally belonged to a foreign authority, had to tread carefully and to show as much loyalty as possible to Poland. Therefore, during August-September he renewed his private correspondence with the heads of the Silesian lodges and the German District. There, as he had done earlier, Ader tried to explain that their refusal to belong to the Polish District could be dangerous for the whole existence of the Order in Poland.[87]

It seems, however, that this correspondence between the B'nai B'rith heads did not entirely fulfil Ader's wish. In his first letter after his personal meeting with the head of the Polish District, two weeks after the *August Novelisation*, Kochmann seemed to be extremely careful and not promise anything. According to his letter, while the members of *Concordia's* council did not have any opposition to incorporation, the matter could not proceed without a vote by the rest of the members, which could not take place until their second meeting in October.

Apparently, the head of *Concordia* was trying to delay the decision, hoping that the political situation would become clearer, since his justifi-

[85] APKr, BB 68, pp. 134-135.

[86] Andrzej Ajnenkiel, *Polska po przewrocie majowym: Zarys dziejów politycznych Polski 1926–1939* (Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna, 1980), 25-32; Antony Polonsky, *Politics in Independent Poland: The Crisis of Constitutional Government* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 181-185.

[87] APKr, BB 68, pp. 139-148, 155.

cation for such a remote date for the vote was the fact that 'The brothers will simply not understand being convened from their holidays to an extraordinary meeting to deal with a question about which it has taken us four years to decide.'[88]

In fact, the members of two Silesian Lodges were still traditionally loyal to the decision of Leo Baeck as the head of the German District, whose policy fit their own wishes: take a delaying position towards any decision. It is very probable that the two presidents of the German and the Polish Districts were here being guided by different considerations. Leon Ader tried to incorporate the Silesian lodges into the Polish District in order to show to the Polish State and to the regional authorities a maximal measure of B'nai B'rith loyalty. Leo Baeck had to carry out a policy which was in a large measure dictated by the political and economic relations of Western Europe and the United States towards Poland.

During the summer months of 1926, the policies of the United States towards Poland still had not clarified themselves.[89] Since the future of the Polish State in general, and of Eastern Upper Silesia in particular, was rather unclear, it seems that the higher ranks of B'nai B'rith in the United States strongly recommended to the German and Polish Districts that they avoid any administrative changes between the German and the Polish States that could be interpreted as political actions and eventually could damage the whole Order. Being a member of the Executive Committee and a known figure in German-Jewish society, Leo Baeck had to obey this policy of non-intervention.

Thus, more than a hundred Silesian B'nai B'rith members during the mid-1920s were positioned in a web of different interests: the Polish, German and American Districts in addition to their own personal considerations. Eventually, such tension brought about quarrels and a split between the members of *Concordia*: the pro-Polish (or rather pro-incorporation into the Polish B'nai B'rith) and the anti-Polish.

Such 'dissonances' (as they were called by Kochmann) between himself and the clearly anti-Polish former president of the lodge, Reichmann, as well as among several other brothers who had significant posts within

[88] APKr, BB 68, pp. 139-141.

[89] The thing could be reflected by financial policy of the United States towards Poland, which was unclear until October 1926, when after several months of discussions and postponements, a loan contract between Piłsudski and the American Bankers Trust delegation was signed. Cf. Neal Pease, *Poland, the United States, and the Stabilization of Europe, 1919–1933* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 90-101.

Concordia, forced Kochmann in September 1926 to ask Leon Ader to intervene. So, pursuant to this request, Ader and his two deputies from Bielsko and Katowice were asked to conduct a peace court during the first meeting of *Concordia* on October 5 in order to pacify the quarrelling parties.[90]

On October 20, Berthold Kochmann sent Ader a report in which he described in detail the results of the significant vote of the members of the two Silesian lodges that took place in order to decide the issue of a potential incorporation into the Polish District. The final results of the voting, on the one hand, were unfavourable for the Polish District: the majority of the members voted against incorporation. However, according to Kochmann, many more brothers voted in favour of incorporation than during the previous years. Among them were not only all the members of the council of officials, but even Friedrich Reichmann himself, who had changed his mind entirely and had become one of incorporation's supporters.

As a result, the letter of Kochmann sounded rather optimistic: '[...] the number of incorporation supporters has grown significantly since the earlier negotiations, the times have also worked in favour of the incorporation idea'.[91] Eventually, Kochmann tried to reach two goals simultaneously: to keep a good relationship with Leon Ader by turning the negative results into a more positive prognosis, and to gain an additional delay in the incorporation matter without offending anyone.

However, the reaction of the Polish District's president can be regarded as negative. In his private letter, intended for Kochmann only, Ader clearly pointed to the behaviour of the brothers from Katowice and Królewska Huta as a cause for embarrassment. Therefore, after a request to repeat the voting in a few days, Ader warned about the possibility of passing the whole matter to the judgment of the General and the Executive Committees and to give them the power to decide.[92]

This letter indicates a crucial point in the relationship between the members of the two Silesian lodges and Ader. Staying constant in their position of rejecting joining with the Polish District, the brothers from these lodges also rejected all the recent internal political changes in Poland in favour of illusory international changes. Their 'local' pro-German Silesian self-definition from 'outside', as it were, came to a clash with

[90] APKr, BB 68, pp. 155, 195.

[91] APKr, BB 68, pp. 195, 197.

[92] APKr, BB 68, pp. 199-203.

Ader's broader understanding of the current political situation of Poland from 'inside'.

Therefore, the behaviour of the Silesian brothers as the 'outsiders' in the state they belonged to, being in the same position vis-a-vis Poland as toward other European or American B'nai B'rith districts, in fact embodied a narrow-minded understanding, at odds with those Polish District's members who were 'inside'. The latter group apparently had much less interest in international possibilities, but a much broader vision of the political developments within the country.

As a result, by intimating a threat to pass the two Silesian lodges over to the consideration of the international Orders' committees, Ader finally put an end to his previous attempts to bring them 'inside' and to bridge the two worlds within the same organization. According to him, from that point on these outsider members had to be dealt with by the same outside international B'nai B'rith committees to which they apparently belonged more closely than to their brothers within the same state.

Moreover, Ader notified the Order in the States that in the event of a positive result in the next vote within *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* in the matter of their incorporation into the Polish District, he as a member of the Executive Committee and the Polish District's president would raise his voice against their incorporation '[...] if a large minority declares itself against the incorporation'.[93] It seems that Ader, at this point, did not wish to force a large number of brothers to belong to a District against their wishes.

This case demonstrates how a clear pro-German self-definition by a large part of *Concordia's* members, left to the side (at least temporarily) their pro-Jewish and organizational feelings of belonging. Eventually the clear Jewish self-definition might have forced them to obey the directives of the Polish District and to become loyal to Poland. Moreover, during 1926 even the brothers of the two Silesian lodges who were more loyal to the Polish District and the Polish State could hardly be defined as pro-Polish. Their obedience was caused more by political necessity rather than by any changed sense of belonging or of self-definition.

As a result, the process of *Polonization* among the members of two Silesian lodges could occur only as a two-step process. The first step, mentioned earlier, involved the perception of Polish Jews as equals. Only then could the second step take place: respecting the state to which they belonged and being its loyal citizens.

[93] APKr, BB 68, p. 201.

Yet, such a process, in addition to being difficult and slow, was burdened even more by internal Polish politics, which were far from stabilized and becoming more and more a confusing factor in the shifting of one's self-definition. An additional burden was that the international considerations of the B'nai B'rith Order from abroad (mostly from the Grand Lodge of the United States) were supportive of the Silesian lodges members' pro-German policy of delaying integration into the Polish District. Thus, it seems that the pro-Polish strategy of Leon Ader towards the incorporation of *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* was in opposition to the will of the Order's highest ranks.

One could assume, therefore, that the heads of the Order in the United States would become concerned about any German-Polish developments with the pro-Polish tendency promoted by Ader, especially after the significant changes in Polish politics in May 1926. Probably, due to these considerations, in the beginning of December 1926 Baeck wrote to Leon Ader that the General Committee in the United States had made a decision to discharge Ader from his supervision of the two Silesian lodges.

The reason given by Baeck was the frustration these lodges had caused Ader. At the same time, Leo Baeck also listed political developments among the reasons (and apparently the real motives) which forced the Committee to take this unpleasant step. Hence, Baeck's saying 'Political song is a nasty song' could be an allusion to the political reasons for such unpleasant decisions.[94] During December both Upper Silesian lodges were under the supervision of another, still unknown person. As an alternative, ten days later Baeck proposed to Ader the opportunity of taking another post as a head of Joint (apparently the Polish branch).[95] As it seems, a nomination to such a position could fulfil a wish Leon Ader once expressed.

Ader's reaction, after his already unpleasant experiences in his recent contact with the Silesian lodges, was complicated, combining feelings of relief and frustration. On the one hand his humiliation and disappointment arising from having contact with the members from Katowice and Królewska Huta would now be over. On the other hand, apparently, his attempt to combine the posts of the Polish District's president and the representative of Executive Committee, and supervising two Silesian lodges had failed. Ader's efforts to incorporate these lodges were unsuc-

[94] APKr, BB 68, p. 225.

[95] APKr, BB 107, p. 281.

cessful partly because of the lodge members' unwillingness, partly because of the Order's politics.

Thus, his activity, which could be regarded by Polish authorities as *Polonization*, ended in a period when the Polish State was strengthening its central power. All of these complexities are well described in his words: 'I see, therefore, no way out except to pass the supervision of the above-mentioned two lodges to another member of the Executive-Committee. I am fully aware that [...] the whole situation is quite bizarre.'[96]

After some reflections and discussions about a suitable person who could eventually supervise the two lodges (a sensitive area), Baeck himself took on this duty of supervision. Until the final decisions were received by the Order's authorities, he became the official supervisor of the two Silesian lodges. Because apparently the brothers of these lodges were more loyal to the decisions of Leo Baeck and to the German District than to the Polish District, Baeck justified to Ader his decision saying that '[...] both lodges [are] in the area which should be held in a harmony desired by all of us'.[97]

After these decisive actions and such an optimistic conclusion, it took seventeen days until the situation reversed itself yet again. On January 7, 1927 Leo Baeck wrote to Leon Ader asking him to again take on the supervision of the Upper Silesian lodges. The motivations behind this request are unclear, except a mention that Ader's supervision would serve the interests of both lodges as well for the sake of the whole B'nai B'rith Order in Europe.[98]

This decision was taken due to the new alignment of forces in European politics. At the end of 1926, both the political and the economic situation in Poland had improved due to the *Sanation* movement, the loans from American banks, and the successful export of Polish-Silesian coal to England.[99] Poland had, therefore, no economic dependence on the German State. In the very beginning of 1927, the German government decided to abandon the previous tactic of political economy and started a

[96] APKr, BB 68, p. 229.

[97] APKr, BB 68, p. 231.

[98] APKr, BB 68, pp. 233, 234.

[99] Michael C. Kaser, Edward A. Radice, *The Economic History of Eastern Europe 1919–1975*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 43; Thomas S. Dyman, *Britain, Poland, and the Search for Security in Europe: Anglo-Polish Relations, 1924–1934*, Ph.D. thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1985, 191-199; Jerzy Tomaszewski, *Zarys historii gospodarczej Polski 1918–1939* (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1999), 163.

new one: to distinguish between trade interests and non-trade issues. It is possible to say that American and European political negotiations with Poland were improved due to the new trade contracts and loans, and the question of a territorial revision was abandoned.

These developments apparently influenced the politics of B'nai B'rith as well. Leo Baeck, as a representative of the German State, was obligated to keep good relationships with Polish authorities and to minimize his (or German) influence and intervention in the matters of the Polish State. These external factors help explain such a sharp change in Baeck's position.

Leon Ader, however, exhausted from supervising German lodges whose members did not wish to join the Polish District and who had disappointed him for three years, categorically refused to return and to supervise them once again.[100] Among the reasons for his refusal was that the German-Jewish members of the Silesian lodges saw themselves as superior to the members of the Polish District.

Furthermore, in his letter, Ader bitterly stated: 'I can understand that I am personally a Polish Jew and have no necessary authority over these brothers [...]'.[101] Moreover, at the same time that Ader received Baeck's new proposal, he sent an immediate response to the Order's president in the United States, Alfred Cohen.[102] In it the president of Polish District explained in detail his refusal to renew his supervision of the Silesian lodges. He had noted most of these reasons three days earlier in his answer to Leo Baeck. In his explanation, Ader quoted the message which was sent to him by the previous Order's president (this message was mentioned in the previous chapter), emphasizing the fact that Ader had behaved according to its prescriptions. It seems that this action of Ader's reflected not only his frustration at the behaviour of the Silesian lodges' members, but also his disappointment with the Order's ambiguous policy.

During the following winter-spring months of 1927, active international American-German-Polish-Silesian discussions concerning the fate of the lodges *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* took place and the intensity of correspondence reached its climax (sometimes in the same day several letters were sent to different Districts).[103] Eventually, each side supported

[100] APKr, BB 68, pp. 235-238.
[101] APKr, BB 68, p. 237.
[102] APKr, BB 68, pp. 239-242.
[103] APKr, BB 68, pp. 233-341.

its own position and tried to impose it on the other participants in the discussion.

So, the American heads of the Order during all these months as well as during summer months, insisted, on the one hand, on a renewal of Ader's supervision. On the other hand, they constantly emphasized the importance of the 'waiting posture' without taking any steps for or against the Silesian lodges' incorporation into the Polish District.[104] It seems that the reasons for such caution remained the same as they had been during the previous spring-summer, in spite of certain political and economic improvements in the Polish State and in the Polish-American diplomatic and economic relationships.[105]

Within the framework of this study it would be difficult to state precisely the reasons for such distrust of Poland and of the Silesian lodges' incorporation. From a few hints one senses a certain apprehension from the heads of the Order as to the consequences which such developments could bring to the American District. Thus, according to the letters from Cincinnati, '[...] the situation of the two lodges of Kattowitz and Königshütte received very careful consideration [...]', while the District's authorities '[...] have consulted various parties who know the situation in Poland [...]'. Together with the '[...] opinion expressed by various representative people [...]', they decided to '[...] postpone any final decision and avoid any change'.[106]

In addition, the heads of the Order held a 'consultation with representatives of the Polish Federation in New York City' which was among the reasons to postpone any decision.[107] From these statements one can gather that in the summer of 1927, the heads of the American B'nai B'rith District (who apparently were well informed about the Polish-American diplomatic and economic relations and about the Western European and American policies towards Poland) still had some reasons to be unsure with regard to the future of the western borders of Poland. Probably, one of these reasons was the assassination of the Soviet envoy to Poland, Piotr Voĭkov, on June 7 in Warsaw.

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[104] APKr, BB 68, pp. 271, 335, 337, 339, 341, 363, 367, 369.

[105] Kaser, Radice, *The Economic History*, 43; Dyman, *Britain, Poland*, 191-199; Wandycz, *Polish Diplomacy*, 96-103; Jerzy Tomaszewski, Zbigniew Landau, *Gospodarka Polski Międzywojennej 1918–1939*, vol. 2 (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1971), 163; Pease, *Poland*, 97-98.

[106] APKr, BB 68, p. 271.

[107] APKr, BB 68, p. 339.

Due to this clear expression of political and social imbalance, the American bankers who were close to signing a loan to Poland decided to postpone their decision until autumn, probably in order to observe the further developments within the Polish State.[108] The heads of American B'nai B'rith, having apparently some connections both with the Bankers Trust's representatives and with some political leaders in the United States, chose the same waiting tactic as their financial fellows in their discussions with the Polish representatives.

Correspondence between Leon Ader and the representatives of the German District and the American brothers indicated the fact that the position of the German B'nai B'rith differed slightly from their brothers in the United States. The Order's representatives in Cincinnati regarded the matter of Ader's renewed supervision as a sure thing, while the German B'nai B'rith brothers saw the whole complexity of situation from a closer (both geographic and personal) perspective.[109]

Being subordinated to the heads of the Order in the United States and to the dynamics of international diplomacy, representatives of the German District could not clearly promise Leon Ader any definite change and had to convince him to return to his duties of supervisor with half-promises of certain incorporation of Silesian lodges into the Polish District in the future.

In his answer to Leo Baeck, Ader expressed his confidence that the Grand Secretary of the German District, Leon Goldschmidt, might be the best candidate to supervise *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* due to his highly respected position among the members of these lodges.[110] Apparently, the German representatives of the Order were not happy about such a development, since it involved them in international matters of supervising the members of two lodges who were subordinated to the United States, who

[108] Pease, *Poland*, 97-98.

[109] An example of such remoteness of the American District from the European ones, especially dealing with certain less known lodges, could be an example of a mistake which was made in the Order's periodical *B'nai B'rith Magazine* from July 1927. There, in the section 'Across the Seas' was published an announcement, where instead of informing the reader about the new officers' installation within the two Silesian lodges, appeared a proclamation about the foundation of two new Polish lodges: *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs*. Since the two lodges were among the oldest ones in Germany, such an announcement could be easily regarded by the Silesian lodges' members as offensive: APKr, BB 68, pp. 367-369, 373-376.

[110] APKr, BB 68, pp. 267-268.

lived in Poland, and in addition who were located in the politically complicated border area.

Therefore, Goldschmidt, as the one who would be dealing with the complicated aspects of these lodges, sent Ader his opinion about the matter on March 31, 1927. There he emphasized the sincere wish of both Silesian lodges' members to see Ader as their supervisor again. Being careful in the sensitive question of these lodges' incorporation, Goldschmidt expressed his confidence that it would take place in the near future, while still leaving the final decision and the final date to the lodges' members themselves. Finally, Goldschmidt hinted that the matter of the future incorporation obligated Ader to return to his previous post, by saying: '[...] a resignation from the supervision of the both Eastern Upper Silesian lodges would almost endanger the considerations [by these lodges'] of incorporation'.[111]

Ader's response was quite cynical and his refusal to renew his supervision was clear. His words were:

> I myself have no hope [...] of being able to convince the brothers in Eastern Upper Silesia of the necessity of their being incorporated into District XIII. These brothers have once doggedly taken the wrong track with the idea that this incorporation conflicts with their duties towards their Germanness [*Deutschtum*] [...].[112]

A short time after this answer, Ader received a letter from Cincinnati. In it, after a hint as to the positive consideration of the incorporation matter, there appeared a clear request to renew his supervision of the Silesian lodges.[113] Since the connection between these two matters was eventually quite obvious to Ader, at the end of April he sent to the United States and to the German District his agreement to renew his supervision.[114] One can notice that in his two letters, the matters of supervision and of incorporation appeared in the same logical connection as they had been mentioned by his German and American colleagues. In other words, the Polish District's president agreed to perform his duty again in exchange for the promise of incorporation.

In his rapid response, Leo Baeck, who understood the position of Ader, hinted that the matter of supervision would not be long, since he

[111] APKr, BB 68, pp. 295-296.
[112] APKr, BB 68, p. 309.
[113] APKr, BB 68, p. 271.
[114] APKr, BB 68, pp. 313-316.

hoped for incorporation of the Upper Silesian lodges in the near future.[115] By that half-promise, Leo Baeck tried somehow to come in between the position of the Polish District, which regarded the incorporation of these two lodges as necessary for the existence of the Polish B'nai B'rith, and the position of Grand District of the United States which was convinced that under the present conditions they should postpone any final decision and avoid any change.

Thus, a short time later, Ader participated in the meetings of *Concordia* and of *Michael Sachs* and installed its new officers, briefly informing the heads of the German and American Districts of his actions.[116] It seems that in his wish to end the discussion of incorporation, which had already lasted for more than three years already, Ader was ready to show a maximal measure of friendliness towards the Silesian lodges' members and to overcome the 'unpleasant episode', which apparently (based on his letter) occurred during the process of installation. Since this 'episode' was mentioned only within the internal correspondence between Ader and Kochmann, one can guess that one of the highly pro-German brothers of *Concordia* expressed himself in a not entirely respectful way regarding the Polish District and the discussions of incorporation. Ader tried to calm the situation, attempting to bring together in a diplomatic way the German, Polish, and Jewish sides saying: '[...] I esteem very highly his faithfulness to his homeland [*Vaterland*] and his original culture, though at the same time I represent the view that yet many things link us as Jews and as B'nai B'rith and that we [...] still have to represent many very strong common interests [...]'.[117]

From that point during the summer no consequential developments came from the side of the leadership of the B'nai B'rith Order towards the future incorporation of the Silesian lodges. At the end of June, Ader wrote a further letter to the Executive Committee in Cincinnati. There again he explained as clearly as he could the necessity of such incorporation as soon as possible, while commenting that the current position of the Silesian lodges was: 'Such a case which has never taken place in the whole world.'[118]

During mid-July, Ader had an opportunity to meet in Prague with the Order's president, Alfred Cohen, who was visiting some of the European

[115] APKr, BB 68, p. 323.

[116] APKr, BB 68, pp. 325-329, 335-337.

[117] APKr, BB 68, pp. 327-328.

[118] APKr, BB 68, p. 349.

districts.[119] According to a letter of the Order's secretary, Boris Bogen, the two arrived at a common decision concerning the future of the *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* lodges.[120] One could only guess what this decision was, since in the mid-September 1927 the Order's secretary only hinted at the pending change in the situation of the Silesian lodges.

During these summer months, probably after the unofficial decision by Cohen and Ader, after some influence from Leo Baeck, and due to the political reality of *Sanation* in Poland which had strengthened the state's power, the members of both Silesian lodges started to discuss intensively the matter of their incorporation into the Polish District.

After active communication regarding the position of the two Silesian lodges took place between several B'nai B'rith districts during the spring-summer months, there was a certain lull in their correspondence from the second half of September until mid-November. Such silence cannot be entirely explained by the Jewish holiday schedule. Almost a month of Jewish holidays could certainly have affected the frequency of communication (in 1927 the first autumn holiday, *Rosh Hashanah*, started relatively late: on September 26). However, it seems that such silence from Ader's side from the end of October through the beginning of November 1927 could also reflect certain preparations which the head of the Polish District (probably together with the German District and the Silesian lodges) preferred not to announce.

Thus, on November 16, 1927, the Polish District received sudden news: the heads of *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* had sent a letter to Leon Ader in which they reported their official final decision, made by the majority of members, to be incorporated into the District.[121]

This final pro-Polish shift of the Silesian lodges was neither an impulsive action from their side nor the result of Ader's efforts. Since the whole activity of the B'nai B'rith Order in large measure depended on the decision of the Grand Lodge in the United States, the Polish-American diplomatic relationship during those weeks may have contributed to the decision to incorporate. As was already mentioned above, this relationship had an almost economic character, less political-territorial, making it different from the relationship which Poland had with many European states.

[119] APKr, BB 68, p. 365.
[120] APKr, BB 68, p. 369.
[121] APKr, BB 68, p. 383.

Thus, in order to understand better the background of the B'nai B'rith lodges' decision in favour of incorporation, one should examine the economic shifts which took place in the Polish-American relationship, as well as the whole economic situation of Central Europe during the autumn of 1927. For instance, at the end of September 1927, the Polish government finally succeeded in receiving a large stabilization loan from *Banque de France* (whose decision to grant it to Poland was supported by the American Federal Reserve Bank).[122] Such an economic step also reflected a certain improvement of the Polish position, both in Europe and in the United States. At the same time, the confidence of the United States in Poland (both financially and politically) also became stronger than it had been during the previous months. Finally, the most important emblem of such confidence in Poland from the American side was the final signature on October 13 by the American bankers' group of the largest loan granted to Poland during the whole interwar period ($71.7 million).[123]

Two days later, on November 18, 1927, Ader solemnly announced that the lodges *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* were officially incorporated into the Polish District. This action received a positive approval from the side of the Grand Lodge of the United States, although its position was still in favour of further waiting. Nevertheless, the president of the Order, Alfred Cohen, sent his thanks for the cooperation and called the act of incorporation an encouraging one. Leo Baeck sent his last letter concerning the Silesian lodges' matter with his best regards and expressed his deep pleasure.[124] The story of a very long discussion about a small group of people, created by politics, world economy and diplomatic relationships had finally come to an end.

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[122] So, in October 1927 the Quai d'Orsay decided about an additional revision of French military convention with Poland among its members, while on November 17 the French marshal arrived in Warsaw. Even though after several days of discussions the whole French mission failed, during October through the beginning of November, Poland appeared to Europe and the United States in a much more positive light than it had earlier. Cf. Wandycz, *The Twilight*, 94-101; Wandycz, *Polish Diplomacy,* 21.

[123] Wandycz, *The Twilight*, 96-98; Kaser, Radice, *The Economic History*, 43; Pease, *Poland*, 99-101.

[124] Kargol, *Działalność i charakter*, 118-120; APKr, BB 68, pp. 351-352, 387-393.

4. 1928–1933: *POLONIZATION* OF THE GERMAN SPEAKERS: DYNAMICS OF THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE GERMAN-SPEAKING JEWS AND THE *OSTJUDEN* COMMUNITY OF KATOWICE

Although the incorporation of the *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* lodges was a crucial event in the history of both lodges and of the German and Polish B'nai B'rith Districts, this action was followed almost immediately by several letters from the Polish District dealing with different daily matters. Probably, this was partially done in order to 'enter' the lodges promptly into the District's life, without giving too much time to the Jewish Silesian brothers to reflect on the change they had experienced.

So, on November 22, a few days after the incorporation, the two lodges received a letter informing them about the date of the district's upcoming member's meeting and they were invited to send their representatives to participate. The planned event was going to take place at the end of January 1928 in Bielsko (which would be considered as a friendly gesture towards the new Silesian members of the District, who consequently did not have to travel too far within the Polish State, but could stay in the vicinity of their familiar area).[125] Another concession which had been made to the two Silesian lodges' members even before the incorporation was the lodges' right to correspond and to receive all correspondence in German. In addition, the Polish District undertook to send official letters to all the lodges with a translation into the German language.[126] Finally, the Order's General Committee from the time of its last elections (which were held in the previous year) elected one member less (7 instead of 8), and as a result saved a special place for a Silesian lodge's member, who was to be chosen by the two lodges themselves.[127]

Apparently, the lodges' members were ready for an active collaboration, since on the last day of 1927, *Concordia* sent Ader a detailed list of its newly chosen officers. In the same letter, 18 new members who wished to join the lodge were mentioned.[128] Taking into account that the total of all the lodge's members during the years after the borders' shift was on average close to 100, one could assume that such an increase by almost

[125] APKr, BB 68, pp. 355-356.
[126] Kargol, *Działalność i charakter*, 158.
[127] APKr, BB 68, p. 356.
[128] APKr, BB 68, p. 439.

one fifth was a great achievement. Apparently, this sudden surge was not coincidental, but rather was as a result of the lodge's incorporation into the Polish District. Finally, some other, possibly more pro-Polish, members of the city's Jewish community could finally join the lodge without fear of belonging to a foreign, pro-German organization.

The installation of the new members and of the new officers of *Concordia* for the first time as a Polish lodge took place on January 22, 1928, a day before the meeting of the District's representatives. Leon Ader agreed to participate in the event and he himself installed the members.[129] An additional positive step towards the two Silesian lodges was made during the following meeting of the General Committee on January 24, when Otto Aronade, one of the most prominent members of *Concordia* was chosen to be the vice-president of the Polish District.[130] As it seems, such a choice, in addition to its honourable intention, also had a political meaning. First, it repeated the same action which had been made in the newly established Polish District in January 1924 (as described in the previous chapter).

Back then, a representative of the lodge *Austria* in Bielsko (not entirely loyal to the Polish District) was appointed to the same vice-presidential post and this nomination finally smoothed the relationships between the lodge in Bielsko and the Grand Lodge in Kraków. Four years later, the same nomination was made of another Silesian Jewish representative and as it seems not unsuccessfully, since the lodge's president emphasized this fact in his report to Ader. Secondly, such an appointment of a German-Jewish member to be a vice-president of the Polish Order's District symbolized a step towards the further rapprochement of the German-speaking and the Polish-speaking members.

Several weeks later, Aronade received a letter from the Grand Lodge in Kraków where he, as a vice-president of the district, was asked to supervise two lodges in Greater Poland, namely *Amicitia* in Poznań and *Raphael Kosz* in Leszno.[131] The choice of these two lodges was also not coincidental: On the one hand, they both were in the former Prussian territory which was more familiar to the German Jew, Aronade, than Eastern Polish ones. Coming to such a territory from the Upper Silesian region (especially for a German speaker without a good knowledge of Polish) was much easier than attending to those in the east of the country. On the

[129] APKr, BB 68, p. 409.

[130] APKr, BB 68, p. 415.

[131] APKr, BB 68, pp. 423-424.

other hand, due to a massive population change in the area, the brothers of the two lodges were *Ostjüdisch* enough in order to take the Silesian German-Jewish vice-president away from the surroundings of his German-speaking lodge and allow him access to a different Polish-Jewish world.

Finally, the presence of a formerly pro-German lodge member in such a high official post in the organization would also 'signal' to the Polish state officials the loyal pro-Polish position of the two Silesian lodges. Thus, a short time after the incorporation, an additional step towards the German-Jewish *Polonization* in the area was made. There is a need to mention, however, that in the case of Aronade this planned attempt failed, since this prominent activist of *Concordia* made a difficult decision to emigrate back to Germany, to Berlin, and he left Poland in the autumn of 1929.[132]

In February 1928, *Concordia*, as a new member of the Polish District, sent out for the first time an announcement of the lodge's monthly cultural activities and its programs to all the district's members, and first of all to Leon Ader. Thereafter, such announcements and programs were sent regularly and from these announcements one can learn more about the lodge life, its areas of interest, as well as track changes within this area. So, during the first month of the lodge's activity within Poland, its members tried to cover the whole spectrum of its identity: as Jewish, as German-Jewish, as members of a Polish District, as universal humanists.

For instance, a lecture was dedicated to Sholem Aleichem, who wrote about a clearly *Ostjüdisch* life, but it was given in German by a brother who was invited from Breslau. In addition to two lectures about contemporary Jewish poetry and music, another one dealt with 'Spiritual Life of the Deaf and of the Blind'.[133] All the following lectures, which were given weekly in *Concordia*, were also evidence of the complicated self-definition of the two Silesian lodges' members. However, at least during the first years after their incorporation into the Polish District, lectures which attempted to inform the listeners about Eastern Europe very often were given by German Jews, apparently from their point of view and in the German language, as mentioned previously or, for example, the lecture about Arnold Zweig's 'Sergeant Grischa' given by Otto Aronade himself.[134]

[132] APKr, BB 68, p. 575, BB 360, p. 80.

[133] APKr, BB 68, p. 419.

[134] APKr, BB 68, p. 455.

It seems however, that within a relatively short period of time, members of the two Silesian lodges started to invite in not only their colleagues from Germany, but also to seek out the German-speaking members from the other Polish lodges, trying to involve them in the lectures. As far as one can see from the correspondence of *Concordia* with the Grand Lodge of Poland, an attempt to find such speakers could be relatively complicated and demanded time and effort. So, a brother from the lodge *Solidarność* in Kraków, Raphael Taubenschlag, who was a professor in a highly prestigious Law Faculty of the Jagiellonian University and a specialist in ancient papyrus texts, was recommended by Ader as a potential lecturer.[135]

At this point a female lodge of the *Schwesterbund* of B'nai B'rith started to be active some years after its male counterpart. Usually the female lodge was comprised of members who were the daughters and the wives of the Order's brothers.[136] Based on the program of the last months of 1928, and from the report of *Concordia* for the year 1928, the Order's sisters succeeded in drawing the interest of women activists and scholars to both the male and female lodges of Katowice and in some measure to continue the process of *Polonization*. So, in October 1928, invited by the local *Schwesterbund* of Katowice, Frau Pewzner, a lecturer from Jerusalem, gave a talk about the history of B'nai B'rith in the United States. A month later, another sister from Berlin organized an evening of Jewish and Polish poetry. In December 1928 a scholar from Berlin, Dr Schiff, lectured about the 'Development of Advertisement Pictures from Antiquity until Now' and about the 'Women's Fashion and Society'.[137]

In addition, the members of *Concordia* (and also their colleagues from the female lodge) very soon became involved in other aspects of the Polish District's activities, dealing in a large part with charity, such as material assistance to needy Jews, support of Jewish victims of the earthquake in Bulgaria in 1928, or support of the Institute of Judaic Studies, which was founded in 1928 in Warsaw.[138] The large sum of 2,000 złoty was transferred by the lodge to the Institute, which had been created in a large measure due to Meir Bałaban, a historian who was one of the Institute's

[135] APKr, BB 68, pp. 477, 482.

[136] For more information about the founding and the beginning of activity of the B'nai B'rith female lodges cf. Wilhelm, *Deutsche Juden in Amerika*, 81-99, 208-227.

[137] APKr, BB 68, p. 479, 360, pp. 11-15.

[138] Kargol, *Działalność i charakter*, 162.

co-creators and a professor there.[139] A smaller, but yet considerable sum of 500 złoty was sent to support the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.[140]

Despite the two Silesian lodges' incorporation into the Polish District, the German District was still interested in the fate of the two lodges and continued to some extent to regard them as German lodges. So, in June 1928 Leo Baeck wrote to Ader concerning the volume which was going to be dedicated to the jubilee of the founding of the German District and planned to be published in 1932. There the history of the German District, in general, and of each German lodge in particular was to appear and the two Silesian lodges were invited to contribute to the volume. They were asked to submit materials about their history from the beginning until the moment of their incorporation into Poland.[141]

In the second half of 1928, the members of *Concordia* started to be more involved in the matters of the Jewish community of Katowice. Among the several reasons, one would have been the change the lodge experienced in joining the Polish District and, therefore, becoming more 'Polish' or 'Eastern Jewish' or as drawing closer in the eyes of the other community members who were the majority. Another reason probably was the growing involvement of the *Voivodeship's* authorities in community life, which had already started earlier, but increased in the second half of that year.

In September 1928, the local Silesian authorities started to develop a new project dealing with a changing of the statutes for the Jewish community of Katowice. According to the *Voivodeship's* officials, several changes were aimed at making the community's statutes more 'democratic', meaning less pro 'German-Jewish'. So, for the first time, women were allowed to participate in the elections of the community's administration. The tenure period of the newly chosen administration was shortened to five years, and instead of seven members, the number of officials was enlarged to nine.[142] Such an increased interest in Jewish community matters was also shown in a detailed report concerning the character of differ-

[139] APKr, BB 68, p. 429-432, 443; Roman Zakharii, *Moses Schorr and Meir Bałaban: Forgotten Eastern European Jewish Historians*, M.A. thesis, Central European University, Budapest, 1998, 28-48; David Assaf, 'Only broken shards remain', *Haaretz*, 2 May 2003, available at http://haaretz.com/only-broke, n-shards-remain-1.11277; Marcos Silber, 'Meir Balaban u Peiluto Haziburit-Hapolitit Bepolin Beyemei Milhemet Haolan Harishona', Shvut 11 [27] (2002–2003), 139-157.

[140] APKr, BB 360, p. 13.

[141] APKr, BB 107, pp. 515, 523.

[142] UWSL, 27, ADM, pp. 270-271.

ent groups within the community. So, the Jewish inhabitants of the city were divided to four groups, namely:

> I. the most powerful group of Dr Reichmann (German Jews).
> II. the most numerous group, but the weakest one because of its lack of unity, within this group one can notice the following lines:
> 1) Zionists... from Congress Poland as well as from Galicia.
> 2) Bundists from Congress Poland, showing communist tendencies, also are not organized and were defeated by Dr Reichmann in the fight with other groups.
> 3) Indifferent ones who came from Galicia, a so-called Jewish intelligentsia. Are hostile to the group of Dr Reichmann [...].
> 4) Other newcomers from Galicia and Congress Poland (the orthodox who do not show any direction [...]).[143]

In addition the authorities defined the first 'German-Jewish' group as the 'most powerful one because of being consolidated' and as divided into two directions: a 'Philogerman' one (where some of the *Concordia's* members names were mentioned) and a 'loyal' one, represented by the community's head Bruno Altmann, who had 'moral superiority' within the community (probably because of the numerical prevalence of the non-German Jewish members there).[144]

At the end of this report dealing with the planned project, a sentence revealing its real purpose appeared:

> Thus far the German group has the advantage [...]. In the case of elections [...] it will certainly get a majority. After development of the new electoral law, all the groups expect that each one of them will profit more than they have thus far and this explains their unproblematic consent to a change. From the state point of view, each solution of the matter will be good, which will lead to a weakening of group I [the German group] [...]. In any case, there are chances

[143] UWSL, 27, ADM, p. 270. More about the history of Galician and Austro-Hungarian Jewry see in: Israel Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772–1881* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002), 124-133; Marsha L. Rozenblit, 'The Jews of Germany and Austria: A Comparative Perspective', in Robert S. Wistrich, ed., *Austrians and Jews in the Twentieth Century: From Franz Joseph to Waldheim* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), 1-18; Robert S. Wistrich, *Socialism and the Jews: The Dilemmas of Assimilation in Germany and Austria-Hungary* (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 1982), 175-224; Robert S. Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 238-665; Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna*; David Rechter, 'A Jewish El Dorado? Myth and Politics in Habsburg Czernowitz', in Richard I. Cohen et al., eds., *Insiders and Outsiders: Dilemmas of East European Jewry* (Oxford: The Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2010), 208-220.

[144] UWSL, 27, ADM, pp. 270-271.

> for change in the current balance of power with the reduction of influence of the group I [the so called German Jews].[145]

Already some months earlier, during the summer of 1928, there was an attempt by the *Voivodeship's* authorities side, not to approve the taxes list for 1928 and, therefore, to decrease the community's budget. The community's officials reacted to this action with a letter where each of its financial expenditures was described in detail. Among others, the nomination of the two city rabbis and their monthly allowance was mentioned as essential and necessary.[146]

According to this tradition, from the beginning of the community's existence in Katowice there had been two rabbis and the community, despite a total change of its character and language (which was far from being homogeneous), intended to continue this tradition without any changes. Thus, when in 1928 both rabbis decided to leave their posts, two new rabbis were invited to Katowice: Kalman Chameides and Mordekhai Vogelmann.[147] Both new rabbis were born in Galicia, both were well-educated and probably could fit the above-mentioned authorities' definition of 'Galician Jewish intelligentsia'. It seems that Chameides became more prominent among the German Jews of the city, probably because of his knowledge of German. Since Chameides did not know any Polish at all, among the reasons for the choice of Vogelmann as the second city rabbi was his knowledge of Polish and his closer position to the 'Eastern Jewish' part of Katowice.[148] However, both rabbis were highly respected, and approximately a year later (in the beginning of 1930), became members of *Concordia*.[149] It is difficult to say, however, whether they had belonged to B'nai B'rith earlier. They became active Order members and probably served as a certain 'link' between the heterogeneous Jewish community outside *Concordia*, and the German-speaking majority inside the lodge, and in some way also became agents of the *Polonization* of the lodge.

Such interest from the local authorities in the Jewish community during the summer-autumn months of 1928, together with the similar

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[145] UWSL, 27, ADM, p. 271.

[146] UWSL, 27, ADM, pp. 250-269.

[147] UWSL, 27, ADM, p. 276. Leon Chameides, 'Rabbi Kalman Chameides – One of the Last Spiritual Leaders of Katowice: A Tribute', in Wodziński, Spyra, *Jews in Silesia*, 401-415.

[148] Josef Chrust, 'Hayiton Harashmi shel Hakehila', in Chrust, Frenkel, *Kattowitz*, 28.

[149] APKr, BB 68, p. 623.

interest within *Concordia*, and the lodge's loyal and to some extent pro-Polish policy, were probably a result of Polish diplomatic politics during the second half of 1928. In August, the Kellogg-Briand Pact was signed and Poland was among the signatories. According to this agreement, no dispute or conflict could be solved by a war and this promise restored at least temporary peace and stability. Eventually, for the German-Jewish inhabitants of Katowice, the German State signing this pact together with the recently chosen Polish government meant stable German-Polish borders and a place to reside within the Polish State. Realizing this fact, together with the progressing *Sanation* policy of Michał Grażyński, the German-Jewish members of *Concordia* started to become more involved in the Jewish community of Katowice. Apparently, the *Voivodeship's* officials realized this fact as well, and started to 'limit' the influence of the German-Jewish minority of the city; as the Jewish minority's stay within Poland turned into a permanent one, the officials realized the group could become too influential.

During the first half-year 1929 no noteworthy events took place in either of the Silesian lodges. The usual annual election of officials took place and Fritz Reichmann once again was chosen to be the president of *Concordia*. Some disagreements occurred among the lodge's members and were mentioned in the lodge's correspondence. The immigration of Otto Aronade in the second half of the year to Berlin was at least partially influenced by these disagreements.

However, the real dramatic changes came during the second half of the year after October 29, when the Wall Street Crash occurred. Such a highly industrial and commercial area as Upper Silesia, together with the rest of Europe, was crushed by the crisis.[150] Presumably, some lodge members had experienced the economic disaster even before October 29. The correspondence which took place in October-November 1929 reveals that Fritz Reichmann had decided that summer to leave his post at the beginning of October because of his 'physical and financial collapse' (while it seems that the physical collapse was caused by the material one).[151] However, a serious economic problem started to be evident in

[150] Patricia Clavin, *The Great Depression in Europe, 1929–1939* (London: Macmillan Press, 2000), 90-105; Michael C. Kaser, Rudolf Nötel, *East European Economies in Two World Crises* (Oxford: Russian and East European Center, 1985), 1-6; Derek H. Aldcroft, *Studies in the Interwar European Economy* (Adlershot: Ashgate, 1997), 122-187; Richard Blanke, *Orphans of Versailles*, 145-148; Tomaszewski, Landau, *Gospodarka Polski*, vol. 2, 30-60, 300.

[151] APKr, BB 68, pp. 575-581, BB 360, p. 80.

November-December 1929, and in the beginning of 1930 the correspondence of *Concordia* with the Grand Lodge of Poland dealt mostly with the debts which *Concordia* had to pay. In mid-November *Concordia* owed the Grand Lodge a payment on a back debt. As a response, the lodge's members sent a long and detailed letter describing the complicated economic situation which made them unable to pay their membership fees and asking for a reduction and for a delay in payment.[152]

However, despite the very difficult situation which in a short time caused many of *Concordia's* previously wealthy members to lose at least a large part of their wealth, they continued to participate in the lodge meetings, and lodge activity continued as usual. Personal correspondence about the issue of debts and invoices between the brothers and Ader, some remarks in the lodge's activity programs, and the topics of its weekly or monthly lectures, give signs of the disaster that the members had experienced very recently.[153]

For instance, in the program of the event dedicated to Hanukkah on December 17, 1929, for the first time a request appeared 'The whole income is intended for charitable purposes; we send therefore to our dear brothers the urgent appeal to support us in our aspirations through their quite active participation.'[154]

In addition to the usual annual celebration dedicated to the installation of the newly elected officers and the lodge's president which took place in January 1930, in February a special 'working meeting' of the lodge took place. There a lecture was given: 'Opinion Concerning the Problem of the European *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* of our Order under Special Consideration of the Crisis in the Most Remote Areas of the Jewish Population in Poland'.[155]

Finally, the report of *Concordia* for the year 1929 shows a large gap between the financial activity of the brothers in the beginning of the year and at the end. During that year, the lodge supported several Jewish institutes and some other charity projects, for instance, a summer camp

[152] APKr, BB 358, pp. 21-25.

[153] See the answer of Leon Ader to the members of *Concordia* concerning the reduction of the lodge's payments: APKr, BB 68, pp. 625-626.

[154] APKr, BB 68, p. 621.

[155] APKr, BB 68, p. 649. *Arbeitsgemeinschaft* (Working Community) was created by B'nai B'rith in the year 1926 in order to gather and to consider the controversial matters of the European lodges. It was supervised mostly by the German District; cf. Czajecka, *Archiwum Związku*, 15.

for impoverished Jewish children. In January 1929, after his installation as the lodge's president, Fritz Reichmann (who several months later collapsed materially and physically) created his own foundation for Jewish university students, to which he donated a solid sum of 1,000 złoty.[156] In the second half of 1929, this foundation ceased to exist. Apparently, this report did not dwell on the crisis, except several mentions of the economic hardships lodge members experienced and concentrated mostly on their successes and the achievements of *Concordia*. Probably, this positive image was created out of a fear that the lodge might be dissolved by the Order's central authorities or the number of the members might be reduced.

In addition to attempts to overcome the disaster and to behave as usual, the reaction of *Concordia* to the economic crisis also demonstrates an additional aspect of its group-belonging which gradually occurred during the autumn-winter months following their financial and material collapse. Apparently, during these first months of the crisis, the members of the lodge willingly or unwillingly drew closer to the Grand Lodge of Poland, as well as probably to the rest of the lodges, united by the same disaster. Being in Poland during difficult economic conditions, their fraternal existence within the Polish District in large measure depended on the decision of their *Ostjüdisch* brothers as well as their own private existence on the internal policy of the Polish State.

During 1930-1932 the economic situation of Poland as well as the Polish District and of the Silesian lodges in particular, continued to worsen.[157] So, in the beginning of 1930, the financial report of *Concordia* which included matters up to the end of 1929, was not at all optimistic. In it the representatives of the lodge mention eighteen members who could not pay their usual taxes. The authors of the report also asked for the possibility of dividing the lodge's annual taxes into several monthly payments.[158] During the sitting of the General Committee of the Order, which took place in January 1930 in Berlin, it was decided to give a concession to *Concordia* (as well as to the lodge *Solidarność* in Kraków) in the matter of the non-paying brothers: '[...] and this only due to the difficult

[156] APKr, BB 360, pp. 17-20.

[157] Tomaszewski, Landau, *Gospodarka Polski*, 30-78, 154-167, 398-402; APKr, BB 359, p. 18.

[158] APKr, BB 358, p. 26.

and unfavourable financial situation in which both these [Silesian] lodges find themselves'.[159]

Although the lodges continued their daily functioning, the content of their activity was somewhat changed according to the difficult reality. Taking as an example *Concordia*, one can see that, on the one hand, the lodge continued its charitable activity towards Jewish organizations in Poland and in Palestine, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, or the local Jews most in need, even though the donations probably became smaller than they had been before.[160] On the other hand, as the representatives of the lodge mentioned, most of the weekly lectures which were given according to the lodge traditions in 1931 were made by the local brothers and not by the lecturers from other parts of Poland or from abroad as it had been in previous years.[161] Such a change could easily be explained by a policy to save on expenses, which would want to avoid having to cover the travel costs and the lodging of guest lecturers. Finally, some of the lectures which were given had a clear tone. For instance: 'How Can I Rescue What Remains of My Fortune?', which was given at the meeting of December 1931.[162] In early 1932, in the annual report, the whole economic situation of *Concordia's* brothers was described in pessimistic terms, which '[...] indeed this year [passed] through an unprecedented economic crisis, which paralyzed all the forces and which unfortunately did not stop at the gates of our dear brothers and brought some of them to a struggle for daily existence [...]'.[163]

It seems however, that in the beginning of 1932, due to the policy of strict savings, the lodge's members were still able to cover almost all the debts and taxes which they had to pay to the Polish District.[164] At the same time, it seems that this effort was the last one which *Concordia* was able to make, since a short time after the report, in the spring of 1932, a desperate letter was sent by the lodge representatives to the Grand Lodge in Kraków. In this letter they described the miserable (or as they called it, 'catastrophic') situation in which many of the lodge's members, as well as the whole Silesian *Voivodeship*, found themselves at the beginning of 1932. In the letter brothers were mentioned who had belonged to the lodge for

[159] APKr, BB 358, p. 30.
[160] APKr, BB 68, pp. 769, 775, 843-844, BB 360, p. 41.
[161] APKr, BB 68, p. 768, BB 360, pp. 41-45, BB 357, p. 23.
[162] APKr, BB 357, p. 37.
[163] APKr, BB 360, p. 37.
[164] APKr, BB 358, p. 91.

decades and whose families were now close to 'suffering hunger pangs', which the lodge had tried to keep from happening. One can assume that during these winter-spring months the economic crisis finally reached its peak in this area and the local B'nai B'rith members, after some relatively quiet months, once again found themselves in an unstable financial situation. The lodge itself admitted that it was unable to support its members' families. Therefore, at the end of the letter the heads of the former wealthy *Concordia* asked for financial support from the Polish Grand District, which a few years previously had been a subject of their contempt. Leon Ader rapidly reacted to this request and in a short time the brothers from Kraków, although also in a difficult financial situation, succeeded in gathering a certain sum (although not the whole sum which was requested by *Concordia*); it was intended for the so-called *Katastrophenfonds* (Catastrophe foundation, created for emergency expenses).[165]

In the report from 1932, the heads of *Concordia* described the year as their most difficult one, even more than the previous uneasy years of the crisis. Instead of a gradual improvement after almost three years of economic devastation, during 1932 the crisis in the area of Eastern Upper Silesia only became more severe, devouring the remains of the B'nai B'rith members' possessions. So, the authors of the report emphasized the desperate situation in which the previously wealthy members of the lodge found themselves: 'Many of the brothers were swept with their ventures to the path of self-destruction, other [brothers] were forced [...] to take on a partial work shift' at the time when '[...] this crisis [...] just worsened and brought outrageous forms of struggle for existence'. [166]

However, one can see from this report that despite the worsening financial situation (or maybe because of it), the members of *Concordia* were improving their relationships both at the internal level of the lodge and with their external links with other lodges of the Polish District. During the course of that year, the Silesian lodges overcame their daily difficulties and were able to find a way to continue with their organizational activities. During 1929–1932 such a dramatic event as the economic crisis became an additional agent of *Polonization*, bringing the former German and Polish Jews more closely together than they had been during the period of relative economic and social prosperity. Additionally, one can state that this crisis in some way also contributed to the process of

[165] APKr, BB 68, pp. 903-904, 977, BB 358, p. 92.

[166] APKr, BB 357, p. 109.

Polonization of the German Jews by making them eventually more involved in the economic reality of the Polish State.

5. 1933–1934: Polish Language: by Love or by Fear? Changes in *Concordia* during the Anti-German State Policy and after the Polish-German Pact

In addition to the constant economic troubles for the members of the two Silesian lodges, the year 1933 brought them, and the B'nai B'rith Order in general, an additional challenge to cope with: the rise of the National Socialist regime and its anti-Jewish policy. Despite their material collapse, this year was supposed to be a one of the most solemn years for the brothers of *Concordia*. In November 1933 the lodge's jubilee festivities were to take place and this was a point of pride for its members, since *Concordia* was one of the oldest lodges, created in one of the oldest European Districts; only one of the three German lodges in the world (except the United States) had the opportunity to celebrate its foundation jubilee before *Concordia*.

So, that year the feelings of the lodge members turned bittersweet beginning in the spring of 1933. This ambivalence is clearly expressed in the report of the president of *Concordia* which was sent at the end of the year to the head of the Polish District about the lodge's annual activity:

> On one side we hold the celebration of our 50 years of existence as the brightest feature of the year [...], on other side, however, two elementary facts hover over us with their shadows – the always imminent severe economic crisis with its overwhelming side-effects and the tragic fate which hit so hard the sisters and brothers of our neighbouring land [...]. So we in our feelings are led to the climax of being proud, but soon we again are thrown into deep depression [...].[167]

The whole Polish District started to react to the anti-Jewish measures which took place in Germany starting in February 1933, and then during March-April the violence increased (in many cases it was directed towards the *Ostjuden*).[168] The Order had to witness first hand (and the Polish

[167] APKr, BB 360, p. 67.

[168] Yfaat Weiss, *Deutsche und Polnische Juden vor dem Holocaust: Jüdische Identität zwischen Staatsbürgerschaft and Ethnizität 1933–1940* (München: Oldenbourg, 2000), 26-32; Wolfgang Benz, *A Concise History of the Third Reich* (Berkeley: University of California

District as well) the violent action of the new regime towards certain members within the *Ostjüdisch* society of Germany, who were brutally expelled from Germany to Poland.

In Jewish collective memory, the exiles who crossed the German-Polish border to the small town of Zbąszyń (approximately 70 kilometers from Poznań, the regional capital of Wielkopolska) are usually associated with the year 1938, when in October of that year some eighteen thousands *Ostjuden* were expelled from Germany to Poland.[169] However, as it appears from the archive of the B'nai B'rith's Polish District, the 1938 story of Zbąszyń had its own pre- history in the year 1933. In the spring of 1933, many Jews of Polish origin crossed (or were forced to cross) the German-Polish border and arrived in Zbąszyń.[170]

Almost immediately after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of Germany, even before the burning of the Reichstag and the 9th German Reichstag election of March 5, some *Ostjuden* were forced to return to Poland. Already on February 10, 1933, the Jewish community of Zbąszyń sent a letter to the renowned Jewish historian and a prominent B'nai B'rith member, Professor Moses Schorr in Warsaw, to the Board of the Jewish community in Warsaw, and to the Jewish Deputies in the Sejm, urging the establishment of a fund for the Jewish refugees crossing the border from Germany into Poland.[171] When not a single of these addressees reacted, the community of Zbąszyń dispatched a delegate who at-

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Press, 2006), 138-142; Marion A. Kaplan, *Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 18-21; Wolfgang Benz, *Geschichte des Dritten Reiches* (München: C. H. Beck, 2000), 132-134.

[169] A list of all the research literature that studies and mentions the expulsion to Zbąszyń in the year 1938 could itself be a full length article. I will mention, therefore, only several important examples. Robert Rozett, Shmuel Spector, *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2000), 491-492; Israel Gutman, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Holocaust*, vol. 4 (New York: Macmillan, 1990), 1726-1729; Michael Meyer, Michael Brenner, eds., *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 4 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996-1998), 220-224; Jerzy Tomaszewski, *Preludium Zagłady: Wygnanie Żydów polskich z Niemiec w 1938 r.* (Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1998); Jerzy Tomaszewski, 'Letters from Zbąszyń', *Yad Vashem Studies* 19 (1988), 289-315; Yitzhak Arad et al., eds., *Documents on the Holocaust: Selected Sources on the Destruction of the Jews of Germany and Austria, Poland and the Soviet Union* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 1981), 121-124.

[170] Anna Novikov, 'Zbąszyń, 1933', *Scripta Judaica-Cracoviensia* 7 (2009), 103-109.

[171] Moses Schorr was a professor of oriental studies in Warsaw University, the first historian to systematically study the history of Polish Jewry. He was one of the creators of the Institute for Judaic Studies, and, later, of the Judaic Library, and was a vice-president of the B'nai B'rith Order of the Polish District. In 1935 Schorr was chosen to be a member of the Senate of the Second Polish Republic.

tempted to establish personal contact with Eliyahu Mazur, the president of the Jewish community in Warsaw. Nevertheless, this contact likewise turned out to be fruitless.

In the course of February and the first two weeks of March, the Jewish community of Zbąszyń continued to be the place at which a 'considerable and constant flow of refugees, which constantly increases' arrived.[172] As vice-president of the B'nai B'rith Order in the Polish District, Schorr decided to contact Leon Ader about this matter. Schorr proposed to provide a certain sum from the Order's emergency fund to be distributed in Zbąszyń. The *Amicitia* lodge of Poznań (as the closest to Zbąszyń) was asked to investigate the situation and was to assume responsibility for this distribution and for the care of the immigrants.[173]

At the same time, the Grand Lodge sent letters to Poland's three largest lodges, in Kraków, Warsaw and Lwów, asking them to create special foundations for the refugees.[174] A week later, on 13 April 1933, the Grand Lodge transferred 300 zloty to the bank account of *Amicitia*. This sum was taken from the Emergency Fund of the Polish B'nai B'rith District and was intended to meet the needs of the refugees in Zbąszyń.[175]

It is unclear from the sources, whether the members of the two Silesian lodges, being located near the Polish-German border, dealt with the flow of Jewish refugees as closely as their brothers in Poznań. As far as it would appear, Katowice also turned into a point where the Jewish immigrants arrived after leaving Germany, probably at least some weeks after the area of Zbąszyń. This might have made the whole procedure of their reception, if not less painful and traumatic, at least more familiar and less unexpected.

As is evident from the above-mentioned annual report, the members of the lodge took an active part in the process of the treatment and absorption of these (as called by *Concordia*) 'Polish citizens living in Germany' or *Reemingranten*, whom according to the report, the 'Hitler movement' was driving back to their motherland (*Heimat*). It is interesting that in this

[172] APKr, BB 235, p. 25.

[173] The official name of the foundation, organized by the Polish district was *Fundusz na wypadek katastrof* (Emergency Fund). It was created in January 1926 by the General Committee of the Polish Order. It aimed to aid the victims of catastrophic events, and every member was obliged to pay an annual contribution of 50 American cents. Czajecka, *Archiwum Związku*, 16-17.

[174] Ibid., 9-10.

[175] Ibid., 13.

report apparently for the first time in *Concordia's* existence, the term 'Heimat', which was usually used by the members of the lodge in order to refer to their German homeland, here denoted Poland. At the same time, they referred to Germany as the 'their place of living'.[176] Even though this new application of *Heimat* was 'saved' by them for the refugees, it seems that this first association of Poland with the motherland might reflect a slight change in the Silesian German-Jewish treatment of the state in which they lived.

According to this report, Katowice as one of the 'gates' to Poland from Germany daily experienced 'uncountable' numbers of refugees, whom the lodge's brothers tried to help. Even if the report exaggerated the reality, still it seems that the members of *Concordia* had to assist a large number of newcomers out of their own resources, which due to the economic crisis had become meagre and scarce. So, the brothers provided a 'first aid to reintegrate them into the Polish economy'.[177] The members of the lodge understood this first aid firstly as teaching them Polish. It seems that despite the fact the refugees had originally come from what was now they territory of the Polish Republic (or close to its borders), a large part of them hardly knew any Polish at all. These migrants, the majority of whom had left the East European areas at the end of the nineteenth century up until World War I and after, mostly spoke Yiddish (sometimes Russian and some German, the latter mostly from the areas of Galicia). After years of living in Germany, on the eve of their expulsion to Poland, many of them spoke German (or had become German speakers).[178] The whole reality within the newly founded Second Polish Republic was rather unknown to them and, furthermore, to their children, who had been born in Germany or at least had grown up there. Therefore, their 'return' to their 'homeland' was in fact an exile into an unknown state with a mostly unfamiliar official language.

Such a task of learning Polish, which was mentioned as a primary issue and absolutely necessary for the refugees, presumably proceeded from the previous experience of these German Jews who, as mentioned in the

[176] APKr, BB 360, p. 77.

[177] APKr, BB 360, p. 78.

[178] Maurer, *Ostjuden*, 17-27, 760-761; Shulamit Volkov, 'Die Dynamik der Dissimilation: Deutsche Juden und die ostjüdischen Einwanderer', in Dirk Blasius, Dan Diner, eds., *Zerbrochene Geschichte: Leben und Selbsverstandnis der Juden in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 1991), 64-78; Aschheim, 'The East European Jew', 32-37; Shulamit Volkov, *Germans, Jews, and Antisemites: Trials in Emancipation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 265-274.

previous chapters, after the shifting of borders were transferred into a new linguistic reality. Having experienced how language difficulties could disturb daily life, the lodge brothers (and sisters) tried to smooth the newcomers' sudden entrance to the unknown state by providing them with courses in Polish.

So, in a paradoxical way, the German-Jewish citizens of Poland absorbed the Polish *Ostjuden* expelled from Germany by helping them learn Polish, while both groups generally were German-speaking. This action could be interpreted as an additional and essential step towards the further *Polonization* of the members of a lodge, which a short time earlier had insisted on German as its official language, had tried to avoid any influence which was alien to the German culture, and who had been faithful to the German State.

Apparently, such a change in the lodge's approach to Germany and to Poland was not coincidental and can be clearly explained by a crucial change of values after the rise to power of the National Socialist regime. It would be overstated to suggest that the change in the self-definition of the Silesian German Jews was immediate and that all of them rapidly abandoned their values and their mother tongue and turned into Polish patriots. One can assume however, that their personal preferences were left for their private personal sphere of life, and started to co-exist with the new preferences, which were gradually created within Poland and were significantly strengthened during 1933.

Hence, the organization of the Polish language courses as well as a general caring for the Jewish newcomers from a position as Polish Jewish citizens, in some measure became a tool by means of which members of *Concordia* emphasized the Jewish part of their self-definition. Feeling Jewish could eventually assist in their cognitive dissonance. It mediated between the 'Germanness', on the one hand, which was an inseparable part of their own self-perception, something into which they were born and in which they had lived most of their lives, and which now in some sense 'betrayed' them, and, on the other hand, their 'Polishness', which was still alien to the deepest part of their consciousness, but gradually could defend them from the betrayal of their former motherland and now turned into a crucial part of their self-definition.

It is difficult to say to what extent this new 'Polishness' consisted in feeling closer to the *Ostjuden* and to what extent it included the civic values of the new state and its reception as a new motherland.

Presumably, an essential shift in their self-definition was also caused by their treatment of the surrounding political reality and their own place

within this shifting context. For more than a decade, between 1922 and 1933, the German Jewish Silesian B'nai B'rith brothers regarded their shift to Poland as a failure – politically, culturally, professionally, and linguistically. Moreover, in addition to this harming of their German identity, they were now subjected to another humiliation – this time in the Jewish part of their self-definition (which as it seems had close ties to the German one), manifesting itself in their organizational shift to join the inferior group of *Ostjuden*. Even their final decision to incorporate into the Polish District was made not out of affection for their Polish-Jewish brothers or to the Polish State, but out of a political and organizational necessity.

Thus, during most of those eleven years, the reality within Poland was regarded by these brothers as unwanted, unfamiliar, and as less stable in comparison to Germany. It was also equally threatening. From the beginning of 1933 this situation changed entirely. The German-Jewish inhabitants of Polish Silesia suddenly found themselves in a much more preferable situation than their relatives, friends, and colleagues who continued to live in Germany and who had been up to then (to some extent) the objects of envy of their eastern counterparts. Now as a Jew, the life within Poland had become safer and Polish citizenship suddenly became much more beneficial than the German. It would be interesting to compare this situation with the one described by David Rechter as taking place in 1917 when the B'nai B'rith members of Vienna witnessed a huge wave of *Ostjuden* refugees. In this case, the situation was exactly the opposite to the one the Silesian B'nai B'rith encountered in 1933, since in 1917 '[...] the refugees had emerged from the darkness of their ghetto into the 'bright light of the west' and needed to be 'educated' to adopt a west European lifestyle'.[179] In 1933 these former refugees with the same origins of those *Ostjuden* (and their children) had to leave the 'west European' style which they adopted during fifteen years and be re-educated again to the language and the values of the unfamiliar Polish successor state.

Eventually, these Jewish refugees accustomed to a German reality, would remind members of *Concordia* of their own past and the feelings of being in a new postwar reality. Therefore, it seems that their first drive to emphasize the importance of learning Polish, in addition to some practical reasons, was done more intuitively rather than consciously, bringing at least some feeling of safety to these frightened and confused people by providing them with some basic knowledge of an unfamiliar (or at least not entirely familiar) Polish language.

[179] Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna*, 72-73.

Additionally, according to Yfaat Weiss, the German Jewish organizations used to provide basic assistance to those who were paupers among the *Ostjuden*.[180] Therefore, the German Jewish members of *Concordia* presumably continued to feel towards their Eastern Jewish brothers a sort of responsibility for the 'weakest' ones, which they apparently felt when living in Germany as a German-Jewish society, helping 'legally and materially' for the most part.[181] Such a feeling could, however, be regarded as quite bizarre in the sense of it being a total role reversal: the German-Jewish citizens of Poland now supported their *Germanized* Eastern Jewish brothers.

It seems that for the first time *Polonization* played a crucial role within the self-perception of the German Silesian Jews, since it was not 'brought' from 'outside' and implemented on them in a passive way, but on the contrary, was actively manifested by them, both in terms of being Polish citizens and being Polish Jews (even if most of them were still German speakers).

It is interesting that in the case of the German Silesian Jews, emphasizing the Jewish-Polish part of their identity instead of the German element brought them after 1933 apparently closer to the Polish State, but not necessarily to Zionism. Recently, Moshe Zimmermann has shown an additional way of examining what was called as a 'Renaissance' of Jewish culture within the German-Jewish community after 1933 that was not entirely in a Zionist context.[182] Michael Meyer and Michael Brenner also point to the strengthening of the Jewish self-definition of German Jews after 1933 without it involving Zionism.[183] Another interesting point would be the comparison between the German-Jewish immigrants in Palestine, as examined by Moshe Zimmermann, and the former *Ostjuden* migrants in Poland. While there was a difference in the self-perception among members of the immigrant groups as well as a huge geographic difference between the two lands and the linguistic and ethnic differences

[180] Weiss, *Deutsche und Polnische Juden*, 80.

[181] Concerning the philantropic responsibility of the German Jews towards the *Ostjuden* see also: Maurer, *Ostjuden*, 741-760; David Rechter, 'Ethnicity and the Politics of Welfare – The Case of Habsburg Austrian Jewry', in Böwing, *Yearbook* 1, 257-276, at 257-259.

[182] Moshe Zimmermann, '1933 – Shnat Hamafteakh', in Moshe Zimmermann, Yotam Hotam, eds., *Bein Hamoladot. Hayekim Bemahozoteihem* (Yerushalaim: Merkaz Zalman Shazar, 2005), 80.

[183] Brenner, *The Renaissance*, 214-217; Michael Meyer, *Jewish Identity in the Modern World* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1990), 51.

between the local populations of both lands, an intriguing similarity appears in the way these groups were received by the locals.

In both cases these Jewish groups from Germany returned, not entirely on their own volition, to their 'origins' or their 'homelands' according to the ideological interpretation of the local Jewish population. According to Zimmermann, the Jewish population of Palestine in these years had Eastern European origins. The German-Jewish newcomers had to fit themselves into their political and cultural structures (which were built by, so to say, *Ostjuden*). Within the local Jewish population a strong Zionist, pro-Hebrew ideology prevailed, the reality and language of which these non-Zionist and German-speaking *Jeckes* had to accept.[184] In the case of the Jewish refugees to Poland, the ethnicity, language and the self-definition of the newcomers and the local population were different, but the treatment was similar. In the same way as in the case of German immigrants in Palestine (although quite paradoxically), here the former *Ostjuden* were the German-speakers who came from Germany to the alien Eastern European social and cultural reality and were accepted by the local Jewish population. Moreover, in a similar way to their brothers in Palestine, who emphasized the importance of leaving Germany and learning the local ideological language (i. e., Hebrew), here the German language was abandoned in favour of Polish.

Eventually, one of the reasons for stressing the Jewish-Polish belonging instead of Jewish-German or Jewish-Zionist would be (as it can be seen in *Concordia's* sources) a completely non-Zionist position (although also not an anti-Zionist one) of most of the lodge's members, which differed from the view of the whole Polish District in general. The Grand Lodge of Poland tried to bring together many fields of Jewish activity in Poland, and moderately supported the Zionist movement as one amongst many Jewish organizations.[185] Another piece of evidence for the pro-Polish and not pro-Zionist position of *Concordia* would be the fact that the newcomers were invited to attend the courses of Polish in order to continue their life within Poland, as opposed to classes in Hebrew as a means for their eventual life in Palestine, as might have been proposed by the Zionist organizations in Poland.

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[184] Zimmermann, *Deutsche gegen Deutsche*, 235-241. According to David Rechter, it seems that the German speaking Austrian Viennese B'nai B'rith members before and during World War I also shared rather an anti-Zionist ideology: Rechter, *The Jews of Vienna*, 142-156.

[185] Kargol, *Działalność i character*, 132-166.

Another test case of the Silesian German Jewish affiliation was the already mentioned jubilee of *Concordia* which took place on November 19, 1933. Although the festivity was celebrated in a very solemn way, one could read between the lines of the report a slight discomfort and attempts at 'retouching' the former German patriotism of the lodge and its foundation in Germany. So, at least in the report the use of the word 'Germany' was avoided. It seems that instead of it, the members of *Concordia* started to emphasize the regional affiliation of the lodge. It is difficult to state how the lodge was represented during the speeches at the celebration; one can assume, however, that it would be meaningless on the one hand to emphasize the Polish character of the lodge at an event dedicated to the lodge's history, which had taken place mostly outside Poland.

It also seems that at the end of 1933, after all these dramatic events, deep reflections and crucial shifts within the self-definition now moving away from one in which the members would seek to represent *Concordia* as a former German lodge. Moreover, such a presentation within the backdrop of tense Polish-German political relations would not be welcomed by the Polish state officials, who might read the report. Therefore, it was easier, both officially and psychologically, to stress the local, Silesian character of the lodge, and furthermore its urban character in the city of Katowice. As a result, the 40 years of *Concordia's* existence within Germany and within the German District were briefly described as 40 years of belonging to District VIII. An emphasis was put on the presence of the representative of the 'German-Silesian' lodges (the only mentioning of the word 'German' in the whole description of the event). A final accent was placed on the 'local' subject of pride: the attendance of two honourable members and founders of *Concordia*, who had belonged to the lodge for 50 years from its very beginnings.[186] Therefore, the whole festivity focused instead on the 'regional' character, which emphasized the affiliation of the lodge to Silesia and to Katowice.

The last point I would like to examine in this work is the linguistic shift of *Concordia* during 1933. During this year, precisely starting on June 23, the lodge started to publish its official announcements about the weekly and monthly events both in Polish and German, instead of just in German (as it been done previously) and continued to do it until its closing in 1938. Such a change could be interpreted in several ways. First of all, this could have been done similarly to (and probably taking as an

[186] APKr, BB 360, pp. 67-69.

example) the periodical of the Jewish community of Katowice: *Urzędowa Gazeta Gminy Izraelickiej w Katowicach*. In 1932 this periodical started to be published regularly, twice a week, both in German and Polish, and it existed until December 1936.[187] Interestingly, in 1934, after the non-aggression pact between Poland and Germany was signed, *Concordia* continued to publish its announcements bilingually. Moreover, from the beginning of 1934 the lodge started to use Polish as its official language. From that point on, all its correspondence with the Polish District and with all its lodges started to be done only in Polish.[188] This action supports the assumption that this linguistic shift was done not only from official considerations, but from some inner and deeper motives as well.

As it seems, neither the local *Voivodeship*, nor the state authorities prevented such publications and, therefore, in the politically sensitive and clearly anti-German year of 1933 in Poland, the German-Jewish members of B'nai B'rith followed this example of the Jewish community of Katowice in the publishing of their official announcements.

Secondly, it seems that the lodge followed the general pro-Polish policy followed by the whole Polish District during 1933, which emphasized the members of the Order showing civic loyalty to the state. So, according to Anna Kargol:

> In the face of the growing anti-Semitic moods, the Grand Lodge had to find its sole support against this in its proper relations with the Polish authorities. The Grand Lodge issued [...] a letter indicating all the reasons for which the members of the lodges had to demonstrate their civic attitude [concerning the appeal of the Polish government to subscribe to the state loan in 1933] [...]. B'nai B'rith made every effort so that the brothers would always get involved in all types of social actions which could emphasize the civic attitude not only of Jewish intelligentsia, but also of the whole of Jewry, which could legitimize their equal co-citizenship (now seen as being largely deserved).[189]

One more paradox which apparently followed the generally pro-Polish policy of *Concordia* outwardly (in addition to the changes which were made in the self-definition of its members) is that this pro-Polish behaviour and the language shift were made by the German Jews in order not

[187] See this periodical online in the web-site of the Silesian Digital Library: http://sbc.org.pl/dlibra/publication?id=10282&tab=3; Chrust, 'Hayiton Harashmi shel Hakehila', 27-33.

[188] Concerning the official correspondence in Polish see for instance APKr, BB 357, pp. 177, 183-185.

[189] Kargol, *Działalność i charakter*, 124-126.

to be ill affected by the anti-German policy of Poland. Hence, during this first year of the National Socialist regime in Germany, the German Jews in Poland tried to hide their 'Germanness' in order not to be regarded by the Polish authorities as Germans or as pro-Germanists, and so to remain in Poland.

Conclusion

1934: The German-Polish Pact and Beyond

In January 1934 the external policy of the Polish State significantly changed. Diplomatic relations between Poland and Germany improved; Hitler abandoned the previous anti-Polish policy of the German State, and both states signed a non-aggression pact, which provided for their peaceful relations and mutual support for ten years.[1]

Already in May 1933, Hitler had begun his entrance into foreign affairs with the founding of a peaceful, cooperative relationship with his Polish neighbours with some economic advantages in favour of Poland and against the Soviet Union (although the Polish State assured the USSR of its peaceful interests).[2] Thus, in November 1933 Hitler made a public statement about his friendly intensions towards Poland and then, according to Christian Leitz, 'By agreeing to renounce the use of violence against each other, the road towards the Non-Aggression Pact of January 1934 was opened up.'[3]

In this pact Germany and Poland guaranteed a mutual, permanent peace and also improved their economic relationship by ending the tariff disagreements mentioned previously.[4] Clearly, this signing essentially influenced both the political balance within Europe and the internal politics of Poland. Starting with the signing the Four Powers Pact in July 1933, which had been initiated by Mussolini (although it was never ratified), the international position of Hitler was strengthened, or at least received recognition from several European states. This pact also strengthened German-Polish relations, while the Franco-Polish relations became

[1] Zara Steiner, *The Triumph of the Dark: European International History 1933–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 62; Christian Leitz, *Nazi Foreign Policy, 1933–1941: The Road to Global War* (London: Routledge, 2004), 67.

[2] Ibid., 64-67; Steiner, *The Triumph*, 29-35; Wandycz, *The Twilight*, 294-296.

[3] Leitz, *Nazi*, 65.

[4] Ibid., 67.

estranged.[5] In addition to the general unrest and tension that increased in Europe during 1933–1935 (in which National Socialist Germany had an active role), and in addition to the tensions in the Polish-Soviet relationship, there was another agency which was involved in the background of the German-Polish relationship – The League of Nations.

A recently appointed Polish minister in Berlin, Józef Lipski, was required by Piłsudski to communicate with Hitler in the beginning of November regarding the matter of further German-Polish relations. The decision of Poland to draw closer to Germany led to certain consequences for the Polish State. Just a few days earlier Germany had withdrawn from the Disarmament Conference in Geneva and this step was followed by its total withdrawal from the League of Nations (apparently using the example of Japan which had withdrawn several months earlier in March 1933 after the Manchurian Crisis). Piłsudski knew that Poland was not on the same level with the other Great Powers of Europe, and its international position and security were reliant on two main factors: the Great Powers and the backing of the League of Nations.

According to Wandycz, by drawing closer to the German State and then having Germany leave the League of Nations, Poland consequently lost its second supporter. In addition, rapprochement to Germany meant for Poland alienation from its long-term ally, France.[6] Therefore, the Polish government required some strong recompense for this loss and had to know very clearly what this compensation would look like.[7] Presumably, the promise by Hitler of a non-aggression pact was for Poland of much more significance that its continuing relationship with the League of Nations, which at this point seemed to be losing its former power and influence. Signing the Non-Aggression Pact with Germany, Poland took a crucial step towards its own alienation from the League of Nations, *de facto* ending its cooperation in the questions of minorities in 1934.[8]

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[5] Steiner, *The Triumph*, 32-35; Wandycz, *Polish Diplomacy*, 274-294; Anique H. M. van Ginneken, *Historical Dictionary of the League of Nations* (Lanham: The Scarecrow Press, 2006), 150.

[6] Ruth Henig, *The Origins of the Second World War 1933–1941*, 2nd edn (London: Routledge, 2005), 18-24; Steiner, *The Triumph*, 63-64; van Ginneken, *Historical Dictionary*, 92; Ruth Henig, 'The League of Nations: An Idea before its Time?', in Frank McDonough, ed., *The Origins of the Second World War: An International Perspective* (London: Continuum, 2011), 34-50, here 41-44.

[7] Alan J. P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (London: Penguin, 1961), 30-32.

[8] Van Ginneken, *Historical Dictionary*, 151.

However, in addition to this statement of Wandycz, it seems that the Polish government by this deliberate distancing of itself from the League of Nations had a certain aim: Once the League became weaker, Poland could demonstrate its reluctance to cooperate in the question of the protection of minorities, especially with regard to the Upper Silesian convention of 1922. In this case, Poland could additionally profit from its pact with Germany and its alienation from the League, since it could use the situation of the German minority within the state as an argument in its further relationship with Germany.

One can state that, on the one hand, the pro-German Silesian minority even benefited from this pact, because after the tense months in the first half of 1933, it started once again to be treated respectfully, since the Polish state authorities, as well as the local officials, were apparently prescribed to maintain good relations with Germany. On the other hand, the pro-German Silesian minority was no longer under the protection of the League of Nations, meaning it could hardly turn to it, and therefore was dependent on the good will of the Polish government and its relations with Germany. The treatment of this minority could be also used to influence German politics, since it had no protection except the Polish State. After its withdrawal from the League of Nations, Germany had no longer any obligations to the rights of the Polish minority in its own territory. By its pact with Germany, Poland in fact agreed, as well as Germany, to fulfil all its commitments to the League of Nations and to the Little Versailles Treaties.

The Silesian Test Case

The first part of this work was dedicated to the process of *Polonization* in Silesian society from 1922 to 1934. It concentrated on one of the most important state systems for furthering its ideology, the education system. On the one hand, a new Polish language education system was created. On the other hand, minority schools for the German-speaking population were set up. Therefore, it was important to see how the two types of state schools divided children from the same society, in the same area, and tried to create, in a short period of time, two different national affiliations, Polish and German.

This study has attempted to trace the process of the creation of the new Polish nationals and the tension between the authorities and the local population which followed this complicated process. During the years

which were examined, the national-linguistic vision of Polish state authorities did not meet (and sometimes even opposed) the real self-definition of the Silesian society.

In this study the education system was examined as a 'mediator', which on the one hand reflected the daily process in the creation of a national identity at the 'micro' level of the Eastern Upper Silesian area. On the other hand, the education system offered the possibility for studying precisely the influence of the local discussions on the 'macro' level of international diplomacy.

Finally, the discussions dealing with the system of education in the Silesian *Voivodeship* also reflected some of the most sensitive European interwar political issues dealing with peace treaties and their significance. These issues were hidden behind the debates concerning the minority rights or the nationality of bilingual children.

The first chapter of this dissertation was dedicated to the process of creating a new education system within the recently formed Silesian *Voivodeship* in 1923–1924. During these years the new education system in the Polish Republic underwent an intensive development. The process of creating this system, in the whole Polish State, was extremely complicated, since there was a need to organize a new unified school system out of the three former school systems, the Russian, Austro-Hungarian, and the Prussian. The Second Polish Republic inherited these systems from the former states which had governed its territory for so many years. Although during these years the school system for the whole state had to be created and unified, matters in the Silesian *Voivodeship* were even more complicated because of its special political and legal status as a post-Prussian autonomous region.

Firstly, it already had a well-organized Prussian school system which, while keeping its positive structural and organizational aspects, had to be transformed into a Polish-speaking one. Secondly, due to the Geneva Convention and due to the Little Treaty of Versailles, the Polish government had to support the education of its minorities throughout the whole territory of the state. Therefore, the matter of minority schools in the Silesian *Voivodeship* received special importance and concern. Creation of the schools for the *niemiecka mniejszość językowa* (the German-speaking minority schools, their official name) was one of the central and most discussed matters in the Silesian *Voivodeship* during all of its interwar existence, becoming an even more complicated case than the creation of the Polish-speaking school systems. Because of the significant ideological role which was given to the system of education in the interwar Second

Polish Republic, even the German-speaking minority schools had to promote the ideology of being a pro-Polish citizen among the pro-German Silesian children (who either had to be perceived as Germans or according to the sense of their state affiliation had to be 'returned' to their lost 'Polishness').

A large part of the Silesian population, for various reasons, took a cautious stance both towards the process of *Polonization* and the process of the creation of minority schools. It seems that Silesian parents either preferred to send their children to the German-speaking schools or to keep an unbiased position towards the creation of these schools.
Although there was an essential lack of Polish-speaking teaching staff in the Polish speaking schools, it took the Polish authorities even longer to open the first minority German-speaking schools in the Silesian *Voivodeship*. This could be explained by the Polish-German relations and the domestic Polish state policy in 1923–1924. These political matters directly influenced the fate of the local Silesian population in each tiny place in the *Voivodeship*.

The Polish state authorities and government of the local Silesian autonomous region were ambivalent towards the opening of German schools in the sensitive border area which had just recently been removed from Prussian rule and had to be *Polonized*. Such a step could have symbolized for the local population a failure of the state's pro-Polish policy, which according to the official ideology had fought for many years to free the Polish Silesian children from *Germanization* and from a German-speaking education.

The opening of the German minority schools would create an additional problem for the Polish State: instead of producing new Polish citizens, it would supply the Polish Silesian *Voivodeship* with a new generation of German-speaking Silesian children who perceived themselves as Germans. Consequently, in enlarging the German minority, the Polish State was contradicting its own ideology. Figuratively speaking, by its own hands it had to create and to bring up a large number of Germans and thereby damage the national interests of the Polish State in its sensitive western border area.

Finally, this delay with the opening of the minority schools apparently had some relation to the political situation in Germany, which in the autumn of 1923 was close to crisis. Therefore, the Polish government took a wait and see position, since the state of things in Germany could change at any moment, and carrying the hope that the whole Upper

Silesian area would be incorporated into Poland, and without any obligations towards the German minority there.

A short time later, in the international German-Polish-Swiss discussions, questions about the negative decisions of the Polish government in these matters and how they would affect the Polish minority in the German part of Upper Silesia were raised. It was highly recommended to support the German minority in the Silesian *Voivodeship* and to open the minority schools that had initially been planned. Here the diplomacy of international states was unable to cancel the rights which minorities had obtained in the treaties and conventions; at the same time these minorities succeeded in using their dependence to turn the pro-Polish and the pro-German Silesian societies on both sides of the border into 'hostages' depending on one another. At the end of 1923 and the beginning of 1924, the international position of Germany in Europe and its relationships with the United States became stronger. Therefore, the Polish government had to give up its expectation of a probable reuniting of the whole of Upper Silesia within the Second Republic, and to finally follow the Geneva Convention and the Little Versailles prescriptions and open minority schools in the Silesian *Voivodeship*.

Nevertheless, the Polish authorities, being unable to abandon these instructions, tried to use them at least for their own aims and to interpret them freely, promoting in the German-speaking schools the same state ideology and values which were promoted within the Polish-speaking schools. Ideally, due to this state intervention, by the end of their school studies, these German children would be loyal Polish citizens and be similar in their pro-Polish views to the 'new Poles' educated in Polish schools.

The main questions which arose regarding these issues were: What were these new Germans and new Poles to be like in the vision of the Polish State, and what were the processes and the tools for their creation to be? In the first part of this dissertation the subjects of religion, history, literature and German and Polish language studies (lessons of German in the Polish-speaking schools and of Polish in the German-speaking schools) were examined. This research also focused on the education that was to take place outside of school: films, state holidays and ceremonies, considered by the education and state authorities as significant in the creation of a new Pole.

The study of these subjects was divided into two parts, before the *Coup* of Piłsudski in May 1926 and after that, during the process of *Sanation*, until 1933–1934. After May 1926, the content of most of the school sub-

jects and the outside-of-school education was changed, and the previous creation of a 'Pole', relevant during the first post-Prussian years, was replaced by creating an image of a 'citizen of Poland', whether German or Polish.

The former faithfulness to the local region was to be replaced by faithfulness to the whole state, and 'Polish' symbols had to be turned into the 'Polish State' symbols. The role of religion in education, especially the predominately Catholic one in the state, was still important, but it seems in spite of the Concordat of 1925, and especially after May 1926, each religious confession had to be loyal to any state decisions and respect them. The importance of knowledge of Polish in the education system was still great, however, and even more importantly was the clear understanding by all schoolchildren of their responsibility towards Poland as future citizens of the state. *Polonization* among the Silesian *Voivodeship's* children, before 1926, was concentrated mostly on their 'Polishness'. After 1926 it went hand in hand with the creation of their proper citizenship.

Nationalization: 'Macro' and 'Micro' Levels

Being a part of a postwar successor state and similar to other disputed border areas in Central Europe, the Upper Silesian region was an excellent example of a region that had its own special features and particular qualities. It was important internationally due to its natural resources, its non-national and pro-regionalist minorities, and its special minority treaties. This unique character and legal status of Upper Silesia and its minorities caused multiple discussions in international bodies and in the Polish state government. Therefore, the area was highly sensitive to all the changes both from 'above' (the level of the authorities) and from 'below' (local societies) and clearly reflected the close connection between the two. This allowed this study to trace the mutual influence between the two elements in both directions.

This research has also examined the main symbols which due to the state ideology were important in the creation of the new citizens and, further, in the creation and support of the Polish nation. This dissertation has traced how the international diplomacy in Europe and the external political situation of Poland influenced these symbols and the process of their implementation as a part of the state ideology from 'above' towards the local population in the border area of the Silesian *Voivodeship*. Simultaneously, the dissertation has also discussed the internal political situa-

tion of Poland as an inseparable part of the process of the bringing of high ideas into a material context, to their practical treatment in the Polish and German education system. Therefore, the whole transformation of an idea from the 'macro' level of international decisions to the 'micro' level of a certain population group or even of single individuals was examined.

At the same time this study has traced the process of the self-definition of the Silesian population, which despite its pro-Polish or pro-German attitude perceived itself in terms different from the national or linguistic ones. Moreover, the new definitions of a minority that were accepted in the postwar treaties, where suddenly different ethnic groups were divided by the new frontiers of the successor states, were unclear at the 'macro' level of decision makers themselves. Therefore, different international bodies, such as the Mixed Commission or the League of Nations, as well as the Polish authorities, the pro-German organizations, and the Silesian population tried to take advantage of these flexible definitions and to interpret them according to their own values and ideals (examples of this were 'Maurer's Children' or out-of-wedlock children).

The Silesian *Voivodeship* was an example of one of many Central European border areas where the local population did not suit the new national-linguistic demands of the authorities. Linguistic-national definition very soon clashed with the question of whether a language was indeed the tool to turn a given society into a nation. According to such a linguistic definition, what should one do with bilingual children? And with children who do not know any 'official' language properly, except the Creole they used at home? Apparently, the Silesian population used this linguistic definition of a nation in order to survive in the unstable and changing situation of the Silesian *Voivodeship* during most of the period focused on in this dissertation.

The term 'identity' in this study is inadequate, because from the point of view of the local traditional society there was a certain gap between 'identity' as was demanded by the authorities, and between the deep self-definition which remained almost unchangeable. This constructed national and linguistic identity could be accepted up to a certain point when it confronted the true, underlying self.

Until then it would be useful, and the Silesian society was flexible enough to benefit from its advantages, as was shown in the chapters dealing with the school subjects, for instance, in the case of a gradual change from the negative attitude toward cinema or to some extent to the Polish male and female secular immigrant teachers. Apparently, this attitude towards linguistic advantages was not a novelty to the Silesian

population, since it had used it during the Prussian rule of the area. Therefore, while the authorities and the frontiers were shifted, the local population remained constant and successfully applied the same tactic it had used previously.

'Maurer's Children' and the Out-of-wedlock Children

As was shown both in the chapters dealing with the school subjects before and after 1926, and in the discussion of 'Maurer's Children', the authorities' process of *Polonization* was met by some resistance from the Silesian population because of its strong and unchangeable self-definition, despite all the changing political and social realities. These obstacles came from both the pro-German population as well as from the pro-Polish one.

The pro-German Silesians, using the advantages (as far as they were concerned) of the German-speaking minority schools, were devoted to their confession (either Catholic or Evangelical), to their region, and to their Silesian language. They did not intend to change these since these were the real signs of their self-definition, as opposed to identification through national identity or their usage of Polish or German. These terms of nation or national state languages were distant from their collective self-perception.

At the same time, the pro-Polish patriotic part of the Silesians was less flexible, both during the Prussian rule (when in fact its level was significantly lower) and within the Polish Republic, especially after the *Coup* of Piłsudski in 1926. Being accustomed to some extent to a certain antagonism towards the Prussian authorities and, therefore, developing their own regional 'Polish', i. e. Silesian-Catholic values and ideology, this group continued to cultivate its own particular group identity in the Second Polish Republic. Paradoxically, these pro-Polish actions were regarded by the *Sanation* regime as antagonistic, eventually in the same way as they had been regarded by the Prussian authorities during the *Kulturkampf* and thereafter. Therefore, although the values and the ideology completely changed, the structure of the authorities' demands towards the local, not entirely linguistically loyal population remained the same, as well as the tension between the authorities and the local population.

Moreover, in speaking about the 'macro' level, even the authorities, Polish on the one hand, and Swiss and German on the other, took different positions of interpreting the complicated and vague questions of

national and linguistic belonging, as was shown in the chapter dedicated to 'Maurer's Children' and to the out-of-wedlock children. Apparently, the objective and subjective treatment of the question of national belonging depended on the political tradition of the states, as was mentioned in the same chapter. Therefore, each state created its own version of this mismatch between the official national identification of the Silesian population, its own self-definition according to its own tradition, and the political aims that were far from the interest of the minority being represented.

Hence, here again the matter of minority rights and questions of nationality and language were taken and used outside of their primary context, intended to benefit the minority itself. In most cases, the 'macro' politics of the international diplomatic discussions influenced the issues subordinate to it as well. In addition, these minorities' national issues were used to set up questions of frontiers and power, leaving the local Silesian population in a position of being useful hostages. Apparently, not only the Silesian society experienced such a treatment, but also almost every minority whose national-linguistic belonging, sometimes indoctrinated by force, could be used in international or domestic state politics.

The Jewish Test Case

The second part of this research focused on the German-Jewish community of Katowice, in particular on the lodge *Concordia*, and to a lesser extent the lodge *Michael Sachs* from Königshütte (later Królewska Huta, followed by Chorzów), which belonged to the B'nai B'rith organization. Because of a large wave of Jewish immigrants from Galicia and the eastern parts of Poland, it is sometime difficult to know who of the members of the Jewish community of Kattowitz (later Katowice) belonged to the old, German-Jewish community.

I gathered a large part of my corpus from working with the archives of the B'nai B'rith *Concordia* lodge in the city and with some documents from the lodge *Michael Sachs*. According to the archive materials, most of the Jewish elite members of the lodge lived in Kattowitz before the borders shifted and therefore belonged to German Jewry. The fact of their belonging to the B'nai B'rith Order reflected also the Jewish part of their self-definition. However, these B'nai B'rith members were deeply influenced by German culture and perceived themselves as belonging to the German part of the mixed society of the city.

After the plebiscite, in 1922 the Silesian lodges were shifted to the Polish state territory. According to the statutes of the Order, they could no longer belong to the German District. Their members, staying in the same place, experienced a complicated and challenging shift of the reality around them, in fact becoming immigrants without migrating. The new bureaucratic and linguistic surroundings, together with a large wave of strange newcomers from the eastern parts of the state, Poles and Jews, deepened the antagonism of the lodge's members to this new reality and to these new immigrants.

After the Polish District was set up at the beginning of 1924, the members of *Concordia* and *Michael Sachs* refused to join. Since it no longer could belong to the German District, the lodges were placed directly under the authority of the Executive Committee in the United States. In explaining why they had refused to join the Polish District, the members of the lodges argued that all their social ties were in Germany and that they had no connections with the Polish lodges at all.

It seems, however, that the Order got more involved in the matters between the Upper Silesian lodges and the Polish District beginning in May 1926. One can understand such a long neutral position when taking to account the political background of the Second Polish Republic in the years 1925-1926, keeping in mind the general political and diplomatic relations of the Polish State, the background of the negotiations between the German, Polish and American B'nai B'rith Districts concerning the unfortunate *Concordia* members, who against their will were thrust front and centre into the political arena. These members in 1924–1925 consistently refused to join the Polish District. In this time period, neither the German nor the American Districts made any attempt to change the situation and to influence the Silesian lodges to enter to the Polish District, as they had done immediately after the plebiscite. Apparently, the Upper Silesian lodges and the German and the American Districts, preferred a wait-and-see position, assuming the very possible solution of Eastern Upper Silesia being returned to Germany together with the former German lodges.

May 1926 and Aftermath

After the *May Coup d'État* of Józef Piłsudski in 1926, a new government was installed in which Piłsudski remained the most influential politician in Poland, heading the *Sanation* movement. However, in May 1926 the

weak government, the economic crisis, the humiliation which Poland faced in the Locarno Treaty, together with the German wish of a border revision and in the end, the *coup d'état*, probably gave the heads of B'nai B'rith in the United States and in Germany a strong feeling of an insecure future for the Polish Republic, or at least, an instability of its western borders.

By the end of 1926 the political and economic situation in Poland had improved due to *Sanation*, the loans from American banks, and the successful export of Polish coal to England. Poland no longer was economically dependent on the German State. In the beginning of 1927 the German government decided to abandon its previous tactic of political economy and started a new one: distinguishing between trade interests and non-trade issues. The political negotiation with Poland was improved due to new trade contracts and the question of a territorial revision was abandoned.

This influenced the politics of B'nai B'rith as well. *Concordia* started to discuss the possibility of joining the Polish District and on November 18, 1927 it was officially incorporated. The year 1933 brought a rapid and a deep shift in the self-definition of *Concordia's* members. All the archival documents testify to the fact that in this year the members of the lodge started to use Polish instead of German in their official correspondence. The lodge organized courses in Polish.

In 1934 the members of the lodge proclaimed the Polish language as their official language. From that point forward all the correspondence and the publications were either bilingual or only in Polish. In an ironic way, the members of *Concordia* became pro-Polish patriots in the mid-thirties, while the anti-Jewish forces in the government and the society became stronger.

Here the question can be asked whether the story of a long discussion about the organizational identification of two small lodges was indeed created due to geopolitics and world diplomacy, or rather if it appeared due to the economic discourse between the Polish State and the United States and internal Polish politics.

Hence, the first step of the Silesian German-Jewish B'nai B'rith members towards their further *Polonization* was taken due to the efforts of their 'Polish' Jewish colleague, Leon Ader. It was taken also due to the normalization of financial relationships between the United States and Poland. In addition, Polish economic stabilization and independence apparently played a role in the final pro-Polish decision of the two Silesian lodges' members. One can, therefore, say that in this case, in

contrast to the case of *Polonization* within the system of education in the Silesian *Voivodeship*, this decision depended initially on the internal Polish political-economic situation and was less prescribed by international European diplomacy.

Furthermore, the B'nai B'rith Order's geopolitical discussions about the Eastern Upper Silesian region could not entirely involve any direct intervention from the League of Nations' side. Here the whole dynamic of belonging had a strictly organizational character, far beyond the discourse of minority rights, in contrast to the regional character of the education system, examined in the first part of this dissertation.

Therefore, in a paradoxical way the more transnational character that a certain minority group in the Polish western border area had, the more they depended on internal state politics and, therefore, became an easier object for the process of nationalization or of *Polonization*. Probably the question of B'nai B'rith lodges' affiliation was not entirely territorial-linguistic or ethnic, but rather a cultural-organizational one. Therefore, it concentrated less on the European discourse and more on the Polish-American one, which mostly focused on economic issues.

As a result, on the one hand, the fate of the Polish District and of the Silesian lodges depended mostly on the Polish internal political and international economic decisions. On the other hand, its existence did not affect any key questions of world politics and therefore could not influence the 'macro' level. The actions of Silesian lodges as well as of the Polish B'nai B'rith Districts were strictly subordinate to state control, which became especially strong after 1926. As was shown in the two previous chapters, after the shift the self-definition of the German-Jewish members of the Silesian lodges culturally and territorially remained pro-German. At the same time, their Jewish element, which was reflected in their belonging to the B'nai B'rith order, could be regarded as an international one.

Therefore, during all the years after their organizational shift, these German-Jewish brothers were strongly convinced that the international European and American territorial discourse would serve their interests. This anticipated assistance was expected to appear either with regard to the matters of returning to the German District, or in their desired shift back to Germany together with the whole area, or in both. However, these expectations, both on a personal and organizational level, did not fit the ultimate political and diplomatic reality that surrounded them.

These brothers did not understand that these discourses did not really affect their personal or organizational belonging. One can say that Leon

Ader, being deeply involved in the Order, together with his clear understanding of Polish politics, was among the few Order representatives who succeeded in understanding the situation properly. Such an understanding of the political reality in which both the Polish District and the Silesian lodges were located, could explain Ader's attempts during several years to convince the German-Jewish Silesian members to leave their territorial expectations and to recognize their entire dependence on the Polish State.

Consequently, according to these dynamics of belonging, such a deeply regional ethnic group as Silesian, *de facto* due to the interwar minority legislation, became subject to international discussions, while its fate depended on the European political-territorial resolutions. Silesians themselves, experiencing the results of such decisions, could influence the 'macro' politics. Here the attempts of their nationalization within a certain state reflected several essential and sensitive questions dealing with the postwar Versailles verdicts and their actuality during the interwar period. These questions could be useful in the entire discourse dealing with territorial revisions and minority rights (as was shown in part II, chapters 4 and 5). This dynamic occurred at the same time when the Silesian population itself, in contrast to the Silesian B'nai B'rith members, was less focused on its international position, but rather on its relationships with the Polish authorities within the region and within the state.

One can finally assume that the Polish District, being a part of the international B'nai B'rith organization, depended either on the internal decisions of the Polish State or on its economic relationships, mostly with the remote United States. Therefore, it was an easy object for the state's national-oriented policy. In comparison, the Silesians as another minority group, with a much more local regional character, became a subject of discussion influenced by the 'macro' activity of European diplomacy (and, being used by certain politicians, also influenced it from their 'micro' level). In fact, they ultimately became a much more difficult object for the process of nationalization than the Jewish B'nai B'rith members proved to be.

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* Eastern Upper Silesia and Poland are not included.